THE HOLY QUR-ĀN
English translation of the meanings and Commentary

Revised & Edited By
THE PRESIDENCY OF ISLAMIC RESEARCHES, IFTA,
call and guidance

King Fahd Holy Qur-ān
Printing Complex.
The Custodian Of The Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz Al- Saud, King Of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Has The Honour To Order The Printing Of This Holy Qur-Án And The Translation Of Its Meanings And Commentary.
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الحمد لله رب العالمين القائل في كتابه الكريم: "وقد جاءكم من الله نور كتاب مبين" (1) والصلاة والسلام على حامٍ النبي محمد ﷺ القائل: "خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه:" (2) صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين........... وله:

فلا كان القرآن الكريم هو كتاب الله الذي لا يأتي الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه المنزل من الحكمة الحكيم: كان لزاماً على كل من أراد عز الدنيا وسعادة الآخرة أن يعمل به وطبق أحكامه، ويستشعر عظمة منزله وهذا سهل على من الله عليه بالتوافق من الناطقين باللغة العربية التي نزل بها القرآن الكريم ولكن من لا يتكلم اللغة العربية فإن اللغة تفق حاجزاً دون استفادة من هذا الخبر العظيم الاستفادة الكاملة.

فمن هذا المنطلق تتضح أهمية ترجمة معاني القرآن الكريم إلى اللغات الأجنبية ولابد من إدراك بعض الحقائق فإن أراد دراسة هذا الكتاب الكريم فهو ليس كتباً في الكتب التي عدّت موضوعها المشروع ثم قسم الموضوع إلى أجزاء وفصول ولكن هذا الكتاب ينتمي على مسائل العقيدة والعالم الخلقية والأحكام الشرعية والدعوة والنصيحة والحياة والزمن، والتحري والتعذيب والجزاء والجزاء والشرادة والقصص التاريخية والإشارات إلى آيات الله في الكون، كل ذلك ينكره بين حين وآخر ويبدأ ويبعد نهج متميزة.

وأسلوب متنوع يبدع التدبر لها مرونة معينة وفائدة جديدة وهدفًا خاصًا.

ومن أهم الأمور التي تميز بها القرآن الكريم مايلي:

1. إنه كلام الله حقیقة منزل غير مخلوق أنزله الله على رسوله محمد ﷺ صلى الله عليه وسلم للناس كافة: قال تعالى: "تبث المنزل الذي نزل القرآن على عيد ليكون للعالمين نذيراً" (3).

2. يتميز هذا القرآن بالشمول والكامل: قال تعالى: "ما زلت متى الكب في الكتاب من شيء" (4).

3. وقال تعالى: "ولما عناه الكتب تيانا لكل شيء ونهى ورحمًا وشرى للمسلمين" (5).

4. إنه نزل بأيام الله للعمل بها ونهاية لاجتثاثها كما أنه نزل للعبده وتمت طلبه للآخر وتجمعه، وحصل الثواب: قال تعالى: "فما أتاك الرسول فذكوه وما تنازع عنه فانتهوا" (6).

5. إن الله سماحه و تعالى أكمل به الدين للناس كافة: "قال وللجلق: أهل أتميت لكم دينكم وأتمت عليكم تعتمد ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا" (7).

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1. سورة المائدة آية: 15
2. الآية 17
3. الآية 28
4. الألفاظ على آية: 89.
5. النحل آية: 89
7. الحشر آية: 7.
(6) إنّه معجزة الله الحالية لنبّي محمد ﷺ صلى الله عليه وسلم على المرآة والعصر تحدي الله به فسحة العرب على أن يأتوا بمثل أو بعض سور القرآن أو عصر مثلكا عن ذلك ... قال تعالى: 
قُل لَّنَ اجتَنَبَتِ الْإِنسَانَ وَالْجِنَّ عَلَى أَن يَأْتُوا بِمَثَلٍ مِّنْهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا بَعْضُهُم بِعَضْعٍ ظَهَرٍ (٨) وَقَالَ تَعَالَ: لَمْ يَبْقُوا اِثْنَهُمْ قَالُوا بَعْضُهُم مَّفْتَرِيَاتٌ وَأَعْدَٰوا مِّنْ أَسْتَطِعْنُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كَيْنَ صَادِقٍ (٩) وَقَالَ تَعَالَ:

(7) إنّه منهج متكامل جمع شؤون الحياة الروحية والعقلية والسياسية والاجتماعية والأقتصادية، منهج قابل للتطبيق في كل زمان ومكان، كما قال تعالى: 
إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرآنَ يَبْنِيَ لِلْيَوْمِ الْيَقِيمَ (١٠)
إن الله قد تكفل بحفظ القرآن الكريم كما قال عز وجل: 
إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزُّلُونَا الْقُرآنَ تَأْخُذًا بِالْحَفْظِ (١١) وقد حفظ بداية من الإتفاق في الصدور والسطور كما أنزل على رسول محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، ولم يتخيل ولم يبدله ولا كلمة واحدة منته على المرآة وهكذا يبقى إلى أبد الأبد في هذا الله تعالى.

ولابد من التسليم أولًا بأن القرآن العظيم لا يعني أن تترجم جميع معاناة لغة ولا يمكن أن تكون الترجمة قرآناً باللغة الأجنبية لأن القرآن معجز بلفظه ومعناه وهو كلام الله سبحانه وتعالى أنزله على محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بلسان عربي مبين... ولكن لما كانت الترجمة وسيلة من وسائل نقل بعض المعاني وتيسير فهم القرآن وتمده من لائم اللغة العربية وجب القيام بها نصحا للعباد وإبلاغا لكتاب الله إلى من لائم اللغة وقد تصدق كل هذه الترجمات مجموعة من الناس قامت بهجود فرديا تأثرت ترجمات بأفكار أصحابها، وبغية الوصول إلى ترجمة صاحبة وسيلة من الملاحظات التي وردت على الترجمات السابقة صدر التوجيه السامي لوزارة الاعلام في تاريخ ١٧/٨/١٩٨٨ وقرار رقم ١٤٠٠ من خام السويس يشرفون الملك عبد العزيز حاكم كابان أنشأ له مجلس الوزراء بأن تتولى الرئاسة العامة لدورات البحوث العلمية والإفتاء والإشراف مراجعة النسخة المفترضة طباعتها وتصحيحها باللغة الإنجليزية. وقد تألفت هذه المهمة الصعبة عدة لجان من المؤتمرين تأهيلا شريعا عاليا إضافة إلى إعدادهم اللغة الإنجليزية إعداد تامة من متخصصة الرئاسة العامة لإدارة البحوث العلمية والإفتاء والإشراف والدعوة والإرشاد وغيرهم، تعهد إلى اللجنة الأولى مهمة النظر في الترجمات الموجودة في ذلك الوقت واعتنى بالترجمة صحيحة منها فاتضح أن لا يوجد ترجمة يمكن اعتبارها وأن الترجمات الموجودة لتأكل من ملاحظات وليس هناك من خيار إلا:

الأحد بأ حد أمرين ﷺ

(١٤) الحجر آية : ٩.
(٨) الأسماء آية : ٨٨.
(١٠) جزء آية : ٣٨.
(١٢) البيئة آية : ٥.
(٩) طرود آية : ١٣.
(١٣) الأسراء آية : ٩.
الأول: اختيار أحسن الترجم الموجودة ليكون منطلقًا للعمل ورجعًا أساسًا للجهود التي ستبذل ثم
مراجعة معاني القرآن التي اعتمدتها تلك الترجمة وجوانعها وجوانعها.
الثاني: القيام بتسمية غير مقتبسة من ترجمات سابقة فن bè أن هذا الأمر يحتاج إلى وقت طويل.
الجهود يصعب أن تستغرق في هذا الوقت.
وإذا ترجم الأحرف بأخر الأحرف النحوية اللازمة في المواقع المفتوحة للنحو باسترداد ماتتناسب
وبالأسر كل ما يمكن. وقد تم توجيه ذلك اختيار ترجمة الأضلاع / عبادة يوسف على ما تتناوب
الألفاظ وجروة الفصوص والرسوم الكلية ثم شرح الترجمة في تقسيمها وватسية بالعبارات المذلة في
التراجم الأخرى إضافة إلى مآثرهم في أن تمتمهم من أنظمة جديدة في الأماكن التي رأت ضرورة تحسينها
مع عنايتها بتحقيق الملاحظات التي وردت إلى الرؤية من الهبات والجامعات والموارد بهذا الأمر.
وقد أعطى من عمل ذلك الترجمة إلى عدة جهات وأقراد للنظر في عمل الترجمة المذغلية واستدراك مالي
إلى وإداء الملاحظات حول ملاحظات الترجمة الأولى. ثم تم إصدار تلك الملاحظات في أراء
الجهات التي استنجدت في العمل المذغلية ومقرارة الأراء الواحة في موضوع معين وتسعيرة العمل
الملتقط واستخلاص نص واحد معنود وصم من الملاحظات قدر المستطاع. وبعد ذلك تولت لجنة
رابعة النظر فيما توصلت إلى توجيهات الترجمة الثالثة وتقييمها على مراتب اللجان السابقة وتقييم الأحلام وقرار
النص المرجعي النهائي إضافة إلى مراجعة الخواص مراجعة دقيقة وتغييرها من بعض الأخاد المتعلقه
بالمستقبل وبنبع الأراء الفقهية والتراميات الفكرية المختلفة للصوب.
وحيث إن بعض الألفاظ باللغة العربية مثل الركزة وغيره لا يمكن ترجمتها تؤدي المعنى الصحيح في
الإسلام. هذا فضل الله أن تبقى هذه الألفاظ كما هي في اللغة العربية مكتوبة بالحرف اللاتينية
وعملت غالبًا لهذه الألفاظ التي استنجدت في الترجمة على هذا النحو بجهاز القرءاء بعد هذه المقدمة
وذلك بسبب القراءته الكريمة قراءة تبديل طريقة النطق الصوتي للحروف العربية وما ينقبها باللغة الأجنبية
وقد ألمت بالكلمات المختصرة التي تكرر استخدامها، ونهاية الترجمة فهرس عام بعمل الأسماء والأماكن
وتوضيحات التي ورد ذكرها في القرآن الكريم.
وحسب النهج السامي رقم 1413 المؤرخ في 27/10/1405 هـ، طبعت هذه الترجمة في
مجمع الملك عبد لطباعة الصحف الشريف بالمدينة المنورة، بالتنسيق مع الرؤية العامة لإدارات البحوث
العلمية والابتكار والدعوة والإرشاد.

وتنطلق من توجيهات خامد الحفري الذين يحققون الله في نحو كتاب الله وتركيزه. وتقييم معانيه
إلى كل لغة ينطبق لها المسلمين في الأصوات. وبناء على التعاون القائم بين الأئمة العامة ومعظم الملك
فهد لطباعة الصحف الشريف والرؤية العامة لإدارات البحوث العلمية والابتكار والدعوة والإرشاد في
سبيل ترجمة معاني القرآن الكريم ترجمة علمية مبينة ودقيقة.

يرجى أن نقدم لأعمال المسلمين والباحين عن النار من تلك الكلمات بالله، حيث تأتي هذه الترجمة
التي تأتي ضمن سلسلة تراجم تفسير معاني القرآن الكريم إلى اللغة المختصرة التي تم طباعتها في المجمع
باللغة العربية. دأاعين الله أن يجعل الثواب لم كان وراء هذا العمل المبارك.

إدارة البحوث العلمية والابتكار والدعوة والإرشاد
PREFACE

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, Who has said in His Noble Book:

There has come to you from Allah
Light and a Perspicuous Book. (1)

And may peace and blessings be upon the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, who has said that:

The best among you is he who learned
the Qur-ān and then taught it. (2)

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family and all his Companions.

The Glorious Qur-ān is the Book of Allah, the Wise and Worthy of all Praise, Who has promised to safeguard it from any violations in its purity. It becomes incumbent upon each and every person who seeks the dignity of this world and the bliss of the Hereafter to regulate his life according to it, to implement its commandments and to pay homage to the magnificence of the One Who revealed it. This can be an easy task for those favoured with guidance from Allah, especially those blessed by an understanding of Arabic, the language of the divine communication. But for those not acquainted with Arabic, their ignorance is a barrier between them and this source of guidance and illumination. A translation of the message of Allah is thus a task not to be taken lightly or performed superficially.

Before the reader begins to study the Qur-ān, he must realise that unlike all other writings, this is a unique book with a supreme author, an eternal message and a universal relevance. Its contents are not confined to a particular theme or style, but contain the foundations for an entire system of life, covering a whole spectrum of issues, which range from specific articles of faith and commandments to general moral teachings, rights and obligations, crime and punishment, personal and public law, and a host of other private and social concerns. These issues are discussed in a variety of ways, such as direct stipulations, reminders of Allah's favours on His creation, admonitions and rebukes. Stories of past communities are narrated, followed by the lessons to be learned from their actions and subsequent fates.

The Qur-ān enjoys a number of characteristics unique to it alone, some of which are as follows:

(1) Sūrat Al-Ma'ida: 15. (2) Narrated by the six ones except Muslim.
1. It is the actual Word of Allah; not created but revealed for the benefit of all mankind.
   Blessed is He Who sent down the Criterion
   To His servant, that it may be
   An admonition to all creatures. (3)
2. It is complete and comprehensive. The Almighty says:
   Nothing have We omitted from the Book. (4)
   In another place we read,
   And We have sent down to thee
   The Book explaining all things. (5)
3. It is a theoretical and a practical Book, not only moralising but also defining specifically the permissible and the forbidden. The importance of understanding the message of the Qur'ān is undeniable, but simply reciting it with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure and reward is also an act of worship and meritorious in itself. Allah Almighty says:
   So take what the Prophet gives you
   And refrain from what he prohibits you. (6)
4. Allah has perfected His religion for all mankind with the revelation of this Book. He says:
   This day have I perfected your religion for you,
   Completed my favour upon you and have chosen
   For you Islam as your religion. (7)
5. It is Allah's eternal miracle revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad for all succeeding generations. In response to those who doubt the authorship of the Qur'ān, Allah Almighty has challenged the most articulate Arabs to produce a whole book, ten chapters or even one solitary chapter which can be remotely comparable to the Qur'ān. But to this day, no one has succeeded in meeting the challenge of the Almighty. The critics of the Qur'ān have been struck dumb by its ineffable eloquence and surpassing beauty.
   Say, if the whole of mankind and jinns
   Were to gather together to produce the
   Like of this Qur'ān, they could not
   Produce the like thereof; even if they
   Backed up each other with help and support. (8)

The Almighty also says:
   Or they may say: he forged it.
   Say: Bring ye then ten chapters
   Forged, like unto it and call

(To your aid) whomsoever ye can
Other than Allah, if ye speak
The truth. (9)

And again:
Or do they say: he forged it?
Say: Bring then a chapter like
Unto it and call (to your aid)
Anyone ye can besides Allah,
If it be ye speak the truth. (10)

6. It has been revealed to re-establish the sincere worship of Allah alone, without association of any partners with Him.
This is a Book with verses basic or
Fundamental (of established meaning),
Further explained in detail,—
From One who is Wise and Well-Aware.
(It teaches) that you should worship
None but Allah. (11)

And they have been commanded no more
Than this: to worship Allah,
Offering Him sincere devotion, being true
In faith, to establish regular prayer
And to give Zakat, and that is
The religion Right and Straight. (12)

7. It contains a complete code which provides for all areas of life, whether spiritual, intellectual, political, social or economic. It is a code which has no boundaries of time, place or nation.
Verily this Qur-ān doth guide
To that which is most right. (13)

8. Allah Almighty has taken upon Himself the duty of preserving the Qur-ān for ever in its entirety, as He says:
We have without doubt sent down
The Message, and We will assuredly
Guard it (from corruption). (14)

So well has it been preserved, both in memory and in writing, that the Arabic text we have today is identical to the text as it was revealed to the Prophet. Not even a single letter has yielded to corruption during the passage of the centuries. And so it will remain for ever, by the consent of Allah.

Given the depth as well as the sublimity of the Qur-ānic text, a faithful
translation of it into another language is virtually impossible. The various translations that exist today, however accurate they may be, cannot be designated as the Qur-ān, since they can never hope to imitate the diction or the style of the Book of Allah. But as translation is one of the few ways to export the message of the Qur-ān to allow those lacking in knowledge of Arabic to share this priceless gift, it becomes a duty for those in a position to fulfil this task.

A number of individuals have in the past ventured to translate the Qur-ān, but their works have generally been private attempts, greatly influenced by their own prejudices. In order to produce a reliable translation free from personal bias, a Royal decree (No. 19888, dated 16/8/1400 AH) was issued by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz, at that time the deputy prime minister, authorising the General Presidency of the Departments of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance to undertake the responsibility of revising and correcting a particular translation which would be selected for this purpose and made publicly available later.

To accomplish this enormous task, a number of committees were formed, comprising scholars well-qualified both in Islamic Shari’ah and the English language. Some of these scholars were associated with the General Presidency of the Departments of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance.

The first committee was given the task of examining the existing translations and choosing the most suitable one from among them. The committee discovered that there was no translation free from defects and so there were two options open for consideration: the first was to select the best translation available and then adopt it as a base for further work as well as a source of reference, with the objective of revising its contents and correcting any faults in view of the objections raised against it; the second was to prepare a fresh and independent translation, starting from scratch.

It became obvious from studying these translations that the second option demanded much time and effort, neither of which were available at the time. The first option was therefore considered to be more practical, since it met the existing urgent requirements and helped to achieve the desired goal in a comparatively short period of time. The translation by the late Ustadh ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI was consequently chosen for its distinguishing characteristics, such as a highly elegant style, a choice of words close to the meaning of the original text, accompanied by scholarly notes and commentaries.

The committee began revising and correcting this translation with the aid of other translations available, by comparing and then adopting best expressions as well as by introducing fresh expressions where necessary. The committee was fully aware of all the criticisms that had been directed against this translation and which had been carefully brought to the notice of the presidency by a num-
A third committee was set up to collate all their suggestions. It then compared all such views regarding specific issues, selected the appropriate one(s) and arrived at a text as authentic and defect-free as was humanly possible.

Finally, a fourth committee was formed to look into the findings of the second and third committees and to implement the recommendations made by them. Furthermore, this committee had to finalise the text by adopting the most accurate expression where needed, besides checking the notes vigilantly so as to clear any misconceptions regarding the articles of faith, varying juristic opinions and thoughts not in conformity with the sound Islamic point of view.

In the course of its work, the committee came across some Arabic words which could not be translated correctly, such as Zakat and Tagūt. It was therefore decided to give a transliteration of these words in English with a brief explanatory note for each one at its first occurrence in the text. The reader will find a list of such words at the end of this preface, as well as a list containing an English transliteration of Arabic letters. A list of the abbreviations used in this work is also provided. Finally, the reader will find at the end of the text a comprehensive list containing references to proper names of people, places and important topics, dealt with either in the text or in the accompanying notes.

According to the Royal decree (No. 12412, dated 27/10/1405 AH), this translation is printed at King Fahd Holy Qur-an Printing Complex in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah and also with coordination of the General Presidency of the Departments of Islamic Researches, Ifta Call and Guidance. To implement the directions of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques (May Allah preserve him) concerning the Propagation of the Book of Allah, its distribution and translation into every language spoken by Muslims worldwide, and due to the cooperation between the General Secretariat of King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex and the Presidency of Islamic Researches, Ifta, Call and Guidance regarding a faithful, specific and scholarly translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur-ān, we are pleased to present to all Muslims and those seeking spiritual light among English-speaking people this translation which comes as one of the Series of the translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur-ān into various languages printed by the Complex in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah.

May Allah reward bounteously those who were behind this blessed work.

THE PRESIDENCY OF ISLAMIC RESEARCHES, IFTA, CALL AND GUIDANCE
ARABIC WORDS EXPLAINED

A comprehensive list of names, places and topics appears as an index at the end of the book. Here some oft-repeated Arabic words occurring in the translation are given with brief explanation.

ALLAH: The proper name of God in Arabic.

HAJJ: The pilgrimage to Makkah which takes place in the last month of the Islamic calendar.

IBLİS: Satan.

ISLĂM: Literally, to submit. The Religion of all the Prophets of Allah confirmed finally by the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

JINN: Invisible beings constituting a whole race like mankind.

MUHAJIR: Literally, the emigrant. One who leaves the home town to join a Muslim community.

MUSLIM: One who professes the faith of Islam or born to a Muslim family.

QIBLA: The Ka'ba. The direction for the daily prayers of a Muslim.

QUR-ĂN: Literally, the recital. The final revelation given to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in Arabic.

RAMADHAN: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which the Muslims fast.

SŪRAH: A chapter of the Qur-ān.

ŢĂGUT: Literally, a tyrant, oppresser, false god, tempter to error. Tagut is applied to any object which is worshipped besides Allah.

UMRAH: A minor form of pilgrimage to Makkah.

UMMAH: Literally, a nation but is usually applied to the Muslim Brother-hood.

YATHRİB: The name by which Madinah was known before the Prophet's migration to that city.

ZAKAT: Literally, to grow, to purify. The third pillar of Islam. It is a definite portion of wealth which is given to needy at the turn of the year.
The following table shows the system which I have followed in transliterating the letters of the Arabic alphabet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonantal Sound</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ܐ (inverted apostrophe)</td>
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<td>i</td>
<td>ה</td>
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<td>ai</td>
<td>אי</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. For the *hamzâ* (ه) I have used no distinctive sign. An apostrophe for it and an inverted apostrophe for the 'ain (א), or vice versa, is confusing to English readers. As a moved consonant, it is sufficiently shown in English by the long or short vowel which moves it, e.g., ab, Ra'if. Where it is a hiatus preceded by a fa'āla, I have shown it by a second a: thus, Iqraa, the cave of Hiraa. In other cases it has not been possible to show it without using a distinctive sign. The name of the Holy Book is usually written Qur-ān; but I prefer to write Qur-ān. However a few words like juz have an apostrophe indicating Hamza.

2. The final h preceded by the short a is scarcely pronounced, and I have left it out. Hence Sūra, Fātiḥa, Hijra, etc., where the Arabic spelling would require Sūrah, Fātīḥah, Hijrah, etc.

3. In internationalised words and names I have used the spelling ordinarily current in English; e.g., Maulvi, Urdu, Islam, Israel, Abraham, Jacob. Here the boundary is thin and rather ill-defined, and possibly my practice and that of my proof-readers have not been absolutely uniform. But in place of Mecca and Medina, the more accurate form of Makkah and Madinah is adopted.

---

* Where it is really pronounced long. Hence, Khalaqna-kum but Khalaqnal-insân; Abū Sufyān but Abū-Qāṣim; fin-nār but fi-hi.
4. Some names, e.g., Ishmael, Hagar, etc., have acquired a contemptuous association in their European forms, while the persons they represent are sacred personages held in great honour in Islam. I have, therefore, avoided the European forms and used the Arabic forms, Ismā'īl, Hājār, etc.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

A. = Ayat (verse).
A.D. = Anno Domini = year of the Christian Calendar.
A.H. = Anno Hegirae = year of the Hijra.
Bk. = Book.
Cf. = compare.
d. = date of death of an author (to show the age in which he lived).
e.g. = Exempli gratia = for example.
H. = year of the Hijra.
H.G.S. = Ḥāfiz Gulām Sarwar's Translation of the Qur-ān.
i.e. = id est = that is.
Josh = Book of Joshua, Old Testament.
M.M.A. = Maulvi Muhammad 'Ali's Translation of the Qur-ān
M.P. = Mr. M. Pickthall's The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.
n. = note.
nn. = notes.
p. = page.
pp. = pages.
Q. = Qur-ān.
xx. 25 = Qur-ān, Sūrat 20, verse 25.
S. = sūrat.
v. = verse.
vv. = verses.
viz. = videlicet = namely.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 1: Al-Fātiha. سورة الفاتحة</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 2: Al-Baqarah. سورة البقرة</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Message and the Men</td>
<td>7-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:1-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man's Nature and Destiny</td>
<td>15-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:30-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Children of Israel:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their privileges and backslidings</td>
<td>18-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:40-86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of the Book:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their jealousy and narrow-mindedness</td>
<td>35-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:87-121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham and Ismā'īl built the Ka'ba and founded Islām</td>
<td>49-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:122-141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a new people, with Qibla towards Makkah</td>
<td>56-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:142-167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws for this new people, about food, blood-money, bequests, fasting, jihād, pilgrimage, zakat, drink and gambling, orphans, marriage, divorce and widowhood</td>
<td>68-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting in defence of Truth and Right: Story of David and Goliath</td>
<td>107-113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:243-253</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 2:</td>
<td><em>Al-Baqarah—(Contd.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:254-283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All life as in presence of Allah: No burden greater than we can bear: Prayer to Allah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 2:284-286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix I</strong>: On the Abbreviated Letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Sūrat 3: <em>Āl-i-'Imrān.</em> سوره آل عمران</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of previous Revelations: Acceptance of Faith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:1-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Truths, and the Completed Book of Allah: Friendship with one’s own people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets form one Brotherhood: Birth of Mary, Yahyā and Jesus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:31-63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek common principles, avoid dissembling and disputing: True Religion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:64-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:92-120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah’s help will come to those who strive, as at Badr: We must learn from our misfortunes, as at Uhud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:121-148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangers of indiscipline, disputes, loss of courage, or pursuit of selfish ends: Glorious are the Martyrs without fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 3:149-180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة النساء</td>
<td>Sūrat : 4 An-Nisāa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity and mankind; Sacredness of sex and family relationships; Women and orphans; Distribution of property after death</td>
<td>205-212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes against sex to be rooted out; Marriage and women’s rights; Live in faith, charity, and kindness</td>
<td>212-215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness, purity, truth, obedience, and other virtues lead to a glorious company</td>
<td>215-223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and duties of Brotherhood; fear nothing, maintain the right, and guard against Hypocrites and Deserters</td>
<td>223-232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacredness of life; migrate from places hostile to Islam; precautions in prayer in time of danger</td>
<td>232-242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treachery and secrecy to be avoided; firmness and faith to be encouraged</td>
<td>242-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice to women and orphans and to all; be true and considerate</td>
<td>249-255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the People of the Book went wrong; Revelation continued in the</td>
<td>255-263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Sūrat 4: An-Nisāa—(Contd.) Qur-ān
Text and Notes, 4:153-176 ................................ 265-274

Sūrat 5: Al-Mā'idah. سورة المائدة
Introduction and Summary ................................ 275

Obligations and duties, human and divine, are sacred and inter-connected: laws of food and social intercourse
Text and Notes, 5:1-5 ........................................ 276-282

Cleanliness and purity; justice and right conduct; trust in Allah
Text and Notes, 5:6-11 ......................................... 282-284

How Allah's grace was withdrawn for falsity to trust and rebellion against truth
Text and Notes, 5:12-26 ........................................ 284-292

Jealousy of Cain against Abel led to murder: crimes against individuals and communities
Text and Notes, 5:27-43 ........................................ 292-299

Justice above men's selfish desires: be not afraid to proclaim the truth of Allah: keep away from evil, but recognise the sincere and the humble, even if not of your flock
Text and Notes, 5:44-82 ....................................... 299-314
Text and Notes, 5:83-86 ....................................... 314-315

Avoid excess, rash vows, drinking, gambling, and superstition
Text and Notes, 5:87-108 ..................................... 315-325

Miracles of Jesus, but he claimed no divinity
Text and Notes, 5:109-117 ................................... 325-328

Appendix 2: On the Taurât .................................. 329-332
Appendix 3: On the Injīl ...................................... 333-335
**CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 6: <em>Al-An‘ām</em>, سورة الأنعام</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah reigns in heaven and on earth; there is a Hereafter</td>
<td>337-345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:1-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life of this world is empty; what is serious is the Hereafter; Allah holds the keys of the Unseen</td>
<td>345-355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:31-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah's loving care encompasses us; it is His protection we should seek, and not that of any one else</td>
<td>355-363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:61-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation in all ages; Qurān a blessing and confirmation; Signs of Allah in the daily pageants of Nature</td>
<td>363-375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:83-110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebels against Allah are deceived and deceive each other: let us trust in Allah</td>
<td>375-381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:111-129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees in good and evil deeds: avoid superstition and excess</td>
<td>381-389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:130-150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah's commands are not irrational taboos, but based on moral law</td>
<td>389-395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 6:151-165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 7: <em>Al-A‘rāf</em>, سورة الأعراف</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation should ease difficulties of heart and mind: arrogance and excess at the root of evil</td>
<td>397-405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:1-31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah has forbidden evil: all good is for man's enjoyment: Righteous to live in peace and fulfilment of all Hope</td>
<td>405-415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:32-58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

Sūrat 7: *Al-Aʿrāf—* (Contd.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lōṭ, and Shuʿaib: how their wholesome warning was rejected, to the detriment of the rejecters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:59-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:88-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses had to fight alien arrogance as well as rebellion among his own people, like the final Messenger whom he prefigured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:100-157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prophet's Revelation superseded the older Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:158-171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inborn good in man is strengthened by constant reminders from Allah; if sin has a respite, it is only for a term; Judgment must come; so draw near to Allah, in humility and reverence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 7:172-206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sūrat 8 *Al-Anfāl*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 8:1-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obey Allah's Call, and hold all else as naught: the godless will not thrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 8:20-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Battle of Badr differentiated Truth from Unbelief: its lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 8:38-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 8:41-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The true man is not cowed down by odds against him: he fights not for spoils, but for truth and faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 8:65-75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 9: At-Tauba or Barāat.</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>494-495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the enemy treacherously breaks faith, denounce his treaty, but give time before declaration of war: Mosques are for men of faith</td>
<td>496-507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enemies of Faith cannot put out Allah’s Light: wealth is for good use, not for hoarding: strive and struggle for Allah in a straight fight</td>
<td>507-514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers do their duty and make no excuses: alms are for poor and needy and not for hypocrites: bliss of the righteous is in the Good Pleasure of Allah</td>
<td>514-523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardest striving needed against evil: welcome all chance of service and sacrifice</td>
<td>523-530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vanguard of Faith expect their reward in Allah’s Good Pleasure: Allah’s grace is free and abounding: even the erring obtain it by repentance</td>
<td>530-531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth in word and deed is our fullest satisfaction and reward: our striving should include study and teaching, for our brethren</td>
<td>532-539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 10: Yūnus.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah guides the human spirit in wondrous ways, if man will have Faith and put his trust in Allah:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

### Surat 10: Yūnus—(Contd.).

mankind is one  
Text and Notes, 10:1-20  
...........................  546-553

All things good, beautiful, and useful are from Allah: instead of ephemeral good seek the eternal Home of Peace from Allah through His Book  
Text and Notes, 10:21-40  
...........................  553-560

The Truth of Allah must not be shut out of our souls: Revelations and Prophets are sent to teach us: we must accept them and reject falsehood  
Text and Notes, 10:41-70  
...........................  560-568

Allah works throughout His world in Mercy and Justice: repent before it is too late  
Text and Notes, 10:71-92  
...........................  568-574

Be patient and strive with constancy: Allah's Plan is righteous, and for the good of His creatures  
Text and Notes, 10:93-109  
...........................  574-579

### Surat 11: Hūd

Introduction and Summary  
...........................  580

Ungrateful man folds up his heart and forgets how all nature points to Allah and the Hereafter: Allah's Message is the Light that leads and the Mercy that forgives  
Text and Notes, 11:1-5  
Text and Notes, 11:6-24  
...........................  581-582  582-587

Noah loved his people and taught and warned them, but they flouted his message: Allah's justice overtook them, but he was saved from the Flood in the Ark  
Text and Notes, 11:25-49  
...........................  588-596

The 'Ād were warned against their sins but Hūd, and the Thamūd by Ṣāliḥ,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 11: <em>Hūd</em>—(Contd.)</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>but they defied Allah, and were wiped out</td>
<td>597-603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 11:50-68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The angels, on their mission of justice to the people of Lūt, stopped to give Good News to Abraham: the people of Lūt persisted in their abominations and perished, and so did Madyan, Shu‘aib’s people, for their frauds</td>
<td>603-612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 11:69-95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same lesson is taught by the arrogance of Pharaoh, who misled his people: learn and seek Mercy</td>
<td>612-620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 11:96-123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 12: <em>Yūsuf.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>621-622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beautiful story of <em>Yūsuf</em>: how envy and hate made his brothers sell him for a small price</td>
<td>623-630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 12:1-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He was bought by a dignitary of Pharaoh’s Court: the wife of the dignitary burned with earthly passion and brought him into trouble: but he remained true and righteous</td>
<td>630-641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 12:21-42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He eventually became ruler of Egypt, and fought a famine in the service of the people: his brothers came, not knowing him</td>
<td>641-645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 12:43-52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 12:53-68</td>
<td>645-651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 13. Joseph asked his brethren to bring Benjamin with them next time; by a stratagem he made the brethren confess their past guilt; he forgave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 12: <em>Yūsuf</em>—(Contd.)</th>
<th>PAGES.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>them, and sent for his father</td>
<td>652-661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph’s father Jacob comes to Egypt, and the whole family are re-united honourably; so Allah’s Plan works for good</td>
<td>662-669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 13: <em>Ar-Ra’d.</em></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature proclaims the glory of Allah; Lightning and Thunder are Signs of his Might as well as of His Mercy</td>
<td>670-679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those with Faith are like the seeing, and those without are like the blind; Allah’s promise never fails</td>
<td>679-683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men may mock, but Allah’s Truth will come to its own: the world’s plots have no power to defeat it</td>
<td>684-688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 14: <em>Ibrahim.</em></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revelation leads from darkness to light: Prophets must prevail: Truth is as a goodly tree, with firm roots, spreading branches, and perennial fruit</td>
<td>690-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evil tries to mislead: the godly should be on their guard: Abraham’s Prayer</td>
<td>700-708</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 15: Al-Ḥijr.</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah will guard His Truth, and is the Source of all things: He is Eternal</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 15:1</td>
<td>710-716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 14. Text and Notes, 15:2-25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man’s lowly origin; his rank raised by the breathing of Allah’s spirit into him; Gates of Evil are many, but the goal of Good is peace</td>
<td>716-720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 15:26-50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah’s Grace and Mercy are always first, but His Justice and Wrath will seize those who defy His Law</td>
<td>720-726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 15:51-84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah’s most glorious gift is the Qur-ān: denounce sin, but be gentle and kind</td>
<td>726-729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 15:85-99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 16: An-Nahl.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs and favours innumerable guide man to Allah, but arrogance misleads</td>
<td>731-738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 16:1-25</td>
<td>738-746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plots of the wicked end in shame; the Penalty comes in unexpected ways; for nature proclaims Allah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 16:26-50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah is One: He provides man with all the means for growth, social, moral, and spiritual</td>
<td>746-758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 16:51-83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets will witness against men who reject Truth: be faithful in intent and action</td>
<td>758-763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 16:84-100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

### Sūrat 16: An-Nahj (Contd.)

Give up pride of worldly goods: Allah is with those who live in self-restraint a pure and righteous life

Text and Notes, 16:101-128 .......................... 763-771

### Sūrat 17: Al-Isrā.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 15.</th>
<th>Introduction and Summary</th>
<th>Text and Notes, 17:1-22</th>
<th>772-773</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service of Allah is duty to man; life and trusts are sacred; pry not into evil, but avoid it</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 17:23-40</td>
<td>774-782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creation declares Allah's Glory; His revelation is Truth; guard your words and avoid dissension</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 17:41-60</td>
<td>782-788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roots of Evil; man's preeminence gives him higher responsibility; Truth will last, and Falsehood perish</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 17:61-84</td>
<td>788-795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirit of Inspiration, highest gift of Allah: Qurān teaches Truth; praise the Beautiful Names of Allah</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 17:85-111</td>
<td>796-804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sūrat 18: Al-Kahf.

|                                                                                           | Introduction and Summary | Text and Notes, 18:1-22 | 815 |
|                                                                                           | Revelation warns against evil, and guides to good everlasting; Parable of Companions of the Cave, and its lessons | Text and Notes, 18:85-111 | 816-825 |
Sūrat 18: Al-Kahf (Contd.)

True knowledge is with Allah alone; dispute not nor be puffed up with this world's goods
Text and Notes, 18:23-44 ............................................. 825-832

Good Deeds are the best of possessions in Allah's sight; pride is the root of evil; falsehood must perish
Text and Notes, 18:45-59 ............................................. 832-838

Moses and the Mysteries; highest knowledge must be sought with patience
Text and Notes, 18:60-74 ............................................. 838-841
Text and Notes, 18:75-82 ............................................. 842-844

Three episodes in the life of Zulqarnain: power to be used in the service of Allah
Text and Notes, 18:83-110 ............................................. 845-851

Sūrat 19: Maryam.

Introduction and Summary ............................................. 852

Zakariya and Yahyā, father and son; Yahyā herald of Jesus
Text and Notes, 19:1-15 ............................................. 853-856

Jesus and his mother Mary; Jesus a prophet and servant of Allah
Text and Notes, 19:16-40 ............................................. 857-863

Abraham and his father; Moses and his brother; Ismā'il the Sacrifice of Allah and Ismā'il's father
Text and Notes, 19:41-65 ............................................. 863-869

The Hereafter certain: let us not stray, but glorify Allah
Text and Notes, 19:66-98 ............................................. 870-876

Sūrat 20: Tā-Ḥā.

Introduction and Summary ............................................. 877-878

Allah's Revelation is not for man's distress, but for man's guidance:
## CONTENTS

**Sūrat 20: Ṭā-Ḥā. — (Contd.)**

| Allah’s most beautiful Names | Text and Notes, 20:1-8 | 879-880 |
| How Moses was chosen and granted his mission in the valley of Ṭuwā | Text and Notes, 20:9-36 | 880-884 |
| Birth of Moses; how he was prepared for his task; stay with the Midianites; double mission | Text and Notes, 20:37-76 | 884-896 |
| Rescue of Israel from bondage; rebellion of Samiri; worship of the calf; warming of the Hereafter | Text and Notes, 20:77-104 | 896-905 |
| High and low to be levelled at Judgment; source and allurement of evil; be not impatient, but wait in Faith | Text and Notes, 20:105-135 | 905-914 |

**Sūrat 21: Al-Anbiyā**

| سورة الأنبیاء |
| Part 17. Introduction and Summary | Text and Notes, 21:1-29 | 915 |
| Soon must Judgment come; adore Allah; there is but One Allah and One Truth | Text and Notes, 21:30-50 | 916-923 |
| Creation shows unity of design and benevolence of purpose; take life seriously, and receive Allah’s Message | Text and Notes, 21:51-93 | 923-930 |
| Evil is conquered by virtues, to meet all circumstances; as shown by Allah’s Prophets: all men and women of Allah form one united Brotherhood | Text and Notes, 21:94-112 | 930-942 |
| Every deed has its fruit; Judgment must come; repent while there is time | Text and Notes, 21:94-112 | 942-946 |
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 22: <em>Al-Ḥajj.</em></th>
<th>سورة الحج</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrible will be the Judgment; dispute not; but see Allah's Signs, and accept His Message</td>
<td>948-956</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals provided for spiritual growth; understand the meaning of Pilgrimage, Sacrifice, and Fighting for Truth</td>
<td>956-965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repel evil; be witnesses for Allah amongst men</td>
<td>965-975</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 23: <em>Al-Mūminūn.</em></th>
<th>سورة المؤمنون</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 18.</td>
<td></td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The virtues which go with Faith lead to success and bliss; man has in himself proofs of Allah's Providence</td>
<td>977-987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Brotherhood of Truth is one; sects are created by narrow men</td>
<td>987-994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eschew evil; pay not evil back in its own coin; after death there is no going backwards nor forwards till Judgment</td>
<td>995-1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 24: <em>An-Nūr.</em></th>
<th>سورة النور</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offences to be punished in public, slander of women is a grave offence</td>
<td>1002-1010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and decorum in the home; chastity and purity</td>
<td>1011-1015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

**Sūrat 24: An-Nūr—(Contd.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allah is Light; Parable of Light and Darkness</td>
<td>1015-1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 24:35-57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and respect for elders; but no superstitions in social intercourse; decorum in public council, and respect for Leader</td>
<td>1026-1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 24:58-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sūrat 25: Al-Furqān. سورة الفرقان**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation is the Criterion for distinguishing between right and wrong</td>
<td>1032-1038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 25:1-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 19. Judgment will seize the blasphemers who reject Allah's Signs; Allah's Truth in Revelation penetrates slowly to man governed by impulse</td>
<td>1038-1044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 25:21-44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs of Allah in Nature point to the Law Divine; the virtues of those who adore Him</td>
<td>1044-1054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 25:45-77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sūrat 26: Ash-Shu'ārā. سورة الشعراء**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fret not; Allah's Light will shine, as it did before the wise ones of Pharaoh</td>
<td>1056-1066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 26:1-69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In spite of Abraham's people Abraham received the Light; no less did Noah, in a world of Unfaith</td>
<td>1066-1072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 26:70-122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 'Ād perished for their violence, and the Thamūd for extravagance and sacrilege; they could not resist Allah</td>
<td>1073-1077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 26:123-159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 26: <em>Ash-Shu'arā</em>—<em>(Contd.)</em></th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The abominations of those who mocked the message of Lot recoiled on themselves, and so did the fraud and dishonesty of the mockers of Shu‘aib</td>
<td>1077-1081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation comes through the Spirit of Faith and Truth, and is not like the vain words of false poets</td>
<td>1081-1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix 4: Thamūd Inscriptions at <em>al-Ḥijr</em></strong></td>
<td>1087-1088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 27: <em>An-Naml</em></th>
<th>صورة النمل</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and Summary</strong></td>
<td>1089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation makes things clear, guides us in life, and gives us Glad Tidings; how the Message came to Moses through the Fire</td>
<td>1090-1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How David and Solomon praised Allah; Solomon and the Ant; Solomon and the Queen of Sheba</td>
<td>1093-1102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plot of the nine wicked men against Šāliḥ brought about their own destruction, as did also the defiance of purity and cleanliness by the people of Lot</td>
<td>1103-1106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gifts of nature and the solace of mind and soul come from Allah; trust in His Grace and Mercy; Judgment will come</td>
<td>1106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 28: <em>Al-Qāṣas</em></th>
<th>صورة القصص</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction and Summary</strong></td>
<td>1116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Sūrat 28: Al-Qaṣaṣ—(Contd.)

Moses was prepared in infancy, youth, and exile, for his mission, and he succeeded by Allah's help
Text and Notes, 28:1-42 ........................................ 1117-1132

So was Muḥammad prepared, to be a Mercy to men
Text and Notes, 28:43-60 ........................................ 1132-1138

In the Hereafter, each soul must answer for itself; Mercy and Truth are from Allah alone
Text and Notes, 28:61-75 ........................................ 1138-1142

Not wealth, but righteousness attains the happy End; Allah is the only Reality
Text and Notes, 28:76-88 ........................................ 1142-1148

Sūrat 29: Al-‘Ankabūt

Introduction and Summary .................................. 1149

Faith and Truth must always prevail
Text and Notes, 29:1-27 ........................................ 1150-1158

Worldly power cannot defy the right, nor can misused intelligence obscure Allah’s Light; This world’s strength, skill, beauty and power are like a spider’s web, flimsy before the eternal verities
Text and Notes, 29:28-44 ........................................ 1158-1163

Part 21. Teach Allah’s Truth and pray to Him; Revelation carries its own Proofs and Rejecters miss their own chance
Text and Notes, 29:45-69 ........................................ 1164-1173

Sūrat 30: Ar-Rūm.

Introduction and Summary ................................ 1174-1175

Empires rise and fall, but the true Decision rests with Allah, Who in His
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 30: <em>Ar-Rūm</em>—(<em>Contd.</em>)</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>own good time will separate Good from Evil</td>
<td>1176-1181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 30:1-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah’s signs are many, but they all point to His Unity, Goodness, Power and Mercy; Unity in Religion; worship due to Him alone</td>
<td>1181-1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 30:20-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evil and Mischief may spread, but Allah will restore the balance in the End; He created Purity, Harmony and Law; evil is doomed to perish</td>
<td>1190-1197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 30:41-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5: First contact of Islam with World Movements</td>
<td>1198-1206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6: Comparative Chronology of the Early Years of Islam</td>
<td>1207-1208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 31: <em>Lukmān</em> سورة لقمان</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation is a Guide and a Mercy to Men and teaches them Wisdom; We gave wisdom to Luqman; Path of the Golden Mean</td>
<td>1210-1216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 31:1-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature declares Allah’s Bounties; We must know our place; Allah is the only Reality; He knows all what is hidden</td>
<td>1216-1223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 31:20-34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 32: <em>As-Sajda.</em> سورة السجدة</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Allah’s Creation: Good and Evil are not equal in Goal; Learn now, before the Day of Decision comes</td>
<td>1225-1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 32:1-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 33: Al-Ahzāb</th>
<th>سورة الأحزاب</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1235-1236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah loves Truth; Call things by right names; shun superstition; Prophet is more than father; His Consorts are mothers</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 33:1-8</td>
<td>1237-1240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederates against Islam do not succeed; misused heritage must be forfeited</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 33:9-27</td>
<td>1240-1248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophet's Consorts; their dignity and duties; Allah decrees no unhappy wedlock</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 33:28-30</td>
<td>1249-1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 33:31-52</td>
<td>1250-1261</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined respect in society; specially to the Prophet and his family; women to uphold their honour and dignity; man to be true to his noble Trust from Allah</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 33:53-73</td>
<td>1261-1270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 34: Sabā</th>
<th>سورة سبأ</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah's Mercy and Power endure for ever; Human glory, whether in David or Solomon or the City of Saba, only fleeting</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 34:1-30</td>
<td>1272-1285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfaith has no stable foundations; True values will come in the end</td>
<td>Text and Notes, 34:31-54</td>
<td>1285-1294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 35: Fātir</th>
<th>سورة فاطر</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All power, wisdom, beauty and truth flow from Allah; it is evil that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sūrat 35: *Faṭīr*—(Contd.).

deceives and plots; seek Allah’s love and glorify Him
Text and Notes, 35:1-26 .......................... 1296-1306

There are grades in nature and in the next world; The Good will reach Bliss, while Evil will be doomed
Text and Notes, 35:27-45 .......................... 1306-1315

Sūrat 36: *Yā-Sīn*

Introduction and Summary .................................. 1316

The Quranic Revelation is a guide to the Straight Path; story of the City where the one righteous man from the outskirts bore witness to Truth

{Text and Notes, 36:1-21 .......................... 1317-1322
\Text and Notes, 36:22-32 .......................... 1322-1325

Part 23.

Signs of Allah everywhere, to bear witness to Him, on earth, in man, and in the heavens; prepare for the Hereafter
Text and Notes, 36:33-50 .......................... 1325-1330

When Judgment comes, the Joy and Peace for the Blessed will be crowned with Nearness to Allah; alas for the evil, their own nature and actions will speak against them
Text and Notes, 36:51-83 .......................... 1330-1338

Sūrat 37: *Aṣ-Sāffāt*

Introduction and Summary .................................. 1339

We must work in disciplined ranks to repel evil, for Allah is One: we must choose between Good and evil, with their consequences in the Hereafter
Text and Notes, 37:1-74 .......................... 1340-1352
## CONTENTS

**Sūrat 37: **As-Ṣaffāt — (Contd.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Prophets of Allah were flouted and persecuted, but Allah's Purpose always won, and they receive the blessings of posterity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 37:75-138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ascribe not to Allah things derogatory to Him ; the ranks of angels and righteous men stand firm in His service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 37:139-182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sūrat 38: **Ṣād.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction and Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-glory and Separatism, Envy and Suspicion, lead to evil ; spiritual power more potent than worldly power ; David's case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 38:1-26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solomon and other men of power and vision never forgot Allah ; all should strive to win the final Bliss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 38:27-64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gospel of Unity is the true cure for evil ; no power has evil over Allah's servants sincere and true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 38:65-88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sūrat 39: **Az-Zumar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction and Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Allah alone is devotion due ; variety in creation points to unity in plan; all nature proclaims His Grace and Loving-Kindness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 39:1-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allah teaches men by parables, but His Word is straight and clear ; no other thing can be of any account before His Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 39:22-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text and Notes, 39:32-52 | 1405-1413 |
CONTENTS

Sūrat 39: Az-Zumar—(Contd).

No soul should despair because of its sin;
Allah's Mercy unbounded; repent before Judgment comes
Text and Notes, 39:53-75 ........................................ 1413-1421

Sūrat 40: Gāfir.

Introduction and Summary ................................ 1422

Believe in Allah; He forgives sin and accepts repentance; Day of
Requital ever drawing near
Text and Notes, 40:1-20 .......................................... 1423-1429

Evil comes to nothing but evil, and is brought low; testimony of humble
Believer in Pharaoh's Court
Text and Notes, 40:21-50 .......................................... 1430-1440

Allah's grace and help ever ready for His servants; dispute not Allah's Signs;
nothing avails if soul is dead
Text and Notes, 40:51-85 .......................................... 1440-1451

Sūrat 41: Fussilat.

Introduction and Summary ................................ 1452

Revelation makes things clear; Message of hope and mercy; warning against
snares of evil; all Creation and History, and the powers within you, speak of Him
Text and Notes, 41:1-32 .......................................... 1453-1463

Best of men is the man of Faith, whose law of life is the Will of Allah; Allah's Message comes to guide and heal;
dispute not, but turn to Truth, and live
Text and Notes, 41:33-46 .......................................... 1463-1468
Text and Notes, 41:47-54 .......................................... 1468-1471

Sūrat 42: Ash-Shūra.

Introduction and Summary ................................ 1472
## CONTENTS

**Sūrat 42: Ash-Shūra—(Contd.)**  
Unity in Inspiration and in Creation; no sects or contentions; all will return to Allah  
Text and Notes, 42:1-29 ................................ 1473-1484

Misfortunes due to our ill deeds; Allah forgives; live true and in mutual consultation and forbearance; rely on Allah; His Word comes as a guide and mercy  
Text and Notes, 42:30-53 ................................ 1485-1494

**Sūrat 43: Az-Zukhruf.**  
Introduction and Summary ................................ 1495

Revelation makes things clear; mock not Allah's Signs, nor attribute false qualities or any partners to Him; follow guidance rather than ancestral ways  
Text and Notes, 43:1-25 ................................ 1496-1502

If Arabs go to ancestors, let them follow Abraham; spiritual worth not in gold or silver; if Israel goes to Moses, he was mocked by Pharaoh, but Pharaoh perished  
Text and Notes, 43:26-56 ................................ 1502-1510

If Christians go to Jesus, he preached the One True God; dispute not; Truth has come and must prevail  
Text and Notes, 43:57-89 ................................ 1510-1517

**Sūrat 44: Ad-Dukhān.**  
Introduction and Summary ................................ 1518

Revelation is a blessing, as it warns against evil; Pharaoh's men resisted in arrogance, but their power and glory departed unwept  
Text and Notes, 44:1-29 ................................ 1519-1524
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 44: <em>Ad-Dukhān—(Contd).</em></th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If Israel fell in their trial, can Quraish escape their doom for sin? World created for just ends; good and evil will be sorted out.</td>
<td>1524-1529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 44:30-59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 45: <em>Al-Ŷāthīya.</em></th>
<th>1530</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept Signs of Allah, and follow guidance; forgive weaker brethren; form no sects, nor follow vain desire, glory of Allah.</td>
<td>1531-1541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 45:1-37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 46: <em>Al-Ĥiqāf</em></th>
<th>1542</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 26. Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation is for just ends; learn the Truth and serve Allah; be kind to parents; evil will be undone; learn patient perseverance.</td>
<td>1543-1557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 46:1-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 47: <em>Muḥammad.</em></th>
<th>1558</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe in Revelation and follow not vanities, which will be destroyed; Allah will guide.</td>
<td>1559-1565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 47:1-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In fighting for Truth there is no room for faint-heartedness or half-heartedness; strive your utmost and give yourself generously.</td>
<td>1565-1571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 47:20-38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 48: <em>Al-Ŷāf-h</em></th>
<th>1572-1573</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory and Help, conditions for and against; true fealty, patience, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surat 48: Al-Fatḥ—(Contd.)</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>self-restraint; strength and gentleness; Hudaibiya</td>
<td>1574-1586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 48:1-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surat 49: Al-Ḥujurat</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سورة الحجرات</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manners to Leader and in social life; avoid rumours, quarrels, suspicion, and spying; Islam a privilege</td>
<td>1588-1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 49:1-18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surat 50: Qāf.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سورة ق</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation confirms the Signs in Nature and History; man's Record will confront him at Judgment</td>
<td>1597-1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 50:1-29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision of Judgment; Patience, Prayer and Praise</td>
<td>1603-1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 50:30-45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surat 51: Az-Zariyāt.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سورة الداريات</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Signs of Allah are various, and His Truth and Promise are sure and stable</td>
<td>1609-1613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 51:1-23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs were given for instruction to people in the past; so is a Reminder being sent to you for your profit</td>
<td>1613-1614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 51:24-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 51:31-60</td>
<td>1615-1621</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surat 52: At-Ṭūr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>سورة الطور</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat</td>
<td>Arabic Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52:1-49</td>
<td>At-Ṭūr (Contd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53:1-32</td>
<td>An-Najm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54:1-55</td>
<td>Al-Qamar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55:1-34</td>
<td>Ar-Rahmān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55:35-76</td>
<td>Al-Wāqī’a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56:1-56</td>
<td>At-Ṭūr (Contd.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Sūrat 56: Al-Wāqi‘a—(Contd.)

Everything points to Allah; accept His Message, and glorify Him
Text and Notes, 56:57-96 ........................................ 1679-1685

Sūrat 57: Al-Ḥadīd.

Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1686

Follow Allah's Light in humble dedication and sincerity; seek Him and trust Him; not isolated renunciation, but service
Text and Notes, 57:1-29 ........................................ 1687-1701

Sūrat 58: Al-Mujādila.

Part 28

Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1702

Condemnation of Zihār and all pretences and superstitions derogatory to women; also of secret counsels and intrigues
Text and Notes, 58:1-22 ........................................ 1703-1713

Sūrat 59: Al-Ḥāshr.

Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1714

Treachery foiled; just distribution among brethren; Glory to Allah, Lord of the most Beautiful Names
Text and Notes, 59:1-24 ........................................ 1715-1726

Sūrat 60: Al-Mumtahana.

Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1727

Social relations with Unbelievers; marriages with them
Text and Notes, 60:1-13 ........................................ 1728-1735

Sūrat 61: Aṣ-Ṣaff.

Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1736

Show, by your conduct, unity, discipline, and earnest effort; help
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 61: Aṣ-Ṣaff—(Contd.)</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allah's Cause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 61:1-14</td>
<td>1737-1742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 62: Al-Jumu'ā.</th>
<th>سورة الجمعة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah's Revelation is not exclusive but for all; Day of Assembly (Friday)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 62:1-11</td>
<td>1744-1748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 63: Al-Munāfiqūn.</th>
<th>سورة المنافقون</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution against the wiles of Hypocrites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believers to serve Allah and practise good deeds of charity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 63:1-11</td>
<td>1750-1754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 64: At-Tagābun.</th>
<th>سورة التغابن</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Gain and Loss here and in the Hereafter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 64:1-18</td>
<td>1756-1762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 65: At-Ṭalāq.</th>
<th>سورة الطلاق</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce not to be abused; all interests to be protected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 65:1-12</td>
<td>1764-1770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 66: At-Tahrīm.</th>
<th>سورة التحريم</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex relations should be confidential and harmonious; turn not away; seek virtue for self and family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 66:1-12</td>
<td>1772-1779</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 67: Al-Mulk.</th>
<th>سورة الملك</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 29.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blessed and Most Gracious is Allah, Whose goodness and glory shine everywhere; His is the true Reality; His promise of the Hereafter is true</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 67:1-30</td>
<td>1781-1790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 68: Al-Qalam.</th>
<th>سورة القلم</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Pen betokens the Record, the Decree, the Judgment; man is tried against selfishness and overweening confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 68:1-33</td>
<td>1792-1798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The true standard is with Allah; repent and seek His Grace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 68:34-52</td>
<td>1798-1802</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 69: Al-Ḥāqqa.</th>
<th>سورة الحاقة</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek absolute Reality; be not lured by false appearances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 69:1-52</td>
<td>1804-1812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 70: Al-Ma‘ārīj.</th>
<th>سورة المعارج</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allah is Lord of the ways of Ascent; mystery of Time; new World after Judgment; who will be the honoured ones in the Garden of Bliss?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 70:1-44</td>
<td>1814-1821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 71: Nūḥ.</th>
<th>سورة نوح</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>1822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noah's agony, and his Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 71:1-28</td>
<td>1823-1828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 72:</td>
<td>Al-Jīn.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hidden spiritual forces recognise the “wonderful Recital”; Allah’s message points to the Hereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 73:</td>
<td>Al-Muzzammīl.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer and humility; patience under persecution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 74:</td>
<td>Al-Muddaththir.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Seer, by devotion and contemplation, prepares himself to proclaim the message; sins of unregenerate man, and his End</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 75:</td>
<td>Al-Qiyāmat.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Day of Account; keep it ever in view; contrast between the Blessed ones and the Sinners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 76:</td>
<td>Al-Insān.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is man’s origin, and his destiny? Will he choose Chains and Yokes and Fire, or the flowing Cup of Bliss? Revelation as an admonition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 77:</td>
<td>Al-Mursalāt.</td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>Pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sūrat 77: Al-Mursalat—(Contd.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation is a cleansing Wind, that points to Judgment; “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejectors of Truth!”</td>
<td>1871-1878</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 77:1-50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sūrat 78: An-Nabaa.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة النبل</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 30. Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute not about the great Day of Judgment; evidences of Allah’s goodness and justice are all around us; let us betake ourselves to our Lord Most Gracious</td>
<td>1880-1886</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 78:1-40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sūrat 79: An-Nāzi‘āt.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة النازعات</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah’s errands of mercy and justice are being fulfilled every day; but the great Judgment will entirely restore true values; prepare for that Event</td>
<td>1888-1895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 79:1-46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sūrat 80: ‘Abasa.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة عبس</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The poor and blind may be the readier for Allah’s Message, which is universal; character of Revelation and Judgment</td>
<td>1897-1902</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 80:1-42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sūrat 81: At-Takwir</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة التكوير</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Revelation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 81:1-29</td>
<td>1904-1909</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Sūrat 82:  Al-Infiṭār. سورة الانفطار
Introduction and Summary ........................................ 1910

The Hereafter
Text and Notes, 82:1-19 ............................................. 1911-1914

Sūrat 83:  Al-Muṣafīfeen سورة الطائفين
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1915

All kinds of fraud condemned
Text and Notes, 83:1-36 ............................................. 1916-1921

Sūrat 84:  Al-Inshiqāq. سورة الانشقاق
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1922

The gloom and toil of this life; contrast with Hereafter
Text and Notes, 84:1-25 ............................................. 1923-1927

Sūrat 85:  Al-Burūj. سورة البروج
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1928

Persecution of Allah's votaries
Text and Notes, 85:1-22 ............................................. 1929-1932

Sūrat 86:  At-Ṭāriq. سورة الطارق
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1933

Out of darkness shines the Light; so does Revelation light the soul
Text and Notes, 86:1-17 ............................................. 1934-1937

Sūrat 87:  Al-A'lā سورة الأعلى
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1937

Allah leads on man by stages to the highest
Text and Notes, 87:1-19 ............................................. 1938-1941

Sūrat 88:  Al-Gāshiya. سورة الغاشية
Introduction and Summary ........................................... 1942

Penalty or Joy in the Hereafter
Text and Notes, 88:1-26 ............................................. 1943-1946
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 89: Al-Fajr.</th>
<th>سورة الفجر</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This life’s contrasts should not blind us to the Realities of the Hereafter; realise the Sure Event</td>
<td></td>
<td>1948-1953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 90: Al-Balad.</th>
<th>سورة البلد</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An oath by the Prophet’s City; struggle up the Steep Path</td>
<td></td>
<td>1955-1958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 91: Ash-Shams.</th>
<th>سورة الشمس</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from Allah’s Signs Allah’s Law; the choice is with you</td>
<td></td>
<td>1960-1962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 92: Al-Lail.</th>
<th>سورة الليل</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men strive for diverse ends; take Allah’s guidance and seek His Face</td>
<td></td>
<td>1964-1967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 93: Ad-Dhuḥā.</th>
<th>سورة الضحى</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope shines like the Dawn through Darkness; follow the Light Divine</td>
<td></td>
<td>1969-1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 94: Al-sharḥ.</th>
<th>سورة الشرح</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trouble but is linked with ease and joy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1974-1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As with a tremendous Earthquake, this world will be dissolved

**Text and Notes, 99:1-8**

Introduction and Summary

**Text and Notes, 95:1-8**

Man created in best of moulds, but liable to fall unless he believes and leads a good life

**Text and Notes, 96:1-19**

Allah teaches man new knowledge; His Message to be proclaimed

**Text and Notes, 97:1-5**

Night of Allah’s Revelation

**Text and Notes, 98:1-8**

Clear Evidence; Straight Religion

**Text and Notes, 99:1-8**

As with a tremendous Earthquake, this world will be dissolved

**Text and Notes, 100:1-11**

Spiritual power is irresistible, but man is ungrateful

**Text and Notes, 101:1-19**

Allah teaches man new knowledge; His Message to be proclaimed

**Text and Notes, 100:1-11**

Spiritual power is irresistible, but man is ungrateful
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Al-Qāri‘a—(Contd.)</td>
<td>Balance of Justice will appraise all deeds</td>
<td>1997-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 101:1-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Al-Takāthur.</td>
<td>سورة التكاثر</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pile not up things ephemeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 102:1-8</td>
<td>2000-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Al-‘Aṣr.</td>
<td>سورة العصر</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time shows that nothing lasts but Faith, goodness, truth, and virtue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 103:1-3</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
<td>Oaths and Adjurations in the Qurān</td>
<td></td>
<td>2004-2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Al-Humaza.</td>
<td>سورة الهمزة</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scandal, back-biting, and miserliness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 104:1-9</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Al-Fil.</td>
<td>سورة الفيل</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Earthly power battles in vain against sacred things ; Abraha’s army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 105:1-5</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Quraish.</td>
<td>سورة قريش</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security and prosperity should make men grateful in the service of Allah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lesson for the Quraish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text and Notes, 106:1-4</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 107: Al-Mā‘ūn.</th>
<th>سورة الماعون</th>
<th>PAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vain were worship without heart and soul</td>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 107:1-7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 108: Al-Kauthar.</th>
<th>سورة الكوثر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain of Blessings ; turn in devotion and sacrifice to Allah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 108:1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 109: Al-Kāfirūn.</th>
<th>سورة الكافرون</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith holds fast to Truth, and cannot be forced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 109:1-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 110: An-Naṣr.</th>
<th>سورة النصر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help of Allah and Victory ; praise the Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 110:1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 111: Al-Masad.</th>
<th>سورة المسد</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curses and spite recoil on their authors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 111:1-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 112: Al-Ikhlās.</th>
<th>سورة الإخلاص</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Doctrine of Unity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text and Notes, 112:1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat 113: Al-Falaq.</th>
<th>سورة الفلك</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 113:  Al-Falaq-(Contd.)</td>
<td>PAGES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Allah seek refuge from all outer ill Text and Notes, 113:1-5</td>
<td>2030-2031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sūrat 114:  An-Nās.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سورة الناس</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Summary</td>
<td>2032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Allah seek refuge from all inner ill Text and Notes, 114:1-6</td>
<td>2033-2034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index.</td>
<td>2035-2082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Fātiḥa, 1

- First comes that beautiful Sūra,\(^{15}\)
The Opening Chapter\(^ {16}\) of Seven Verses.\(^ {17}\)
Rightly called the Essence of the Book.
It teaches us the perfect Prayer.
For if we can pray aright, it means
That we have some knowledge of Allah
And His attributes, of His relations
To us and His creation, which includes
Ourselves; that we glimpse the source
From which we come, and that final goal
Which is our spiritual destiny
Under Allah's true judgment: then
We offer ourselves to Allah and seek His light.

- Prayer is the heart of Religion and Faith
But how shall we pray? What words shall convey
The yearnings of our miserable ignorant hearts
To the Knower of all? Is it worthy of Him
Or of our spiritual nature to ask
For vanities, or even for such physical needs
As our daily bread? The Inspired One
Taught us a Prayer that sums up our faith,
Our hope, and our aspiration in things that matter.
We think in devotion of Allah's name and His Nature;
We praise Him for His creation and His Cherishing care;
We call to mind the Realities, seen and unseen;
We offer Him worship and ask His guidance;
And we know the straight from the crooked path
By the light of His grace that illumines the righteous.

---

15. Each chapter or portion of the Qur-ān is called a Sūra, which means a Degree or Step, by which we mount up. Sometimes whole Sūras were revealed, and sometimes portions, which were arranged under the Prophet's directions. Some Sūras are long, and some are short, but a logical thread runs through them all. Each verse of the Sūra is called an Āyāt (plural, Āyāt), which means also a sign. A verse of revelation is a Sign of Allah's wisdom and goodness just as much as Allah's beautiful handiwork in the material creation or His dealings in history are signs to us, if we would understand. Some Āyāts are long, and some are short. The Āyāt is the true unit of the Qur-ān.

16. Al-Fātiḥa = Opening Chapter.

17. These seven verses form a complete unit by themselves, and are recited in every prayer and on many other occasions. Cf. xv. 87.
Al-Fātiḥa, or the Opening Chapter.\textsuperscript{18}

1. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,  
Most Merciful.\textsuperscript{19}

2. Praise be to Allah  
The Cherisher and Sustainer\textsuperscript{20} of  
the Worlds:

3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful;


\textsuperscript{18} By universal consent it is rightly placed at the beginning of the Qur-\'ān, as summing up, in marvellously terse and comprehensive words, man's relation to Allah in contemplation and prayer. In our spiritual contemplation the first words should be those of praise. If the praise is from our inmost being, it brings us closer to Allah. Then our eyes see all good, peace, and harmony. Evil, rebellion, and conflict are purged out. They do not exist for us, for our eyes are lifted up above them in praise. Then we see Allah's attributes better (verses 2-4). This leads us to the attitude of worship and acknowledgment (verse 5). And finally comes prayer for guidance, and a contemplation of what guidance means (verses 6-7).

Allah needs no praise, for He is above all praise; He needs no petition, for He knows our needs better than we do ourselves; and His bounties are open without asking, to the righteous and the sinner alike. The prayer is primarily for our own spiritual education, consolation, and confirmation.

That is why the words in this Sūra are given to us in the form in which we should utter them.

19. The Arabic words "Rahmān" and "Rahim" translated "Most Gracious" and "Most Merciful" are both intensive forms referring to different aspects of Allah's attribute of Mercy. The Arabic intensive is more suited to express Allah's attributes than the superlative degree in English. The latter implies a comparison with other beings, or with other times or places, while there is no being like unto Allah. Mercy may imply pity, long-suffering, patience, and forgiveness, all of which the sinner needs and Allah Most Merciful bestows in abundant measure. But there is a Mercy that goes before even the need arises, the Grace which is ever watchful, and flows from Allah Most Gracious to all His creatures, protecting them, preserving them, guiding them, and leading them to clear light and higher life.

Opinion is divided whether the Bismillah should be numbered as a separate verse or not. It is unanimously agreed that it is a part of the Qur-ān in Sūra An-Naml. Therefore it is better to give it an independent number in the first Sūra. For subsequent Sūras it is treated as an introduction or head-line, and therefore not numbered.

20. The Arabic word Rabb, usually translated Lord, has also the meaning of cherishing, sustaining, bringing to maturity. Allah cares for all the worlds He has created.
21. On realizing in our souls Allah's love and care. His grace and mercy, and His power and justice (as Ruler of the Day of Judgment), the immediate result is that we bend in the act of worship, and see both our shortcomings and His all-sufficient power. The emphatic form means that not only do we reach the position of worshipping Allah and asking for His help, but we worship Him alone and ask for His aid only. For there is none other than He worthy of our devotion and able to help us. The plural "we" indicates that we associate ourselves with all who seek Allah, thus strengthening ourselves and strengthening them in a fellowship of faith.

22. If we translate by the English word "guide", we shall have to say: Guide us to and in the straight Way. For we may be wandering aimlessly, and the first step is to find the way; and the second need is to keep in the Way: our own wisdom may fail in either case. The straight Way is often the narrow Way, or the steep Way, which many people shun (xc. 11). By the world's perversity the straight Way is sometimes stigmatized and the crooked Way praised. How are we to judge? We must ask for Allah's guidance. With a little spiritual insight we shall see which are the people who walk in the light of Allah's grace, and which are those that walk in the darkness of Wrath. This also would help our judgment.

23. Note that the words relating to Grace are connected actively with Allah: those relating to Wrath are impersonal. In the one case Allah's Mercy encompasses us beyond our deserts. In the other case our own actions are responsible for the Wrath,—the negative of Grace, Peace, or Harmony.

24. Are there two categories?—Those who are in the darkness of Wrath and those who stray? The first are those who deliberately break Allah's law; the second those who stray out of carelessness or negligence. Both are responsible for their own acts or omissions. In opposition to both are the people who are in the light of Allah's Grace: for His Grace not only protects them from active wrong (if they will only submit their will to Him) but also from straying into paths of temptation or carelessness. The negative gair should be construed as applying not to the way, but as describing men protected from two dangers by Allah's Grace.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Baqarah*, 2

As the Opening Sūra sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qurān, so this Sūra sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qurān. It is a closely reasoned argument.

Summary.—It begins (verses 1-29) by classifying men into three broad categories, depending on how they receive Allah’s message.

This leads to the story of the creation of man, the high destiny intended for him, his fall, and the hope held out to him (ii. 30-39).

Israel’s story is then told according to their own records and traditions—what privileges they received and how they abused them (ii. 40-86), thus illustrating again as by a parable the general story of man.

In particular, reference is made to Moses and Jesus and their struggles with an unruly people: how the people of the Book played false with their own lights and in their pride rejected Muḥammad, who came in the true line of Prophets (ii. 87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imam, but he was the progenitor of Ismā’īl’s line (Arabs) as well as of Israel’s line, and he with Ismā’īl built the Kā’ba (the House of Allah in Makkah) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (ii. 122-141).

The Kā’ba was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (ii. 142-167).

The Islamic *Ummat* (brotherhood) having thus been established with its definite centre and symbol, ordinances are laid down for the social life of the community, with the proviso (ii. 177) that righteousness does not consist in formalities, but in faith, kindness, prayer, charity, probity, and patience under suffering. The ordinances relate to food and drink, bequests, fasts, Jihād, wine and gambling, treatment of orphans and women, etc. (ii. 168-242).

Lest the subject of Jihād should be misunderstood, it is taken up again in the story of Saul, Goliath and David, in contrast to the story of Jesus (ii. 243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (ii. 254-283), and Allah’s nature* is called to mind in the sublime *Ayat-ul-Kursi*, the Verse of the Throne (ii. 255).

The Sūra ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal

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24-A. By the expression “Allah’s nature” it is meant: Allah’s attributes.
Responsibility, and Prayer (ii. 284-286).

This is the longest Sūra of the Qur-ān, and in it occurs the longest verse (ii. 282). The name of the Sūra is from the Parable of the Heifer in ii. 67-71, which illustrates the insufficiency of carping obedience. When faith is lost, people put off obedience with various excuses: even when at last they obey in the letter, they fail in the spirit, which means that they get fossilized, and their self-sufficiency prevents them from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. For life is movement, activity, striving, fighting, against baser things. And this is the burden of the Sūra.

This is in the main an early Madinah Sūra.
Al-Baqarah, or the Heifer.

In the name of Allah, Most gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M.\textsuperscript{25}

2. This is the Book;
In it is guidance sure, without doubt.
To those who fear\textsuperscript{26} Allah;

3. Who believe in the Unseen,
Are steadfast in prayer,
And spend out of what we have provided for them;\textsuperscript{27}

4. And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee,
And sent before thy time,
And (in their hearts) have the assurance of the
Hereafter.\textsuperscript{28}

---

\textsuperscript{25} These are abbreviated letters, the \textit{Muqatta'\textasciiumlaut{u}t}, on which a general discussion will be found in Appendix I (to be printed at the end of this Sûra).

The particular letters, A.L.M., are found prefixed to this Sûra, and Sûras iii, xxix, xxx, xxxi and xxxii (six in all).

Much has been written about the meaning of these letters, but most of it is pure conjecture.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Taqw\textasciiumlaut{u}}. and the verbs and nouns connected with the root, signify: (1) the fear of Allah, which, according to the writer of Proverbs (i. 7) in the Old Testament, is the beginning of Wisdom; (2) restraint, or guarding one’s tongue, hand, and heart from evil; (3) hence righteousness, piety, good conduct. All these ideas are implied: in the translation, only one or other of these ideas can be indicated, according to the context. See also xlvii. 17; and lxxiv. 56, n. 5808.

\textsuperscript{27} All bounties proceed from Allah. They may be physical gifts, \textit{e.g.} food, clothing, houses, gardens, wealth, etc. or intangible gifts, \textit{e.g.} influence, power, birth and the opportunities flowing from it, health, talents, etc. or spiritual gifts, \textit{e.g.}, insight into good and evil, understanding of men, the capacity for love, etc. We are to use all in humility and moderation. But we are also to give out of every one of them something that contributes to the well-being of others. We are to be neither ascetics nor luxurious sybarites, neither selfish misers nor thoughtless prodigals.

\textsuperscript{28} Righteousness comes from a secure faith, from sincere devotion to Allah, and from unselfish service to Man.
5. They are on (true guidance),
From their Lord, and it is
These who will prosper.²⁹

6. As to those who reject Faith.³⁰
It is the same to them
Whether thou warn them
Or do not warn them;
They will not believe.

7. Allah hath set a seal³¹
On their hearts and on their
hearing.
And on their eyes is a veil;
Great is the chastisement
They (incur).³²

SECTION 2.

8. Of the people there are some
who say:³³
"We believe in Allah and the Last
day;"
But they do not (really) believe.

²⁹. Prosperity must be taken as referring to all the kinds of bounty which we discussed in the note to ii. 3 above. The right use of one kind leads to an increase in that and other kinds, and that is prosperity.

³⁰. Kafara, kufr, kāfir, and derivative forms of the word, imply a deliberate rejection of Faith as opposed to a mistaken idea of Allah or faith, which is not inconsistent with an earnest desire to see the truth. Where there is such desire, the grace and mercy of Allah gives guidance. But that guidance is not efficacious when it is deliberately rejected. The consequence of the rejection is that the spiritual faculties become dead or impervious to better influences. See also n. 83 to ii. 88.

³¹. All actions are referred to Allah. Therefore when we get the penalty of our deliberate sin, and our senses become impervious to good, the penalty is referred to the justice of Allah.

³². The penalty here is the opposite of the prosperity referred to in ii. 5. As we go down the path of sin, our penalty gathers momentum, just as goodness brings its own capacity for greater goodness.

³³. We now come to a third class of people, the hypocrites. They are untrue to themselves, and therefore their hearts are diseased (ii. 10). The disease tends to spread, like all evil. They are curable but if they harden their hearts, they soon pass into the category of those who deliberately reject light.
9. Fain would they deceive
   Allah and those who believe,
   But they only deceive themselves,
   And realize (it) not!

10. In their hearts is a disease;
   And Allah has increased their
disease.\(^{34}\)
   And grievous is the chastisement
   They (incur),
   Because they lied (to themselves).

11. When it is said to them:
   “Make not mischief on the earth.”
   They say: “We are only ones
   That put things right.”

12. Of a surety, they are the ones
   Who make mischief,
   But they realize (it) not.\(^{35}\)

13. When it is said to them:
   “Believe as the others believe.”
   They say: “Shall we believe
   As the fools believe?”—
   Nay, of a surety they are the fools,
   But they do not know.\(^{36}\)

14. When they meet those who believe.\(^{37}\)

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34. The insincere man who thinks he can get the best of both worlds by compromising with good and evil only increases the disease of his heart, because he is not true to himself. Even the good which comes to him he can pervert to evil. So the rain which fills out the ear of corn or lends fragrance to the rose also lends strength to the thorn or adds strength to the poison of the deadly night-shade.

35. Much mischief is caused (sometimes unwillingly) by people who think that they have a mission of peace, when they have not even a true perception of right and wrong. By their blind arrogance they depress the good and encourage the evil.

36. This is another phase of the hypocrite and the cynic. “Faith,” he says, “is good enough to fools.” But his cynicism may be the greatest folly in the eyes of Allah.

37. A deeper phase of insincerity is actual duplicity. But it never pays in the end. If we compare such a man to a trader, he loses in the bargain.
They say: "We believe;"
But when they are alone
With their evil ones.
They say: "We are really with you
We (were) only jesting."

15. Allah will throw back
Their mockery on them,
And give them rope in
Their trespasses;
So they will wander like blind ones
(To and fro).

16. These are they who have bartered
Guidance for error:
But their traffic is profitless,
And they have lost true direction.

17. Their similitude is that of a man
Who kindled a fire;
When it lighted all around him,
Allah took away their light
And left them in utter darkness.
So they could not see.

18. Deaf, dumb, and blind,
They will not return (to the path).

19. Or (another similitude)
Is that of a rain-laden cloud

38. The man wanted light; he only kindled a fire. It produced a blaze, and won the applause of all around. But it did not last long. When the flame went out as was inevitable, the darkness was worse than before. And they all lost their way. So hypocrisy, deception, arrogant compromise with evil, cynicism, or duplicity may win temporary applause. But the true light of faith and sincerity is wanting, and therefore it must mislead and ruin all concerned. In the consternation they cannot speak or hear each other, and of course they cannot see; so they end like the deliberate rejecters of Faith (ii. 7), wildly groping about, dumb, deaf and blind.

39. A wonderfully graphic and powerful simile applying to those who reject Faith. In their self-sufficiency they are undisturbed normally. But what happens when a great storm breaks over them? They cover their ears against thunder-claps, and the lightning =
From the sky: in it are zones
Of darkness, and thunder and
Lightning:
They press their fingers in their ears
To keep out the stunning
thunder-clap,
The while they are in terror of
death.
But Allah is ever round
The rejecters of Faith!

20. The lightning all but snatches away
Their sight: every time the light
(Helps) them, they walk therein,
And when the darkness grows on
them,
They stand still,
And if Allah willed, He could take
away
Their faculty of hearing and seeing;
For Allah hath power over all things.

SECTION 3.

21. O ye people!
Worship your Guardian Lord,
Who created you
And those who came before you
That ye may become righteous.\(^{40}\)

= nearly blinds them. They are in mortal fear, but Allah encompasses them around—even
them, for He at all times encompasses all. He gives them rope. In the intervals of
deafening noise and blinding flashes, there are moments of steady light, and these
creatures take advantage of them, but again they are plunged into darkness. Perhaps they
curse; perhaps they think that the few moments of effective light are due to their own
intelligence! How much wiser would they be if they humbled themselves and sought the
light of Allah!

\(^{40}\) For Taqwā see ii. 2 n. 26. I connect this dependent clause with “worship” above,
though it could be connected with “created.” According to my construction the argument
will be as follows. Adoration is the act of the highest and humblest reverence and
worship. When you get into that relationship with Allah. Who is your Creator and
Guardian, your faith produces works of righteousness. It is a chance given you: will you
take it? If you do, your whole nature will be transformed.
22. Who has made the earth your couch,
   And the heavens your canopy;
   And sent down rain from the heavens;
   And brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance;
   Then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know (the truth).

23. And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if ye are truthful.

24. But if ye cannot--
   And of a surety ye cannot--
   Then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject Faith.

25. But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is Gardens.

41. Further proofs of Allah’s goodness to you are given in this verse. Your whole life, physical and spiritual, depends upon Him. The truth has been brought plainly before you. Will you still resist it and go after false gods, the creation of your own fancy? The false gods may be idols, superstitions, self, or even great or glorious things like Poetry, Art, or Science, when set up as rivals to Allah. They may be pride of race, pride of birth, pride of wealth or position, pride of power, pride of learning, or even spiritual pride.

42. How do we know that there is revelation, and that it is from Allah? Here is a concrete test. The Teacher of Allah’s Truth has placed before you many Suras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides Allah, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence. Or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory, against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle, and stands on its own merits.

43. According to commentators the “Stones” mentioned in this verse refer to the idols which the polytheists worshipped. Thus, far from coming to the aid of their worshippers, the false gods would be a means of aggravating their torment.
Beneath which rivers flow.
Every time they are fed
With fruits therefrom,
They say: "Why, this is
What we were fed with before,"
For they are given things in
similitude;
And they have therein
Spouses purified;
And they abide therein (for ever).

26. Allah disdains not to use
The similitude of things,
Even of a gnat as well as

44. What can be more delightful than a Garden where you observe from a
picturesque height a beautiful landscape round you, —rivers flowing with crystal water and
fruit trees of which the choicest fruit is before you. The fruit of goodness is goodness,
similar, but choicer in every degree of ascent. You think it is the same, but it is because of
your past experiences and associations of memory.

45. The word gnat, a byword in the Arabic language for the weakest of creatures.
In xxix. 41, which was revealed before this Sūra, the similitude of the Spider was used,
and similarly in xxii. 73, there is the similitude of the Fly. For similitudes taken from
magnificent forces of nature, expressed in exalted language, see ii. 19 above. To Allah
all His creation has some special meaning appropriate to itself, and some of what we
consider the lowest creatures have wonderful aptitudes, e.g., the spider or the fly.
Parables like these may be an occasion of stumbling to those "who forsake the path";
in other words those who deliberately shut their eyes to Allah's Signs, and their Penalty
is attributed to Allah. But lest there should be misunderstanding, it is immediately added
that the stumbling and offence only occur as the result of the sinner's own choice of the
wrong course. Verses 26 and 27 form one sentence and should be read together.
"Forsaking the path" is defined in ii. 27; viz., breaking solemn covenants which the
sinner's own soul had ratified, causing division among mankind, who were meant to be
one brotherhood, and doing as much mischief as possible in the life on this earth, for
the life beyond will be on another plane, where no rope will be given to evil.

The mention of the Covenant (ii. 27) has a particular and a general signification. The
particular one has reference to the Jewish tradition that a Covenant was entered into with
"Father Abraham" that in return for Allah's favours the seed of Abraham would serve
Allah faithfully. But as a matter of fact a great part of Abraham's progeny were in
constant spiritual rebellion against Allah, as is testified by their own Prophets and
Preachers and by Muhammad Al-Mustafā. The general signification is that a similar
Covenant is entered into by every creature of Allah: for Allah's loving care, we at least
owe him the fullest gratitude and willing obedience. The Sinner, before he darkens his
own conscience, knows this, and yet he not only "forsakes the path" but resists the Grace
of Allah which comes to save him. That is why his case becomes hopeless. But the loss
is his own. He cannot spoil Allah's design. The good man is glad to retrace his steps
from any lapses of which he may have been guilty, and in his case Allah's Message
reclaims him with complete understanding.
27. Those who break Allah’s Covenant After it is ratified, And who sunder what Allah Has ordered to be joined, And do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves.  

28. How can ye reject46 The faith in Allah?— Seeing that ye were without life, And He gave you life; Then will He cause you to die, And will again bring you to life; And again to Him will ye return.  

29. It is He Who hath created for you All things that are on earth; Then He turned to the heaven Anything above it. Those who believe know That it is the truth from their Lord; But those who reject Faith say: “What Means Allah by this similitude?” By it He causes many to stray, And many He leads into the right path; But He causes not to stray, Except those who forsake (the path).—  

46. In the preceding verses Allah has used various arguments. He has recalled His goodness (ii. 21-22); resolved doubts (ii. 23); plainly set forth the penalty of wrong-doing (ii. 24); given glad tidings (ii. 25): shown how misunderstandings arise from a deliberate rejection of the light and breach of the Covenant (ii. 26-27). Now (ii. 28-29) He pleads with His creatures and appeals to their own subjective feelings. He brought you into being. The mysteries of life and death are in His hands. When you die on this earth, that is not the end. You were of Him and you must return to Him. Look around you and realize your own dignity: it is from Him. The immeasurable depths of space above and around you may stagger you. They are part of His plan. What you have imagined as the seven firmaments (and any other scheme you may construct) bears witness to His design of order and perfection for His knowledge (unlike yours) is all-comprehending. And yet will you deliberately reject or obscure or deaden the faculty of Faith which has been put into you?
SECTION 4.

30. Behold, thy Lord said to the angels; "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?—Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?"
He said: "I know what ye know not."

31. And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them...

47. It would seem that the angels, though holy and pure, and endowed with power from Allah, yet represented only one side of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion, of which the highest flower is love. If man was to be endowed with emotions, those emotions could lead him to the highest and drag him to the lowest. The power of will or choosing would have to go with them, in order that man might steer his own bark. This power of will (when used aright) gave him to some extent a mastery over his own fortunes and over nature, thus bringing him nearer to the God-like nature, which has supreme mastery and will. We may suppose the angels had no independent wills of their own: their perfection in other ways reflected Allah's perfection but could not raise them to the dignity of vicegerency. The perfect vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects perfectly the will of his Principal. The distinction is expressed by Shakespeare (Sonnet 94) in those fine lines: "They are the lords and owners of their faces. Others but stewards of their excellence." The angels in their one-sidedness saw only the mischief consequent on the misuse of the emotional nature by man; perhaps they also, being without emotions, did not understand the whole of Allah's nature, which gives and asks for love. In humility and true devotion to Allah, they remonstrate: we must not imagine the least tinge of jealousy, as they are without emotion. This mystery of love being above them, they are told that they do not know, and they acknowledge (in ii. 32 below) not their fault (for there is no question of fault) but their imperfection of knowledge. At the same time, the matter is brought home to them when the actual capacities of man are shown to them (ii. 31.33).

48. "The names of things;" according to commentators means the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The particular qualities or feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the...
Before the angels, and said: “Tell Me
The names of these if ye are right.”

32. They said: “Glory to Thee: of
knowledge
We have none, save what Thou
Hast taught us: in truth it is Thou
Who art perfect in knowledge and
wisdom.”

33. He said: “O Adam! tell them
Their names.” When he had told
them their names, Allah said: “Did I not tell you
That I know the secrets of heaven
And earth, and I know what ye
reveal.
And what ye conceal?”

34. And behold, We said to the angels:
“Bow down to Adam:” and they
bowed down:
Not so Iblis: he refused and was
haughty:
He was of those who reject Faith.

35. And We said: “O Adam! dwell
thou
And thy wife in the Garden;”

= office of vicegerent. The angels acknowledged this. These things they could only know
from the outside, but they had faith, or belief in the Unseen. And they knew that Allah
saw all—what others see, what others do not see, what others may even wish to conceal.
Man has many qualities which are latent or which he may wish to suppress or conceal,
to his own detriment.

49. The Arabic may also be translated: “They bowed down, except Iblis.” In that
case Iblis (Satan) would be one of the angels. But the theory of fallen angels is not
accepted in Muslim theology. In xviii, 50, Iblis is spoken of as a Jinn. We shall discuss
later the meaning of this word.

50. Was the Garden of Eden a place on this earth? Obviously not. For, in verse 36
below, it was after the Fall that the sentence was pronounced: “On earth will be your
dwelling-place.” Before the Fall, we must suppose Man to be on another plane
altogether—of felicity, innocence, trust, a spiritual existence, with the negation of enmity,
want of faith, and all evil.
And eat of the bountiful things therein
As (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree,
Or ye run into harm and transgression."\(^{51}\)

36. Then did Satan\(^{52}\) make them slip
From the (Garden), and get them out
Of the state (of felicity) in which
They had been. And We said:
"Get ye down, all (ye people\(^{53}\)),
With enmity between yourselves.
On earth will be your dwelling place
And your means of livelihood\(^{54}\—
For a time."

37. Then learnt Adam from his Lord
Certain words\(^{55}\) and his Lord
Turned towards him; for He
Is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

51. "Zulm" in Arabic implies harm, wrong, injustice, or transgression, and may have reference to oneself; when the wrong is done to others it implies tyranny and oppression; the idea of wrong naturally connects itself with darkness, which is another shade of meaning carried with the root word.

52. The word Iblis in the verse 34 above is derived from the root idea of desperateness or rebellion whereas "Satan" conveys the idea of perversity or enmity. Note the appropriateness of the term on each occasion. Also, "slipping" from the Garden denotes the idea of evil gradually tempting man from a higher to a lower state.

53. Note the transition in Arabic from the singular number in ii. 33 to the dual in ii. 35, and the plural here, which I have indicated in English by "All ye people." Evidently Adam is the type of all mankind, and the sexes go together in all spiritual matters. Moreover, the expulsion applied to Adam, Eve, and Satan, and the Arabic plural is appropriate for any number greater than two.

54. Man's sojourn in this lower state, where he is partly an animal of this earth, is for a time. But he must fulfil his lower duties also, for they too are a part of his spiritual training.

55. As "names" in verse 31 above is used for the "nature of things", so "words" here mean "inspiration." The Arabic word used for "learn" here implies some effort on his part, to which Allah's Grace responded.
38. We said: “Get ye down all from here; And if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me,\(^{56}\) whosoever Follows My guidance, on them Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

39. “But those who reject Faith And belie Our Signs, They shall be Companions of the Fire; They shall abide therein.”\(^{57}\)

SECTION 5.

40. O Children of Israel! call to mind The (special) favour which I bestowed Upon you, and fulfil your Covenant\(^{58}\)

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The Arabic word for “Repentance” (tauba) means “turning,” and the intensive word (tauwâb) for Allah’s forgiveness (“Oft-Returning” or “Ever-Returning”) is from the same root. For repentance, three things are necessary: the sinner must acknowledge his wrong; he must give it up; and he must resolve to eschew it for the future. Man’s nature is weak, and he may have to return again and again for mercy. So long as he does it sincerely, Allah is Oft-Returning. Most Merciful. For His grace helps out the sinner’s shortcomings.

56. Note the transition from the plural “We” at the beginning of the verse to the singular “Me” later in the same verse. Allah speaks of Himself usually in the first person plural “We”: it is the plural of respect and honour and is used in human language in Royal proclamations and decrees. But where a special personal relationship is expressed the singular, “I” or “Me” is used Cf. xxvi 51. etc.

In spite of Man’s fall, and in consequence of it, assurance of guidance is given. In case man follows the guidance he is free from any fear for the present or the future, and any grief or sorrow for the past. The soul thus freed grows nearer to Allah.

57. As their rejection of faith was deliberate and definite, so the consequences must be a punishment of an abiding character.

58. The appeal is made to Israel subjectively in terms of their own tradition. You claim to be a favoured nation: have you forgotten My favours? You claim a special Covenant with Me: I have fulfilled My part of the Covenant by bringing you out of the land of bondage and giving you Canaan, the land “flowing with milk and honey” : how have you fulfilled your part of the Covenant? Do you fear for your national existence? If you fear Me, nothing else will matter.
With Me and I shall fulfil My Covenant
With you, and fear none but Me.

41. And believe in what I reveal,59 Confirming the revelation Which is with you, And be not the first to reject Faith therein, nor sell My Signs For a small price; and fear Me, And Me alone.

42. And cover not Truth With falsehood, nor conceal The Truth when ye know (what it is).

43. And be steadfast in prayer: Give Zakat, And bow down your heads 60 With those who bow down (in worship).

44. Do ye enjoin right conduct On the people, and forget (To practise it) yourselves, And yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?

45. Nay, seek (Allah’s) help With patient perseverance 61

59. You received revelations before: now comes one confirming it: its first appeal should be to you: are you to be the first to reject it? And reject it for what? Allah’s Signs are worth more than all your paltry considerations. And the standard of duty and righteousness is to be taken from Allah, and not from priests and customs.

60. The argument is still primarily addressed to the Jews, but is of universal application, as in all the teachings of the Qur’án. The chief feature of Jewish worship was and is the bowing of the head.

61. The Arabic word Sabr implies many shades of meaning, which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty; (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose; (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action; (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.
And prayer:
It is indeed hard, except
To those who are humble.

46. Who bear in mind the certainty
That they are to meet their Lord,
And that they are to return to Him.

SECTION 6.

47. O Children of Israel! call to mind
The (special) favour which I
bestowed
Upon you, and that I preferred
you
To all others.

48. Then guard yourselves against a day
When one soul shall not avail
another
Nor shall intercession be accepted
for her,
Nor shall compensation be taken
from her.
Nor shall any one be helped
(from outside).

49. And remember, We delivered you
From the people of Pharaoh: they
set you
Hard tasks and chastisement,
slaughtered

62. These words are recapitulated from ii. 40, which introduced a general account of Allah’s favours to Israel; now we are introduced to a particular account of incidents in Israel’s history. Each incident is introduced by the Arabic words “أَنْفُسُكُمْ” which is indicated in the translation by “Remember.”

63. Before passing to particular incidents, the conclusion is stated. Be on your guard: do not think that special favours exempt you from the personal responsibility of each soul.
64. The bondage of Egypt was indeed a tremendous trial. Even the Egyptians’ wish to spare the lives of Israel’s females when the males were slaughtered, added to the bitterness of Israel. Their hatred was cruel, but their “love” was still more cruel. About the hard tasks, see Exod. i. 14: “They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.” Pharaoh’s taskmasters gave no straw, yet ordered the Israelites to make bricks without straw: Exod. v. 5-19. Pharaoh’s decree was: “Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive”: Exod. i. 22. It was in consequence of this decree that Moses was hidden three months after he was born, and when he could be hidden no longer, he was put into an ark of bulrushes and cast into the Nile, where he was found by Pharaoh’s daughter and wife (xxviii. 9), and adopted into the family: Exod. ii. 2-10 Cf. xx. 37-40. Thus Moses was brought up by the enemies of his people. He was chosen by Allah to deliver his people, and Allah’s wisdom made the learning and experience and even cruelties of the Egyptian enemies themselves to contribute to the salvation of his people.

65. When the Israelites at last escaped from Egypt, they were pursued by Pharaoh and his host. By a miracle the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, but the host of Pharaoh was drowned: Exod. xiv. 5-31.

66. This was after the Ten Commandments and the Laws and Ordinances had been given on Mount Sinai: Moses was asked up into the Mount, and he was there forty days and forty nights: Exod. xxvii. 18. But the people got impatient of the delay, made a calf of melted gold, and offered worship and sacrifice to it: Exod. xxxii. 1-8.

67. Moses prayed for his people, and Allah forgave them. This is the language of the Qur-an. The Old Testament version is rougher: “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people”: Exod. xxxii. 14. The Muslim position has always been that the Jewish (and Christian) scriptures as they stand cannot be traced direct to
53. And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the Criterion\(^{68}\) 

(Between right and wrong), there was a chance for you to be guided aright.

54. And remember Moses said to his people: “O my people!
Ye have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf:
So turn (in repentance) to your Maker,
And slay yourselves (the wrong-doers);\(^{69}\)
That will be better for you
In the sight of your Maker.”
Then He turned towards you (in forgiveness):
For He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Moses or Jesus, but are later compilations. Modern scholarship and Higher Criticism has left no doubt on the subject. But the stories in these traditional books may be used in an appeal to those who use them: only they should be spiritualized, as they are here, and especially in ii. 54 below.

68. Allah’s revelation, the expression of Allah’s Will, is the true standard of right and wrong. It may be in a Book or in Allah’s dealings in history. All these may be called His Signs or Miracles. In this passage some commentators take the Scripture and the Criterion (Furqān) to be identical. Others take them to be two distinct things: Scripture being the written Book and the Criterion being other Signs. I agree with the latter view. The word Furqān also occurs in xxi. 48 in connection with Moses and Aaron and in the first verse of Sūra xxv. as well as in its title, in connection with Muḥammad. As Aaron received no Book, Furqān must mean the other Signs. Al-Muṣṭafā had both the Books and the other Signs: perhaps here too we take the other Signs as supplementing the Book. Cf. Wordsworth’s “Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong.” (Prelude, Book 4).

69. Moses’s speech may be construed literally, as translated, in which case it reproduces Exod. xxxii. 27-28 but in a much softened form, for the Old Testament says: “Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour... and there fell of the people that day 3,000 men.”

The word here translated Maker [Bārī] has also in it a touch of the root-meaning of “liberator”—an apt word as referring to the Israelites, who had just been liberated from bondage in Egypt.
70. We have hitherto had instances from the Jewish traditional Taurát (or Pentateuch). Now we have some instances from Jewish traditions in the Talmud, or body of exposition in the Jewish theological schools. They are based on the Jewish scriptures, but add many marvellous details and homilies. As to seeing Allah, we have in Exod. xxxiii. 20: “And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live.” The punishment for insisting on seeing Allah was therefore death; but those who rejected faith were forgiven, and yet they were ungrateful.

71. Manna = Hebrew, Man-hu; Arabic Mā-huwa? = What is it? In Exod. xvi. 14 it is described as “a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.” It usually rotted if left over till next day; it melted in the hot sun; the amount necessary for each man was about an Omer, a Hebrew measure of capacity equal to about 2½ quarts. This is the Hebrew account, probably distorted by traditional exaggeration. The actual Manna found to this day in the Sinai region is a gummy saccharine secretion found on a species of Tamarisk. It is produced by the puncture of a species of insect like the cochineal, just as lac is produced by the puncture of the lac insect on certain trees in India. As to quails, large flights of them are driven by winds in the Eastern Mediterranean in certain seasons of the year, as War witnessed during the Great War of 1914-1918.

72. This probably refers to Shittim. It was the “town of acacias,” just east of the Jordan, where the Israelites were guilty of debauchery and the worship of and sacrifices to false gods. (Num. xxv. 1-2, also 8-9); a terrible punishment ensued, including the plague, of which 24,000 died. The word which the transgressors changed may have been =
Of the plenty therein
As ye wish; and enter
The gate prostrating,
And say: Forgive (us)
We shall forgive you your faults
And increase (the portion of)
Those who do good."

59. But the transgressors
Changed the word from that
Which had been given them;
So We sent on the transgressors
A plague from heaven,
For that they infringed
(Our command) repeatedly.

SECTION 7.

60. And remember Moses prayed
For water for his people;
We said: "Strike the rock
With thy staff." Then gushed forth
Therefrom twelve springs.
Each group knew its own place
For water. So eat and drink
Of the sustenance provided by Allah,
And do no evil nor mischief
On the (face of the) earth.

a pass-word. In the Arabic text it is "Hiyatan" which implies humility and a prayer of forgiveness, a fitting emblem to distinguish them from their enemies. From this particular incident a more general lesson may be drawn: in the hour of triumph we are to behave humbly as in Allah’s sight, and our conduct should be exemplary according to Allah’s word: otherwise our arrogance will draw its own punishment.

These verses 58-59, may be compared with vii. 161-162. There are two verbal differences. Here (ii. 58) we have “enter the town” and in vii. 161 we have “dwell in this town.” Again in ii. 59 here we have “infringed (Our command),” and in vii. 162, we have “transgressed.” The verbal differences make no difference to the sense.

73. Here we have a reference to the tribal organization of the Jews, which played a great part in their forty years’ march through the Arabian deserts (Num. i and ii) and their subsequent settlement in the land of Canaan (Josh. xiii. and xiv.). The twelve tribes were derived from the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (soldier of Allah) after he had wrestled, says Jewish tradition, with Allah (Genesis xxxii. 28). Israel had twelve sons (Gen. xxxv. 22-26), including Levi and Joseph. The descendants of these
61. And remember ye said:
   "O Moses! we cannot endure
   One kind of food (always);
   So beseech thy Lord for us
   To produce for us of what the earth
   Groweth,--its pot-herbs, and
cucumbers,
   Its garlic, lentils, and onions."
He said: "Will ye exchange
The better for the worse?
Go ye down to any town,74
And ye shall find what ye want!"

The declension of the word Misr in the Arabic text here shows that it is treated as a common noun meaning any town, but this is not conclusive, and the reference may be to the Egypt of Pharaoh. The Tanwin expressing indefiniteness may mean "any Egypt", i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well =

= twelve sons were the "Children of Israel." Levi's family got the priesthood and the care of the Tabernacle; they were exempted from military duties, for which the census was taken (Num. i. 47-53), and therefore from the distribution of Land in Canaan (Josh. xiv. 3); they were distributed among all the Tribes, and were really a privileged caste and not numbered among the Tribes; Moses and Aaron belonged to the house of Levi. On the other hand Joseph, on account of the high position to which he rose in Egypt as the Pharaoh's minister, was the progenitor of two tribes, one in the name of each of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus there were twelve Tribes in all, as Levi was cut out and Joseph represented two tribes. Their having fixed stations and watering places in camp and fixed territorial areas later in the Promised Land prevented confusion and mutual jealousies and is pointed to as an evidence of the Providence of Allah acting through His Prophet Moses. Cf. also vii. 160.

The gushing of twelve springs from a rock evidently refers to a local tradition well known to Jews and Arabs in Al-Mustafâ's time. Near Horeb close to Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses, is a huge mass of red granite, twelve feet high and about fifty feet in circumference, where European travellers (e.g., Breydenbach in the 15th Century after Christ) saw abundant springs of water twelve in number (see Sale's notes on this passage). It existed in Al-Mustafâ's time and may still exist to the present day, for anything we know to the contrary. The Jewish tradition would be based on Exod. xvii. 6: "Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink."

The story is used as a parable, as is clear from the latter part of the verse. In the desolation and among the rocks of this life people grumble. But they will not be left starving or thirsty of spiritual life. Allah's Messenger can provide abundant spiritual sustenance even from such unpromising things as the hard rocks of life. And all the nations can be grouped round it, each different, yet each in perfect order and discipline. We are to use with gratitude all spiritual food and drink provided by Allah, and He sometimes provides from unexpected places. We must restrain ourselves from mischief, pride, and every kind of evil, for our higher life is based on our probation on this very earth.

74. The declension of the word Misr in the Arabic text here shows that it is treated as a common noun meaning any town, but this is not conclusive, and the reference may be to the Egypt of Pharaoh. The Tanwin expressing indefiniteness may mean "any Egypt", i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well =
They were covered with humiliation and misery: they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah. This because they went on rejecting the Signs of Allah and slaying His Messengers without just cause. This because they rebelled and went on transgressing.

SECTION 8.


= as a severe reproach. The rebellious children of Israel murmured at the sameness of the food they got in the desert. They were evidently hankering after the delicacies of Egypt which they had left, although they should have known that the only thing certain for them in Egypt was their bondage and harsh treatment. Moses’s reproach to them was twofold: (1) Such variety of foods you can get in any town: would you, for their sake, sell your freedom? Is not freedom better than delicate food? (2) In front is the rich Promised Land, which you are reluctant to march to; behind is Egypt, the land of bondage. Which is better? Would you exchange the better for the worse?

75. From here the argument becomes more general. They got the Promised Land. But they continued to rebel against Allah. And their humiliation and misery became a national disaster. They were carried in captivity to Assyria. They were restored under the Persians, but still remained under the Persian yoke, and they were under the yoke of the Greeks, the Romans, and Arabs. They were scattered all over the earth, and have been a wandering people ever since, because they rejected faith, slew Allah’s messengers, and went on transgressing.

The slaying of the Prophets begin with the murder of Abel, who was in the ancestry of Israel. The elder sons of Jacob attempted the murder of Joseph when they dropped him into the well, and if he was afterwards rescued by strangers, their blood-guilt was none the less. In later history they attempted to slay Jesus, in as much as they got the Roman Governor to crucify one in his likeness, and they attempted to take the life of Al-Mustafá.

But the moral goes wider than the Children of Israel. It applies to all nations and all individuals. If they are stiff-necked, if they set a greater value on perishable goods than on freedom and eternal salvation, if they break the law of Allah and resist His grace, their portion must be humiliation and misery in the spiritual world and probably even on this earth if a long view is taken.
And the Christians and the Sabians,\(^76\)

Any who believe in Allah
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness,
Shall have their reward
With their Lord on them
Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.\(^77\)

76. Latest researches have revealed a small remnant of a religious community numbering about 2,000 souls in Lower Iraq, near Basra. In Arabic they are called Subbi (plural Subbâ). They are also called Sabians and Nasoraeans, or Mandaeans, or Christians of St. John. They claim to be Gnostics, or Knowers of the Great Life. They dress in white, and believe in frequent immersions in water. Their Book Ginza is in a dialect of Aramaic. They have theories of Darkness and Light as in Zoroastrianism. They use the name Yardan (Jordan) for any river. They live in peace and harmony among their Muslim neighbours. They resemble the Sâbi-ûn mentioned in the Qur-ân, but are not probably identical with them.

The pseudo-Sabians of Harrân, who attracted the attention of Khalifa Mamûn-al Rashid in 830 A.D. by their long hair and peculiar dress probably adopted the name as it was mentioned in the Qur-ân, in order to claim the privileges of the People of the Book. They were Syrian Star-worshippers with Hellenistic tendencies, like the Jews contemporary with Jesus.

There was another people called the Sabaeans, who played an important part in the history of early Arabia, and are known through their inscriptions in an alphabet allied to the Phoenician and the Babylonian. They had a flourishing kingdom in the Yemen tract in South Arabia about 800-700 B.C., though their origin may have been in North Arabia. They worshipped the planets and stars (Moon, Sun, Venus). Probably the Queen of Sheba is connected with them. They succumbed to Abyssinia about 350 A.D. and to Persia about 579 A.D. Their capital was near San'â. They had beautiful stone buildings, in which the pointed arch is noticeable. Cf. v. 69 and n. 779. (See E.B. on Sabaeans.)

77. Cf. ii. 38, where the same phrase occurs. And it recurs again and again afterwards.

The point of the verse is that Islam does not teach an exclusive doctrine, and is not meant exclusively for one people. The Jews claimed this for themselves, and the Christians in their origin were a sect of the Jews. Even the modern organized Christian churches, though they have been, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the Time-spirit, including the historical fact of Islam, yet cling to the idea of Vicarious Atonement, which means that all who do not believe in it or who lived previously to the death of Christ are at a disadvantage spiritually before the Throne of Allah. The attitude of Islam is entirely different. Islam existed before the preaching of Muhammad on this earth: the Qur-ân expressly calls Abraham a Muslim (iii. 67). Its teaching (submission to Allah's will) has been and will be the teaching of Religion for all time and for all peoples.
63. And remember We took
Your Covenant
And We raised above you
The Mount (Sinai)\(^{78}\)
(Saying): “Hold firmly
To what We have given you
And bring (ever) to remembrance
What is therein:
Perchance ye may fear Allah.”

64. But ye turned back thereafter:
Had it not been for the Grace
And Mercy of Allah to you
Ye had surely been
Among the lost.

65. And well ye knew
Those amongst you
Who transgressed
In the matter of the Sabbath:
We said to them:
“Be ye apes.
Despised and rejected.”\(^{79}\)

66. So We made it an example
To their own time
And to their posterity,
And a lesson
To those who fear Allah.

67. And remember Moses said
To his people: “Allah commands

78. The Mountain of Sinai (\(\text{Tür-u-Sinin}\)), a prominent mountain in the Arabian
desert, in the peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea. Here the Ten
Commandments and the Law were given to Moses. Hence it is now called the Mountain
of Moses (\(\text{Jabal Mūsā}\)). The Israelites encamped at the foot of it for nearly a year. The
Covenant was taken from them under many portents (Exod. xix. 5, 8, 16, 18), which
are described in Jewish tradition in great detail.

79. The punishment for breach of the Sabbath under the Mosaic law was death.
“Every one that defileth it (the Sabbath) shall surely be put to death: for whosoever
doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people”: (Exod. xxxi.
14). There must have been a Jewish tradition about a whole fishing community in a
seaside town, which persisted in breaking the Sabbath and were turned into apes: cf. vii.
163-166.
That ye sacrifice a heifer.”

They said: “Makest thou
A laughing-stock of us?”

He said: “Allah save me
From being an ignorant (fool)!"

68. They said: “Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
What (heifer) it is!”

He said: “He says: the heifer
Should be neither too old
Nor too young, but of middling
Age: now do what ye are
commanded!”

69. They said: “Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
Her colour.” He said: “He says:
A fawn-coloured heifer,
Pure and rich in tone,
The admiration of beholders!”

70. They said: “Beseech on our behalf
Thy Lord to make plain to us
What she is: to us are all
Heifers Alike: we wish indeed for guidance
If Allah wills.”

80. This story or parable of the heifer in ii. 67-71 should be read with the parable of the dead man brought to life in ii. 72-73. The stories were accepted in Jewish traditions, which are themselves based on certain sacrificial directions in the Old Testament. The heifer story of Jewish tradition is based on Num. xix. 1-10, in which Moses and Aaron ordered the Israelites to sacrifice a red heifer without spot or blemish; her body was to be burnt and the ashes were to be kept for the purification of the congregation from sin. The parable of the dead man we shall refer to later.

The lesson of the heifer parable is plain. Moses announced the sacrifice to the Israelites, and they treated it as a jest. When Moses continued solemnly to ask for the sacrifice, they put him off on one pretext and another, asking a number of questions which they could have answered themselves if they had listened to Moses’s directions. Their questions were carping criticisms rather than the result of a desire for information. It was a mere thin pretence that they were genuinely seeking for guidance. When at last they were driven into a corner, they made the sacrifice, but the will was wanting, which would have made the sacrifice efficacious for purification from sin. The real reason for their prevarications was their guilty conscience, as we see in the parable of the dead man (ii. 72-73).
71. He said: "He says: a heifer
   Not trained to till the soil
   Or water the fields; sound
   And without blemish." They said:
   "Now hast thou brought
   The truth." Then they offered
   Her in sacrifice,
   And they scarcely did it.

SECTION 9.

72. Remember ye slew a man¹
   And fell into a dispute
   Among yourselves as to the crime:
   But Allah was to bring forth
   What ye did hide.

73. So We said: "Strike the (body)
   With a piece of the (heifer)."
   Thus Allah bringeth the dead
   To life and showeth you His Signs:
   Perchance ye may understand.

74. Thenceforth were your hearts
   Hardened: they became
   Like a rock and even worse
   In hardness. For among rocks

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¹ In Deut. xxi. 1-9 it is ordained that if the body of a slain man be found in a field and the slayer is not known, a heifer shall be beheaded, and the elders of the city next to the slain man’s domicile shall wash their hands over the heifer and say that they neither did the deed nor saw it done, thus clearing themselves from the blood-guilt.

The Jewish story based on this was that in a certain case of this kind, every one tried to clear himself of guilt and lay the blame at the door of others. In the first place they tried to prevaricate and prevent a heifer being slain as in the last parable. When she was slain, Allah by a miracle disclosed the really guilty person. A portion of the sacrificed heifer was ordered to be placed on the corpse, which came to life and disclosed the whole story of the crime.

The lesson of this parable is that men may try to hide their crimes individually or collectively, but Allah will bring them to light in unexpected ways. Applying this further to Jewish national history, the argument is developed in the following verses that the Children of Israel played fast and loose with their own rites and traditions, but they could not thus evade the consequences of their own sin.
There are some from which Rivers gush forth; others
There are which when split
Asunder send forth water;
And others which sink
For fear of Allah, And Allah is
Not unmindful of what ye do.82

75. Can ye (O ye men of Faith) Entertain the hope that they Will believe in you?
Seeing that a party of them Heard the Word of Allah, And perverted it knowingly After they understood it.

76. Behold! when they meet83
The men of Faith, they say: "We believe": but when They meet each other in private, They say: "Shall you tell them What Allah hath revealed to you, That they may engage you In argument about it Before your Lord?"— Do ye not understand (their aim)?

82. The sinner’s heart gets harder and harder. It is even harder than rocks, of which a beautiful poetical allegory is placed before us. In nature we think there is nothing harder than rocks. But there are rocks that weep voluntarily, like repentant hearts that come to Allah of their own accord: such are the rocks from which rivers and springs flow spontaneously, sometimes in small trickles, sometimes in big volumes. Then there are rocks which have to be split or dug into or blown up with dynamite, and underneath we find abundant waters, as in wells beneath rocky soil. Such are the hearts of a less degree of fineness, which yet melt into tears when some great blow or calamity calls the mind to higher things.

83. The immediate argument applies to the Jews of Madinah, but the more general argument applies to the people of Faith and the people without Faith, as we shall see below. If the Muslims of Madinah ever entertained the hope that the Jews in their city would as a body welcome Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafā as the Prophet prophesied in their own books, they were mistaken. In Deut. xviii. 18. they read: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee." (i.e., like unto Moses): which was interpreted by some of their doctors as referring to Muhammad, and they came into Islam. The Arabs are a kindred branch of the Semitic family, and are correctly described in relation to the
77. Know they not that Allah
Knoweth what they conceal
And what they reveal?

78. And there are among them84
Illiterates, who know not the Book,
But (see therein their own) desires,
And they do nothing but conjecture.

79. Then woe to those who write
The Book with their own hands,
And then say: “This is from Allah,”
To traffic with it
For a miserable price!—
Woe to them for what their hands
Do write, and for the gain
They make thereby.

= Jews as, “their brethren”; and there is no question that there was not another Prophet
“like unto Moses” until Muḥammad came: in fact the postscript of Deuteronomy, which
was written many centuries after Moses, says: “There arose not a prophet since in Israel
like unto Moses, whom the Lord Knew face to face.” But the Jews as a body were jealous
of Muḥammad, and played a double part. When the Muslim community began to grow
stronger they pretended to be of them, but really tried to keep back any knowledge
of their own Scriptures from them, lest they should be beaten
by their own arguments.

The more general interpretation holds good in all ages. Faith and Unfaith are pitted
against each other. Faith has to struggle against power, position, organization, and
privilege. When it gains ground, Unfaith comes forward insincerely and claims
fellowship. But in its own mind it is jealous of the armoury of science and knowledge which Faith
brings into the service of Allah. But Allah knows all, and if the people of Faith will only
seek knowledge sincerely wherever they can find it,—even as far afield as China, as
Muḥammad said, they can defeat Unfaith on its own ground. [Even though the directive
that Muslims should derive knowledge regardless of its location is an acceptable
proposition from the Islamic viewpoint, the tradition to which the author refers here is
not authentic].

84. The argument of i. 76 is continued. The Jews wanted to keep back knowledge,
but what knowledge had they? Many of them, even if they could read, were no better
than illiterates, for they knew not their own true Scriptures, but read into them what they
wanted, or at best their own conjectures. They palmed off their own writings for the
Message of Allah. Perhaps it brought them profit for the time being; but it was a
miserable profit if they “gained the whole world and lost their own souls” (Matt. xvi.
26). “Writing with their own hands” means inventing books themselves, which had no
divine authority.

The general argument is similar. Unfaith erects its own false gods. It attributes things
to causes which only exist in its own imagination. Sometimes it even indulges in actual
dishonest traffic in the ignorance of the multitude. It may pay for a time, but the bubble
always bursts.
80. And they say: "The Fire\textsuperscript{85} Shall not touch us
But for a few numbered days:"
Say: "Have ye taken a promise
From Allah, for He never
Breaks His promise?
Or is it that ye say of Allah
What ye do not know?"

81. Nay, those who seek gain\textsuperscript{86}
In Evil, and are girt round
By their sins,
They are Companions of the Fire:
Therein shall they abide
(For ever).

82. But those who have faith
And work righteousness,
They are Companions of the Garden:
Therein shall they abide
(For ever).

SECTION 10.
83. And remember We took\textsuperscript{87}
A Covenant from the Children

\textsuperscript{85} The Jews in their arrogance might say: Whatever the terror of Hell may be for other people, our sins will be forgiven, because we are the children of Abraham: at worst, we shall suffer a short definite punishment and then be restored to the "bosom of Abraham." This bubble is pricked here. Read this verse with ii. 81-82.

The general application is also clear. If Unfaith claims some special prerogative, such as race, "civilization," political power, historical experience, and so on, these will not avail in Allah’s sight. His promise is sure, but His promise is for those who seek Allah in Faith, and show it in their conduct.

86. This is many degrees worse than merely falling into evil: it is going out to "earn evil," as the Arabic text has it, \textit{i.e.} to seek gain in evil. Such a perverse attitude means that the moral and spiritual fortress erected around us by the Grace of Allah is voluntarily surrendered by us and demolished by Evil, which erects its own fortress, so that access to Good may be more and more difficult.

87. So far from the Covenant being of the kind you suggest in ii. 80, the real Covenant is about the moral law, which is set out in ii. 83. This moral law is universal, and if you break it, no privileges will lighten your punishment or help you in any way (ii. 86). "Speak fair to the people" not only means outward courtesy from the leaders =
After this it is ye, the same people, Who slay among yourselves, And banish a party of you From their homes; assist (Their enemies) against them, In guilt and transgression; And if they come to you As captives, ye ransom89 them, except a few among you, And ye backslide (even now).

84. And remember We took Your Covenant (to this effect): Shed no blood amongst you, Nor turn out your own people From your homes: and this Ye solemnly ratified. And to this ye were witness.

85. After this it is ye, the same people, Who slay among yourselves, And banish a party of you From their homes; assist (Their enemies) against them, In guilt and transgression; And if they come to you As captives, ye ransom89 them,

88. Verse 83 referred to the universal moral law. This verse 84 refers to its application under a special Covenant entered into with the Jews of Madinah by the newborn Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is given in Ibn Hisham's Sirat-ur-Rasul. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijra, and was treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards.

89. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by any chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by “ransom them” pay “ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies,” it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment.

=S.2.A.83-85
J.1
الجزء الأول
سورة البقرة

Of Israel (to this effect):
Worship none but Allah;
Treat with kindness
Your parents and kindred,
And orphans and those in need;
Speak fair to the people;
Be steadfast in prayer;
And Give Zakat,
Then did ye turn back,
Except a few among you,
And ye backslide (even now).

And remember We took
Your Covenant (to this effect):
Shed no blood amongst you,
Nor turn out your own people
From your homes: and this
Ye solemnly ratified.
And to this ye were witness.
86. These are the people who buy The life of this world at the price Of the Hereafter: their chastisement Shall not be lightened Nor shall they be helped.

SECTION 11.

87. We gave Moses the Book And followed him up With a succession of Messengers; We gave Jesus the son of Mary Clear (Signs) and strengthened him With the holy spirit. Is it That whenever there comes to you A Messenger with what ye Yourselves desire not, ye are Puffed up with pride?—

90. As to the birth of Jesus, cf. xix. 16-34. Why is he called the "Son of Mary"? What are his clear signs? What is the "holy spirit" by which he was strengthened? We reserve to a later stage a discussion of the Quranic teaching on these questions. See iii. 62 n. 401.
91. Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in "some ye called impostors" to the present tense in "others ye slay." There is a double significance. First, reviewing the long course of Jewish history, we have come to the time of Jesus: they have often given the lie to Allah's Prophets, and even now they are trying to slay Jesus. Secondly, extending the review of that history to the time of Muhammad, they are even now trying to take the life of that holy Prophet. This would be literally true at the time the words were promulgated to the people. And this transition leads on naturally to the next verse, which refer to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Madinah in the second year of the Hijra.

Sections 11-13 (ii. 87-121) refer to the People of the Book generally, Jews and Christians. Even where Moses and the Law of Sinai are referred to, those traditions are common to both Jews and Christians. The argument is about the people who ought to have learnt from previous Revelations and welcomed Muhammad's teaching, and yet they both took up an attitude of arrogant rejection.

92. The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of Allah were enclosed in their hearts. But there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. Their claim was not only arrogance but blasphemy. In reality they were men without Faith. (I take Gulsun here to be the plural of Gildun the wrapping or cover of a book, in which the book is preserved.).

As usual, there is a much wider meaning. How many people at all times and among all nations close their hearts to any extension of knowledge or spiritual influence because of some little fragment which they have got and which they think is the whole of Allah's Truth? Such an attitude shows really want of faith and is a blasphemous limitation of Allah's unlimited spiritual gifts to His creatures. [According to another view, the verse refers to the Jewish claim that a covering had been placed over their hearts which prevented them from grasping the message of the Prophet (peace be on him). See Ibn Kathir's commentary on the verse. See also verse iv, 155.]

93. The root kafara has many shades of meaning: (1) to deny Allah's goodness, to be ungrateful, (2) to reject Faith, deny His revelation, (3) to blaspheme, to ascribe some limitation or attribute to Allah which is derogatory to His nature. In a translation, one shade or another must be put forward according to the context, but all are implied.
89. And when there comes; to them
A Book⁴ from Allah, confirming
What is with them,—although
From of old they had prayed
For victory against those
Without Faith,—when there comes
To them that which they
(Should) have recognized,
They refuse to believe in it
But the curse of Allah
Is on those without Faith.

90. Miserable is the price
For which they have sold
Their souls, in that they
Deny (the revelation)
Which Allah has sent down,
In insolent envy that Allah
Of His Grace should send it
To any of His servants He pleases:⁵
Thus have they drawn
On themselves Wrath upon Wrath.
And humiliating is the Chastisement
Of those who reject Faith.

91. When it is said to them,
"Believe in what Allah

---

⁴ The Jews, who pretended to be so superior to the people without Faith—the Gentiles—should have been the first to recognize the new Truth—or the Truth renewed—which it was Muhammad’s mission to bring because it was so similar in form and language to what they had already received. But they had more arrogance than faith. It is this want of faith that brings on the curse, i.e., deprives us (if we adopt such an attitude) of the blessings of Allah.

Again the lesson applies to a much wider circle than the Jews. We are all apt, in our perverseness, to reject an appeal from our brother even more summarily than one from an outsider. If we have a glimmering of the truth, we are apt to make ourselves impervious to further truth, and thus lose the benefit of Allah’s Grace.

⁵ Racial arrogance made the Jews averse to the reception of Truth when it came through a servant of Allah, not of their own race. Again the lesson is wider. Is that averseness unknown in our own times, and among other races? Yet how can a race or a people set bounds to Allah’s choice? Allah is the Creator and Cherisher of all races and all worlds.
Hath sent down," they say,  
"We believe in what was sent down  
To us": yet they reject  
All besides, even if it be Truth  
Confirming what is with them.  
Say: "Why then have ye slain  
The prophets of Allah in times  
Gone by, if ye did indeed  
Believe?"

92. There came to you Moses  
With clear (Signs); yet  
Ye worshipped the Calf  
(Even) after that, and ye  
Did behave wrongfully.

93. And remember We took  
Your Covenant and We raised  
Above you the mount (Sinai):  
(Saying): "Hold firmly  
To what We have given you,  
And hearken (to the Law)"  
They said: "We hear,  
And we disobey";

96. Even the race argument is often a flimsy and hollow pretext. Did not the Jews reject Prophets of their own race who told them unpleasant truths? And do not other nations do likewise? The real trouble is selfishness, narrowness, a mean dislike of anything which runs counter to habits, customs or inclinations.

97. Cf. the introductory words of ii. 63, which are the same as the introductory words here, but the argument is developed in a different direction in the two places. In ii. 63, after they are reminded of the solemn Covenant under the towering height of Mount Sinai they are told how they broke the Covenant in after ages. Here, after they are reminded of the same solemn Covenant, they are told that even then they never meant to observe it. Their thought is expressed in biting words of sarcasm. They said in words: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." But they said in their hearts: "We shall disobey."

98. What they should have said was: "We hear and we obey": this is the attitude of the true men of Faith (ii. 285).

99. After the Commandments and the Law had been given at Mount Sinai, and the people had solemnly given their Covenant, Moses went up to the Mount, and in his absence, the people made the golden calf. [The word ʿishribū which occurs in the verse seems to suggest, as the noted Tābiʿī Qatādah is reported to have said, that their hearts were saturated with the love for the calf. See Ibn Kathīr, Commentary on the verse ii. 93.
The phrase “What their hands have sent on before them” frequently occurs in the Qur-ān. Here, and in many places, it refers to sins. In such passages as lxxviii. 40. or lxxxi. 14, it is implied that both good and bad deeds go before us to the judgment-seat of Allah before we do ourselves. In ii. 110, it is the good that goes before us. Our deeds are personified. They are witnesses for or against us, and they always go before us. Their good or bad influence begins to operate before we even know it. This is more general than the New Testament idea in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, v. 24: “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.”
SECTION 12.

97. Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel—for he brings down the revelation to thy heart by Allah’s will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe,—

98. Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and prophets, to Gabriel and Michael,—Lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith.

99. We have sent down to thee manifest signs (āyāt); and none reject them but those who are perverse.

100. Is it not the case that every time they make a covenant, some party among them throw it aside?—Nay, most of them are faithless.

101. And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming what was with them, a party of the People of the Book and the Jews ridiculed the Muslim belief that Gabriel brought down revelations to Muhammad Al-Mustafā. Michael was called in their books “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people”: (Daniel, xii. 1). The vision of Gabriel inspired fear (Daniel, viii. 16-17). But this pretence—that Michael was their friend and Gabriel their enemy—was merely a manifestation of their unbelief in angels, Prophets and Allah Himself; and such unbelief could not win the love of Allah. In any case it was disingenuous to say that they believed in one angel and not in another. Muhammad’s inspiration was through visions of Gabriel. Muhammad had been helped to the highest spiritual light, and the message which he delivered and his spotless integrity and exemplary life were manifest signs which every one could understand except those who were obstinate and perverse. Besides, the verses of the Qur-ān were in themselves reasonable and clear.
102. I think that by "the Book of Allah" here is meant, not the Qur-an, but the Book which the People of the Book had been given, viz., the previous Revelations. The argument is that Muhammad's Message was similar to Revelations which they had already received, and if they had looked into their own Books honestly and sincerely, they would have found proofs in them to show that the new Message was true and from Allah. But they ignored their own Books or twisted or distorted them according to their own fancies. Worse, they followed something which was actually false and mischievous and inspired by the evil one. Such was the belief in magic and sorcery. These are described in the next verse in terms referring to the beliefs and practices of the "People of the Book".

103. This is a continuation of the argument in ii. 101. The People of the Book, instead of sticking to the plain Books of Revelations, and seeking to do the will of Allah, ran after all sorts of occult knowledge, most of which was false and evil. Many wonderful tales of occult power attributed the power of Solomon to magic. But Solomon dealt in no arts of evil. It was the powers of evil that pretended to force the laws of nature and the will of Allah; such a pretence is plainly blasphemy.

104. Hārūt and Mārūt lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened: probably even earlier, as Mārūtu or Madruk was a deified hero afterwards worshipped as a god of magic in Babylon. Being good men, Hārūt and Mārūt of course dabbled in nothing evil, and their hands were certainly clean of fraud. But knowledge and the arts, if learned by evil men, can be applied to evil uses. The evil ones, besides their fraudulent magic, also learnt a little of this true science and applied it to evil uses. Hārūt and Mārūt did not withhold knowledge, yet never taught anyone without plainly warning them of the trial and temptation of knowledge in the hands of evil men. Being men of insight, they also saw the blasphemy that might rise to the lips of the evil ones puffed up with science and warned them against it. Knowledge is indeed a trial or temptation: if we are warned, we know its dangers: if Allah has endowed us with free will, we must be free to choose between the benefit and the danger.

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash (Jewish Tannaim) was a story of two angels who asked Allah's permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment. Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians also. (See the Second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and the Epistle of Jude, verse 6).
But neither of these taught anyone
(Such things) without saying:
"We are only for trial;
So do not blaspheme."
They learned from them⁴⁰⁵
The means to sow discord
Between man and wife.
But they could not thus
Harm anyone except
By Allah’s permission.
And they learned what harmed
them,
Not what profited them.
And they knew that the buyers
Of (magic) would have
No share in the happiness
Of the Hereafter. And vile
Was the price for which
They did sell their souls,
If they but knew!

103. If they had kept their Faith
And guarded themselves from evil,
Far better had been
The reward from Allah
If they but knew!

105. What the evil ones learnt from Hārūt and Mārūt (see last note) they turned to
evil. When mixed with fraud and deception, it appeared as charms and spells and love
potions. They did nothing but cause discord between the sexes. But of course their power
was limited to the extent to which Allah permitted the evil to work, for His grace
protected all who sought His guidance and repented and returned to Him. But apart from
the harm that these false pretenders might do to others, the chief harm which they did
was to their own souls. They sold themselves into slavery to the Evil, as is shown in the
allegory of Goethe’s Faust. That allegory dealt with the individual soul. Here the tragedy
is shown to occur not only to individuals but to whole groups of people, for example,
the People of the Book. Indeed the story might be extended indefinitely.
SECTION 13

104 O ye of Faith!
Say not (to the Prophet)
Ra’îna, but say, ‘Unzurna’
And hearken (to him):
To those without Faith
Is a grievous punishment.

105. It is never the wish
Of those without Faith
Among the People of the Book
Nor of the polytheists.
That anything good
Should come down to you
From your Lord.
But Allah will choose
For His special Mercy
Whom He will—for Allah is
Lord of grace abounding.

106. None of Our revelations
Do We abrogate
Or cause to be forgotten.
But We substitute
Something better or similar:
Knowest thou not that Allah
Hath power over all things?

106. The word disapproved is Ra’inâ, which as used by the Muslims meant. “Please look at us, attend to us.” But it was ridiculed by enemies by a little twist to suggest some insulting meaning. So an unambiguous word “Unzurna,” with the same meaning is suggested. The general lesson is that we must guard ourselves against the cynical trick of using words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them. Not only must we be plain and honest in our words. We must respectfully hearken to the words of a Teacher whom we have addressed. Thoughtless people use vain words or put foolish questions, and straightway turn their minds to something else.

107. The word which I have translated by the word “revelations” is Áyât. See n. 15. It is not only used for verses of the Qur-án, but in a general sense for Allah’s revelations, as in ii. 39 and for other Signs of Allah in history or nature, or miracles, as in ii. 61. It has even been used for human signs and tokens of wonder, as, for example, monuments or landmarks built by the ancient people of ‘Ád (xxvi. 128). What is the meaning here? If we take it in a general sense, it means that Allah’s Message from age to age is always
107. Knowest thou not
That to Allah belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth?
And besides Him ye have
Neither patron nor helper.

108. Would ye question
Your Messenger as Moses
Was questioned of old?
But whoever changeth
From Faith to Unbelief,
Hath strayed without doubt
From the even way.

109. Quite a number of the People
Of the Book wish they could
Turn you (people) back
To infidelity after ye have
believed.
From selfish envy.
After the Truth hath become

= the same, but that its form may differ according to the needs and exigencies of the time. That form was different as given to Moses and then to Jesus and then to Muhammad. Some commentators apply it also to the Ayat of the Qur-an. There is nothing derogatory in this if we believe in progressive revelation. In iii. 7 we are told distinctly about the Qur-an, that some of its verses are clear (and of established meaning), and others are not entirely clear, and it is mischievous to treat the verses that are not entirely clear and to follow them (literally). On the other hand, it is absurd to treat such a verse as ii. 115 as if it were abrogated by ii. 144 about the Qibla.

There may be express abrogation, or there may be “causing or permitting to forget.” How many good and wise institutions gradually become obsolete by afflux of time? Then there is the gradual process of disuse or forgetting in evolution. This does not mean that eternal principles change. It is only a sign of Allah’s infinite Power that His creation should take so many forms and shapes not only in the material world but in the world of man’s thought and expression.

108. Moses was constantly harassed with foolish, impertinent, or disingenuous questions by his own people. We must not follow that bad example. Questions should be asked only for real instruction.

109. “Even way”: the Arabic word sawaa signifies smoothness as opposed to roughness; symmetry as opposed to want of plan; equality or proportion as opposed to want of design; rectitude as opposed to crookedness; a mean as opposed to extremes; and fitness for the object held in view as opposed to faultiness.
Manifest unto them:
But forgive and overlook.\(^{110}\)
Till Allah brings about
His command;\(^{111}\) for Allah
Hath power over all things.\(^{112}\)

110. And be steadfast in prayer
And give Zakat:
And whatever good
Ye send forth for your souls\(^ {113}\)
Before you, ye shall find it
With Allah: for Allah sees
Well all that ye do.

111. And they say: “None
Shall enter Paradise unless
He be a Jew or a Christian”
Those are their (vain) desires.
Say: “Produce your proof
If ye are truthful.”

112. Nay,—whoever submits
His whole self\(^ {114}\) to Allah

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110. Three words are used in the Qur-\(\text{\textregistered}\), with a meaning akin to “forgive”, but each with a different shade of meaning. \(\text{Aṣ̱rū}\) (here translated “forgive”) means to forget, to obliterate from one’s mind. \(\text{Ṣaf̱āhū}\) (here translated “overlook”) means to turn away from, to ignore, to treat a matter as if it did not affect one. \(\text{Gaffārā}\) (which does not occur in this verse) means to cover up something as Allah does to our sins with His grace; this word is particularly appropriate in Allah’s attribute to \(\text{Gaffārā}\), the One who forgives again and again.

111. The word \(\text{Amr}\), is comprehensive, and includes (1) an order or command as in xcvi. 12; or (2) a purpose, design, will, as in xviii. 82; or (3) affairs, working, doing, carrying out or execution of a design, as in lxxxix. 5. In many cases some of these meanings run together.

112. Note how this phrase, seemingly repeated from ii. 106, and occurring in many other places, has an appropriate signification in each place. In ii. 106 we were told about progressive revelation, how the same thing may take different forms, and seeming human infirmity contribute to the fulfilment of Allah’s design, for Allah’s power is unlimited. Here we are told to be patient and forgiving against envy and injustice; this too may be fulfilling Allah’s purpose, for His power is infinite.

113. Cf. ii 95 n. 100.

114. The word translated “self” is \(\text{Wajh}\), a comprehensive Arabic word.
And is a doer of good,—
He will get his reward
With his Lord;
On such shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.\(^{115}\)

**SECTION 14.**

113. The Jews say: “The Christians have naught (to stand) upon;
And the Christians say:
“The Jews have naught (to stand) upon.” Yet they (Profess to) study the (same) Book.
Like unto their word Is what those say who know not;\(^{116}\)

But Allah will judge Between them in their quarrel On the Day of Judgment.

114. And who is more unjust Than he who forbids\(^{117}\)
That in places for the worship Of Allah, His name should be

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\(^{115}\) This phrase comes in aptly in its own context many times. In this Sûra it occurs in ii. 38, 62, 112, 262, 274 and 277.

\(^{116}\) It is a sure sign of ignorance and prejudice when you study the same book as another or a similar one and yet are absolutely intolerant of the meaning which the other draws from it. You should know better, but you speak like the ignorant. In this case the primary reference in the word “ignorant” may be to the Pagan Arabs.

\(^{117}\) There were actually Pagans in Makkah who tried to shut out the Muslim Arabs from the Ka’ba, the universal place of Arab worship. The Pagans themselves called it the House of Allah. With what face could they exclude the Muslims, who wanted to worship the true Allah instead of worshipping idols? If these Pagans had succeeded, they would only have caused violent divisions among the Arabs and destroyed the sanctity and the very existence of the Ka’ba.

This verse, taken in a general sense, establishes the principle of freedom of worship in a public mosque or place dedicated to the worship of Allah. This is recognized in Muslim law.
118. That is, you will face Allah whichever direction you turn your face. See note to ii. 112 above.

119. It is a derogation from the glory of Allah—in fact it is blasphemy—to say that Allah begets sons, like a man or an animal. The Christian doctrine is here emphatically repudiated. If words have any meaning, it would mean an attribution to Allah of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex.

120. The previous verse told us that everything in heaven and earth celebrates the glory of Allah. Lest anyone should think that the heavens and the earth were themselves primeval and eternal, we are now told that they themselves are creatures of Allah’s will and design. Cf. vi. 102, where the word bada’a is used as here for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and khalaqa is used for the creation of all things. Bada’a goes back to the very primal beginning, as far as we can conceive it. The materialists might say that primeval matter was eternal; other things, i.e. the forms and shapes as we see them now, were called into being at some time or other, and will perish. When they perish, they dissolve into primeval matter again, which stands as the base of all existence. We go further back. We say that if we postulate such primeval matter, it owes its origin =

Celebrated?—whose zeal
Is (in fact) to ruin them?
It was not fitting that such
Should themselves enter them
Except in fear. For them
There is nothing but disgrace
In this world, and in the world
To come, an exceeding torment.

115. To Allah belong the East
And the West: whithersoever
Ye turn, there is Allah’s Face.¹¹八
For Allah is All-Embracing,
All-Knowing.

116. They say: “Allah hath begotten
A son”: Glory be to Him.—Nay,
To Him belongs all
That is in the heavens
And on earth: everything
Renders worship to Him.¹¹九

117. The Originator
Of the heavens and the earth:¹²０
When He decreeth a matter,
He saith to it: “Be,”
And it is.
118. Say those without knowledge:

“Why speaketh not Allah
Unto us? Or why cometh not
Unto us a Sign?
So said the people before them
Words of similar import.
Their hearts are alike.
We have indeed made clear
The Signs unto any people
Who hold firmly
To Faith (in their hearts).

119. Verily We have sent thee
In truth as a bearer
Of glad tidings and a warner:
But of thee no question
Shall be asked of the Companions
Of the Blazing Fire.

120. Never will the Jews
Or the Christians be satisfied
With thee unless thou follow
Their form of religion. Say:

= itself to Allah. If this is conceded, we proceed to argue that the process of Creation is
not then completed. “All things in the heavens and on the earth” are created by gradual
processes. In “things” we include abstract as well as material things. We see the abstract
things and ideas actually growing before us. But that also is Allah’s creation, to which
we can apply the word khalaqa, for in it is involved the idea of measuring, fitting it into
a scheme of other things. Cf. liv. 49; also xxv. 59. On the other hand, the “amr”
(= Command, Direction, Design) is a single thing, unrelated to Time, “like the twinkling
of an eye” (liv. 50). Another word to note in this connection is ja'ala “making” which
seems to imply new shapes and forms, new dispositions, as the making
of the Signs of the Zodiac in the heavens, or the setting out of the sun and moon for light, or the
establishment of the succession of day and night (xxv. 61-62). A further process with
regard to the soul is described in the word sawwd, bringing it to perfection (xci. 7) but
this we shall discuss in its place. Fatara (xlii. 11) implies, like bada'a, the creating of a
thing out of nothing and after no pre-existing similitude, but perhaps futara implies the
creation of primeval matter to which further processes have to be applied later, as when
one prepares dough but leaves the leavening to be done after. Badaa (without the ‘ain),
xxx. 27, implies beginning the process of creation: this is made further clear in xxvii. 7
where the beginning of the creation of pristine man from clay refers to his physical body,
leaving the further processes of reproduction and the breathing in of the soul to be
described in subsequent verses. Lastly, baraa is creation implying liberation from pre­
existing matter or circumstance, e.g., man’s body from clay (lix. 24) or a calamity from
previously existing circumstances (lvii. 22). See also vi. 94, n. 916; vi. 98, n. 923; lix.
24, nn. 5405-6.
"The Guidance of Allah,—that
Is the (only) Guidance."
Wert thou to follow their desires
After the knowledge
Which hath reached thee,
Then wouldst thou find
Neither Protector nor Helper
Against Allah.

121. Those to whom We have given
The Book study it as it
Should be studied: they are
The ones that believe therein:
Those who reject faith therein,—
The loss is their own.

SECTION 15.

122. O Children of Israel! call to mind
The special favour which I bestowed
Upon you, and that I preferred you
To all others.

123. Then guard yourselves against a Day
When one soul shall not avail
another,
Nor shall compensation be
accepted from her
Nor shall intercession profit her
Nor shall anyone be helped
(from outside)\(^\text{122}\)

124. And remember that Abraham
Was tried by his Lord

121-122. Verses 122-123 repeat verses 47-48 (except for a slight verbal variation in ii. 123, which does not affect the sense). The argument about the favours to Israel is thus beautifully rounded off, and we now proceed to the argument in favour of the Arabs as succeeding to the spiritual inheritance of Abraham.
With certain Commands,\textsuperscript{123} Which he fulfilled:

He said: “I will make thee An Imam\textsuperscript{124} to the people.
He pleaded: “And also (Imams) from my offspring!”
He answered: “But My Promise Is not within the reach Of evil-doers.”

125. Remember We made the House\textsuperscript{125}
A place of assembly for men
And a place of safety;
And take ye the Station Of Abraham as a place
Of prayer; and We covenanted

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Kalimat}: literally “words”; here used in the sense of Allah’s Will or Decree or Purpose. This verse may be taken to be the sum of the verses following. In everything Abraham fulfilled Allah’s wish: he purified Allah’s house: he built the sacred refuge of the Ka’ba; he submitted his will to Allah’s, and thus became the type of Islam. He was promised the leadership of the world; he pleaded for his progeny, and his prayer was granted, with the limitation that if his progeny was false to Allah, Allah’s promise did not reach the people who proved themselves false.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Imám}: the primary sense is that of being foremost: hence it may mean: (1) leader in religion; (2) leader in congregational prayer; (3) model, pattern, example; (4) a book of guidance and instructions (xi. 17); (5) a book of evidence or record (xxxvi 12). Here, meanings 1 and 3 are implied. In ix. 12 the word is applied to leaders of Unbelief or Blasphemy.

\textsuperscript{125} The Ka’ba, the House of Allah. Its foundation goes back by Arab tradition to Abraham. Its fourfold character is here referred to (1) It was the centre to which all the Arab tribes resorted for trade; for poetic contests, and for worship. (2) It was sacred territory, and was respected by friend and foe alike. At all seasons, all fighting was and is forbidden within its limits, and even arms are not allowed to be carried, and no game or other thing is allowed to be killed. Like the Cities of Refuge under the Mosaic Dispensation, to which manslayers could flee (Num. xxxv. 6), or the Sanctuaries in Mediaeval Europe, to which criminals could not be pursued. Makkah was recognized by Arab custom as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence. (3) It was a place of prayer: even to-day there is a Station of Abraham. (4) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes.

Though the verse as a whole is expressed in the First Person Plural, the House is called “My House,” to emphasize the personal relation of Allah, the One True God, to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which defiled it before it was purified again by Muḥammad.
With Abraham and Ismā'īl,  
That they should sanctify  
My House for those who  
Compass it round, or use it  
As a retreat, or bow, or  
Prostrate themselves (therein)

In prayer.

126. And remember Abraham said:
"My Lord, make this a City
Of Peace, and feed its People
With fruits—such of them
As believe in Allah and the Last
Day."

He said: "(Yea), and such as
Reject Faith—for a while
Will I grant them their pleasure,
But will soon drive them
To the torment of Fire—
An evil destination (indeed)!

127. And remember Abraham
And Ismā'īl raised
The foundations of the House
(With this prayer): "Our Lord!
Accept (this service) from us:
For Thou art the All-Hearing,
The All-Knowing.

126. Four rites are here enumerated, which have now acquired a technical meaning.
(1) Going round the Ka'ab: Tawāf. (2) Retiring to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer: I'tikāf. (3) The posture of bending the back in prayer: Rūkū. (4) The posture of prostrating oneself on the ground in prayer: Sujud. The protection of the holy territory is for all, but special cleanliness and purity is required for the sake of the devotees who undertake these rites.

127. The root salama in the word Islam implies (among other ideas) the idea of Peace and therefore when Makkah is the city of Islam, it is also the City of Peace. The same root occurs in the latter part of the name Jerusalem, the Jewish City of Peace. When the day of Jerusalem passed (see verse 134 or 141 below), Makkah became the "New Jerusalem"—or rather the old and original "City of Peace" restored and made universal.

128. The territory of Makkah is barren and rocky, compared with, say, Ta'īf, a city to the east of Makkah. A prayer for the prosperity of Makkah therefore includes a prayer for the good things of material life.
128. “Our Lord! make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), And of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (Will); And show us our places for The celebration of (due) rites; And turn unto us (in Mercy); For Thou art the Oft-Relenting Most Merciful.

129. “Our Lord! send amongst them A Messenger of their own, Who shall rehearse Thy Signs To them and instruct them In Scripture and Wisdom, And purify them: For Thou art the Exalted in Might The Wise.”

SECTION 16.

130. And who turns away From the religion of Abraham But such as debase their souls With folly? Him We chose

129. How beautiful this prayer is, and how aptly it comes in here in the argument! Such Paganism or star-worship or planet-worship as there was in Abraham’s time was first cleared out of Makkah by Abraham. This is the chief meaning of “sanctification” or “purification” in ii. 125, although of course physical cleanliness is (in physical conditions) a necessary element of purification in the higher sense. Abraham and his elder son Isma‘îl then built the Ka‘ba and established the rites and usages of the sacred city. He was thus the founder of the original Islam (which is as old as mankind) in Arabia. As becomes a devoutman, he offers and dedicates the work to Allah in humble supplication, addressing Him as the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing. He then asks for a blessing on himself and his progeny generally, both the children of his eldest-born Isma‘îl and his younger son Isaac. With prophetic vision he foresees that there will be corruption and backsliding in both branches of his family: Makkah will house 360 idols, and Jerusalem will become a harlot city (Ezekiel xvi. 15), a city of abomination. But the light of Islam will shine, and reclaim the lost people in both branches and indeed in all the world. So he prays for Allah’s mercy, addressing Him as the Oft-Relenting. Most Merciful. And finally he foresees in Makkah a Prophet teaching the people as one “of their own” and in their own beautiful Arabic language: he asks for a blessing on Muḥammad’s ministry, appealing to the Power and Wisdom of Allah.

130. İstafa: chose; chose because of purity; chose and purified. It is the same root from which Al-Muṣṭafa is derived, one of the titles of Muḥammad.
And rendered pure in this world:
And he will be in the Hereafter
In the ranks of the Righteous.

131. Behold! his Lord said
To him: Submit (thy will to Me):"
He said: "I submit (my will)
To the Lord and Cherisher
Of the Universe."

132. And Abraham enjoined
Upon his sons
And so did Jacob;
"Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen
The Faith for you; then die not
Except in the state of submission
(to Me).

133. Were ye witnesses
When Death appeared before Jacob?
Behold, he said to his sons:
"What will ye worship after me?"
They said: "We shall worship
Thy God and the God of thy
fathers,
Of Abraham, Isma'il, and Isaac,—
The One (True) God;
To Him do we submit."

134. That was a People that hath
Passed away. They shall reap
The fruit of what they did,
And ye of what ye do!

131. The whole of the Children of Israel are called to witness one of their slogans, that they worshipped "the God of their fathers." The idea in their minds got narrowed down to that of a tribal God. But they are reminded that their ancestors had the principle of Islam in them,—the worship of Allah, the One True and Universal God. The death-bed scene is described in Jewish tradition.

132. "Fathers" means ancestors, and includes uncles, grand-uncles, as well as direct ascendants.
Ye shall not be asked
About what they did.\textsuperscript{133}

135. They say: “Become Jews
Or Christians if ye would be guided
(To salvation).” Say thou:
“Nay! (I would rather) the Religion
Of Abraham the True,\textsuperscript{134}
And he joined not gods with Allah.”

136. Say ye:
“We believe
In Allah, and the revelation
Given to us, and to Abraham,
Ismā’īl, Isaac, Jacob,
And the Tribes, and that given
To Moses and Jesus, and that given
To (all) Prophets from their Lord:
We make no difference
Between one and another of them:
And we submit to Allah.\textsuperscript{135}

137. So if they believe
As ye believe, they are indeed
On the right path; but if
They turn back, it is they
Who are in schism; but Allah will

\textsuperscript{133} On the Day of Judgment each soul would have to answer for its own deeds: it cannot claim merit from others, nor be answerable for the crimes or sins of others. Here the argument is: if the Jews or Christians claim the merits of Father Abraham and the Patriarchs or of Jesus, we cannot follow them. Because there were righteous men in the past, it cannot help us unless we are ourselves righteous. The doctrine of personal responsibility is a cardinal feature of Islam.

\textsuperscript{134} Ḥanif: inclined to right opinion, orthodox (in the literal meaning of the Greek words), firm in faith, sound and well-balanced, true. Perhaps the last word, True, sums up most of the other shades.

The Jews, though taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the Trinity or borrowed it from Paganism. We go back to the pure, Ḥanif doctrine of Abraham, to live and die in faith in the One True God.

\textsuperscript{135} Here we have the Creed of Islam: to believe in (1) the One Universal God, (2) the Message to us through Muhammad and the Signs (āyāt) as interpreted on the basis of personal responsibility, (3) the Message delivered by other Teachers in the past. These are mentioned in three groups: (1) Abraham, Ismā’īl, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes: of these Abraham had apparently a Book (lxxxvii. 19) and the others followed his tradition: (2) Moses and Jesus, who each left a scripture: these scriptures are still extant, though =
Suffice thee as against them, and He is the All-Hearing, The All-Knowing.

138. (Our religion)
Takes its hue from Allah and who can give a better hue Than Allah. It is He. Whom we worship.

139. Say: Will ye dispute With us about Allah, seeing That He is our Lord And your Lord; that we Are responsible for our doings And ye for yours; and that We are sincere (in our faith) In Him?

140. Or do ye say that Abraham, Isma‘il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do ye know better Than Allah? Ah! who Is more unjust than those Who conceal the testimony

= not in their pristine form; and (3) other scriptures, Prophets, or Messengers of Allah, not specifically mentioned in the Qur-ān (xi. 78). We make no difference between any of these. Their Message (in essentials) was one, and that is the basis of Islam.

136. We are thus in the true line of those who follow the one and indivisible Message of the One Allah, wherever delivered. If others narrow it or corrupt it, it is they who have left the faith and created a division or schism. But Allah sees and knows all. And He will protect His own, and His support will be infinitely more precious than the support which men can give.

137. Şibgat: the root-meaning implies a dye or colour.

138. The alternative is with the question in the last verse. Do you dispute with us although we worship the same God as you and claim that ours is the same religion as that of your ancestors? Or do you really assert that Abraham and his son and his sons' sons, who founded the Tribes long before Moses, followed your Jewish religion as you know it? History of course proves that claim absurd. If the Christians claim that these Patriarchs knew of and followed the teaching of Jesus, the claim is still more absurd--except in the sense of Islam that Allah’s teaching is one in all ages.
139.Verse 134 began a certain argument, which is now rounded off in the same words in this verse. The argument is that it is wrong to claim a monopoly for Allah’s Message; it is the same for all peoples and in all ages: if it undergoes local variations or variations according to times and seasons those variations pass away. This leads to the argument in the remainder of the Sūra that with the renewal of the Message and the birth of a new People, a new ordinances become appropriate, and they are now expounded.

140. Nās = People, the unthinking multitude that sway to and fro, instead of being firm in Allah’s Way. The reference here is to the idolaters, the Hypocrites, and the party of Jews who were constantly seeking to “entangle in their talk,” Al-Muḥāfīz and his disciples in Madinah even as the Pharisees and the Sadducees of Jesus’s day tried to entangle Jesus (Matt. xxii, 15, 23).

141. Qibla = the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer. Islam lays great stress on social prayer in order to emphasise our universal Brotherhood and mutual cooperation. For such prayer, order, punctuality, precision, symbolical postures, and a common direction are essential, so that the Imam (leader) and all his congregation may face one way and offer their supplications to Allah. In the early days, before they were organised as a people, they followed as a symbol for their Qibla the sacred city of Jerusalem, sacred both to the Jews and the Christians, the people of the Book. This symbolised their allegiance to the continuity of Allah’s revelation. When, despised and persecuted, they were turned out of Makkah and arrived in Madinah, Al-Muṣṭafā under divine direction began to organise its people as an Ummat, an independent people, with laws and rituals of their own. At that stage the Ka’bah was established as Qibla, thus going back to the earliest centre, with which the name of Abraham was connected, and traditionally also the name of Adam. Jerusalem still remained (and remains) sacred in the eyes of Islam on account of its past, but Islam is a progressive religion, and its new symbolism enabled it to shake off the tradition of a dead past and usher in the era of untrammelled freedom dear to the spirit of Arabia. The change took place about [16½] months after Hijrat.
He guideth whom He will
To a Way that is straight.

143. Thus have We made of you
An Ummat justly balanced.
That ye might be witnesses
Over the nations,
And the Messenger a witness
Over yourselves;
And We appointed the Qibla
To which thou wast used,
Only to test those who followed
The Messenger from those
Who would turn on their heels
(From the Faith). Indeed it was
(A change) momentous, except
To those guided by Allah.
And never would Allah

142 Thus: By giving you a Qibla of your own, most ancient in history, and most modern as a symbol of your organisation as a new nation (Ummat).

143. Justly balanced: The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances on either side. It is a sober, practical religion. But the Arabic word (wasat) also implies a touch of the literal meaning of Intermediacy. Geographically Arabia is in an intermediate position in the Old World, as was proved in history by the rapid expansion of Islam, north, south, west and east.

144. Witnesses: When two persons dispute, they advance extravagant claims. A just witness comes between them, and brings the light of reason to bear on them, pruning all their selfish extravagances. So the mission of Islam is to curb, for instance, the extreme formalism of the Mosaic law and the extreme “other-worldliness” professed by Christianity. The witness must be unselfish, equipped with first-hand knowledge, and ready to intervene in the cause of justice. Such is the position claimed by Islam among rival systems. Similarly, within Islam itself, the position of witness to whom disputants can appeal is held by Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā.

145. The Qibla of Jerusalem might itself have seemed strange to the Arabs, and the change from it to the Ka’ba might have seemed strange after they had become used to the other. In reality one direction or another, or east or west, in itself did not matter. What mattered was the sense of discipline, on which Islam lays so much stress: which of us is willing to follow the directions of the chosen Prophet of Allah? Mere quibblers about non-essential matters are tested by this.
Make your faith of no effect.\textsuperscript{146}
For Allah is to all people
Most surely full of Kindness,
Most Merciful.

144. We see the turning
Of thy face (for guidance)
To the heavens:\textsuperscript{147} now
Shall We turn thee
To a Qibla that shall
Please thee. Turn then
Thy face in the direction
Of the Sacred Mosque:\textsuperscript{148}
Wherever ye are, turn
Your faces in that direction.

\textsuperscript{146} What became of prayer with the Jerusalem Qibla? It was equally efficacious before the new Qibla was ordained. Allah regards our faith: every act of true and genuine faith is efficacious with Him, even if formalists pick holes in such acts.

\textsuperscript{147} This shows the sincere desire of Al-Muṣṭafā to seek light from above in the matter of the Qibla. Until the organisation of his own People into a well-knit community, with its distinctive laws and ordinances, he followed a practice based on the fact that the Jews and Christians looked upon Jerusalem as a sacred city. But there was no universal Qibla among them. Some Jews turned towards Jerusalem, especially during the Captivity, as we shall see later. At the time of our Prophet, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Byzantine Empire, which was Christian. But the Christians oriented their churches to the East (hence the word “orientation”), which is a point of the compass, and not the direction of any sacred place. The fact of the altar being in the East does not mean that every worshipper has his face to the east; for, according at least to modern practice, the seats in a church are so placed that different worshippers may face in different directions. The Preacher of Unity naturally wanted, in this as in other matters, a symbol of complete unity, and his heart was naturally delighted when the Qibla towards the Ka'ba was settled. Its connection with Abraham gave it great antiquity: its character of being an Arab centre made it appropriate when the Message came in Arabic, and was preached through the union of the Arabs: at the time it was adopted, the little Muslim community was shut out of it, being exiles in Madinah but it became a symbol of hope and eventual triumph, of which Muhammad lived to see the fulfilment; and it also became the centre and gathering ground of all peoples in the universal pilgrimage, which was instituted with it.

\textsuperscript{148} The Sacred Mosque: i.e. the mosque wherein the Ka'ba is located, in the sacred city of Makkah. It is not correct to suggest that the command making the Ka'ba the Qibla abrogates ii. 115, where it is stated that East and West belong to Allah. This is perfectly true at all times, before and after the institution of the Qibla. As if to emphasise this, the same words about East and West are repeated in this very passage; see ii. 142 above. Where the \textit{Itqān} mentions \textit{mansūkh}, in this connection. I am sorry I cannot follow that opinion, unless \textit{mansūkh} is defined in a special way, as some of the commentators do.
149. Glimmerings of such a Qibla were already foreshadowed in Jewish and Christian practice but its universality was only perfected in Islam.

150. See n. 147 to ii. 144 above.

The Jews and Christians had a glimmering of the Qibla idea, but in their attitude of self-sufficiency they were not likely to welcome the Qibla idea as perfected in Islam. Nor is Islam, after the fuller knowledge which it has received, likely to revert to the uncertain, imperfect, and varying ideas of orientation held previously.

A very clear glimpse of the old Jewish practice in the matter of the Qibla and the importance attached to it is found in the book of Daniel, vi. 10. Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 606-538 B.C. He was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian, but was still living when Assyria was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. In spite of the "captivity" of the Jews, Daniel enjoyed the highest offices of state at Babylon, but he was ever true to Jerusalem. His enemies (under the Persian monarch) got a penal law passed against any one who "asked a petition of any god or man for 30 days" except the Persian King. But Daniel continued true to Jerusalem. "His windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
Theirs own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know.

147. The Truth is from thy Lord; So be not at all in doubt.

SECTION 18.

148. To each is a goal
To which Allah turns him; Then strive together (as in a race) Towards all that is good. Where so ever ye are, Allah will bring you Together. For Allah Hath power over all things.

149. From whencesoever Thou startest forth, turn

151. The People of the Book should have known all this as well as “they knew their own sons,” as their past traditions and teaching should have made them receptive of the new Message. Some commentators construe the demonstrative pronoun “this” to refer to the Prophet. In that case the interpretation would be: The People of the Book know Muhammad as well as they know their own sons: they know him to be true and upright; they know him to be in the line of Abraham: they know him to correspond to the description of the prophet foretold among themselves: but selfishness induces some of them to act against their own knowledge and conceal the truth.

152. Truth only comes from Allah, and it remains truth, however men might try to conceal it or throw doubts on it.

153. The question is how we are to construe the pronoun huwa in the original. The alternative translation would be: “To each is a goal to which he turns”.

The simile of life being a race in which we all zealously run forward to the one goal, viz., the goal of good, may be applied individually and nationally. This supplies another argument of the Ka’ba Qibla, viz., the unity of goal, with diversity of races, traditions and temperaments.

154. The simile of a race is continued, and so the Qibla command is repeated from that point of view. In ii. 144 it was mentioned as the new symbol of the new nation (Muslim); now it is shown as the symbol of Good, at which we should all aim, from whichever point we started, e.g. as Jews or Christians, or our individual point of view; the Qibla will unite us as a symbol of the Goal of the Future. In ii. 150 below, it is repeated: first for the individual, on the ground of uniformity and the removal of all occasions of dispute and argument; and secondly for the Muslim people, on the same ground, as a matter of discipline. There is another little harmony in the matter of the
Thy face in the direction
Of the Sacred Mosque;
That is indeed the truth
From thy Lord. And Allah
Is not unmindful
Of what ye do.

150. So from whencesoever
Thou startest forth, turn
Thy face in the direction
Of the Sacred Mosque;
And wheresoever ye are,
Turn your face thither:
That there be no ground
Of dispute against you
Among the people.
Except those of them that are
Bent on wickedness; so fear
Them not, but fear Me;
And that I may complete
My favours on you, and ye
May (consent to) be guided;

151. A similar (favour
Have ye already received)\(^{155}\)
In that We have sent
Among you a Messenger
Of your own, rehearsing to you

= repetitions. Note that the race and starting point argument begins at ii. 149 and is
rounded off in the first part of ii. 150; while the national and general argument beginning
at ii. 144 is rounded off in the latter part of ii. 150. The latter argument includes the
former, and is more widely worded: “wheresoever ye are”: which in the Arabic expression
would imply three things: in whatever circumstances ye are, or at whatever time ye are,
or in whatever place ye are. I have spoken before of a sort of musical harmony in verbal
repetitions: here there is a sort of pictorial harmony, as of a larger circle symmetrically
including smaller concentric circle.

155. This verse should be read with ii. 150, of which the sentence is here completed.
The argument is that in the grant of the Ka’ba Qibla, God was perfecting religion and
fulfilling the prayer for the future made by Abraham. That prayer was threefold: (1) That
Makkah should be made a sacred Sanctuary (ii. 126); (2) that a truly believing (Muslim)
nation should be raised, with places of devotion there (ii. 128); and (3) that an Apostle
should be sent among the Arabs with certain qualities (ii. 129), which are set out there
and again repeated here to complete the argument.
152. Then do ye remember\textsuperscript{156} Me; I will remember You. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.

SECTION 19.

153. O ye who believe! seek help With patient Perseverance\textsuperscript{157} And Prayer: for God is with those Who patiently persevere.

154. And say not of those Who are slain in the way\textsuperscript{158} Of Allah: “They are dead.” Nay, they are living, Though ye perceive (it) not.

155. Be sure we shall test you With something of fear

\textsuperscript{156} The word “remember” is too pale a word for \textit{zikr}, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious literature. In its verbal signification it implies: to remember: to praise by frequently mentioning: to rehearse; to celebrate or commemorate: to make much of: to cherish the memory of as a precious possession.

\textsuperscript{157} See ii. 45 and n. An additional meaning implied in \textit{ṣabr} is self-restraint. Ḥaqqānī defines it in his \textit{Tafsir} as following Reason and restraining Fear, Anger, and Desire. What can be a higher reward for patience, perseverance, self-restraint and constancy than that Allah should be with us? For this promise opens the door to every kind of spiritual well-being.

\textsuperscript{158} The “patient perseverance and prayer” mentioned in the last verse is not mere passivity. It is active striving in the way of Truth, which is the way of Allah. Such striving is the spending of one’s self in Allah’s way, either through our property or through our own lives, or the lives of those nearest and dearest to us, or it may be the loss of all the fruits of a lifetime’s labour not only in material goods but in some intellectual or moral gain, some position which seemed in our eyes to be eminently desirable in itself, but which we must cheerfully sacrifice if necessary for the Cause. With such sacrifice; our apparent loss may be our real gain: he that loses his life may really gain it; and the rewards or “fruits” that seem lost were mere impediments on our path to real inward progress.
And hunger, some loss
In goods, lives and the fruits
(Of your toil), but give
Glad tidings\(^{159}\) to those
Who patiently persevere,—

156. Who say, when afflicted
With calamity: “To Allah
We belong, and to Him
Is our return”:-

157. They are those on whom
(Descend) blessings from their Lord,
And Mercy.
And they are the ones
That receive guidance.

158. Behold! Safa and Marwa
Are among the Symbols\(^{160}\)
Of Allah. So if those who visit
The House\(^{161}\) in the Season
Or at other times,

159. The glad tidings are the blessings of Allah in ii. 157 or (which is the same thing) the promise in ii. 153 that Allah will be with them.

160. The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safa and Marwa now absorbed in the city of Makkah and close to the well of Zam-zam. Here, according to tradition, the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Isma'il, prayed for water in the parched desert, and in her eager quest round these hills, she found her prayer answered and saw the Zam-zam spring. Unfortunately the Pagan Arabs had placed a male and a female idol here, and their gross and superstitious rites caused offence to the early Muslims. They felt some hesitation in going round these places during the Pilgrimage. As a matter of fact they should have known that the Ka'ba (the House of Allah) had been itself defiled with idols, and was sanctified again by the purity of Muhammad's life and teaching. The lesson is that the most sacred things may be turned to the basest uses; that if our intentions and life are pure, Allah will recognise them even if the world cast stones at us because of some evil associations which they join with what we do, or with the people we associate with, or with the places which claim our reverence.

161. The House = the Sacred Mosque, the Ka'ba. The Season of regular Hajj culminates in the visit to Arafat on the ninth day of the month of Zul-hijja, followed by the circumambulation of the Ka'ba. A visit to the Sacred Mosque and the performance of the rites of pilgrimage at any other time is called an 'Umra. The rites are the same in either case, except that the 'Arafat rites are omitted in the 'Umra. The Safa and Marwa are included among the Monuments, as pointing to one of the highest of Muslim virtues.
Should compass them round,  
It is no sin in them.  
And if any one obeyeth his own  
Impulse to Good,—162  
Be sure that Allah  
Is He Who recogniseth  
And knoweth.

159. Those who conceal  
The clear (Signs) We have  
Sent down, and the Guidance,  
After We have made it  
Clear for the People  
In the Book,—on them  
Shall be Allah’s curse,  
And the curse of those  
Entitled to curse.—163

160. Except those who repent  
And make amends  
And openly declare (the Truth):  
To them I turn;  
For I am Oft-Returning,  
Most Merciful.

161. Those who reject Faith.  
And die rejecting,—  
On them is Allah’s curse,  
And the curse of angels,  
And of all mankind;

162. The impulse should be to Good; if once we are sure of this, we must obey it without hesitation, whatever people may say.

163. Those entitled to curse: i.e., angels and mankind (see ii. 161 below): the cursed ones will deprive themselves of the protection of Allah and of the angles, and of the good wishes of mankind, because by contumaciously rejecting Faith, they not only sin against Allah but are false to their own manhood, which Allah created in the “best of moulds” (O. xcv. 4). The terrible curses denounced in the Old Testament are set out in Deut. xxviii. 15-68. There is one difference. Here it is for the deliberate rejection of Faith, a theological term for the denying of our higher nature. There it is for a breach of the least part of the ceremonial Law.
162. They will abide therein. Their penalty will not be lightened, nor will respite be their (lot).

163. And your God is One God: There is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

SECTION 20.

164. Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the Night and the Day; in the sailing of the ships through the Ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they therein are in the curse. A curse is not a matter of words: it is a terrible state, opposite to the state of Grace. Can man curse? Not of course in the same sense in which we speak of the curse of Allah. A mere verbal curse is of no effect. Hence the English saying: “A causeless curse will not come.” But if men are oppressed or unjustly treated, their cries can ascend to Allah in prayer, and then it becomes Allah’s “wrath” or curse, the deprivation of Allah’s Grace as regards the wrong-doer.

165. Where the terrible consequences of Evil, i.e., the rejection of Allah, are mentioned, there is always stress laid on Allah’s attributes of Grace and Mercy. In this case Unity is also stressed, because we have just been told about the Qibla symbol of unity and are about to pass the theme of unity in diversity, in Nature and in the social laws of human society.
166. This magnificent Nature passage stands out like a hill in a landscape, enhancing the beauty of our view, and preparing us for the every-day laws and ordinances which follow.

Note its literary architecture. Allah is one: and among His wondrous Signs is the unity of design in the widest diversity of Nature. The Signs are taken from the features of beauty, power, and utility to man himself, and lead up to an appeal to Man's own intelligence and wisdom. We begin with the glory of the heavens and the earth, the wide spaces covered by man's imagination, remote and yet so near to his own life. The most striking every-day phenomenon resulting from the interrelations of the heavens and the earth is the alternation of day and night, regular and yet changing in duration with the Seasons and the latitudes of our globe. The night for rest, and the day for work: and we can think of the work in terms of nature's beauty; the stately ships "flowing" (as the original text has it) across the seas, for communications and merchandise as between men and men. The seas thus serve us no less than land, and the give-and-take as between sea, sky, and land, is further exemplified by the rain. The rain leads to the fertility of land, and here we are reminded of the contrast between the Winter's death of Nature and her revivification in the Spring. Here we are reminded of agriculture and the use we make of cattle and all kinds of living creatures. The word translated "beasts" has a wide meaning, including crawling creatures, insects, etc., all contributing to the round of Nature's operations. This leads us on to the wonderful winds, the region of the air, which man is just beginning to explore and navigate. The personified winds drive the clouds in the sky like "slaves." Here is another aspect of clouds besides that of giving rain. The fleecy clouds are things of sunset beauty; at mid-day they temper the glare of the sun; at all times they affect radiation and other processes going on in the sky. So we come back to the sky, rounding off the argument, and correlating our human life with the Will and Power of Allah, if we had the wisdom to see!
Will strongly enforce
The Punishment. 167

166. Then would those
Who are followed
Clear themselves of those
Who follow (them):
They would see the Chastisement
And all relations
Between them would be cut off.

167. And those who followed
Would say: "If only
We had one more chance,
We would clear ourselves
Of them, as they have
Cleared themselves of us."
Thus will Allah show them
(The fruits of) their deeds
As (nothing but) regrets.
Nor will there be a way
For them out of the Fire. 168

167. Everything around and within us points to unity of purpose and design.—points to Allah. Yet there are foolish persons (unrighteous = those who deliberately use the choice given them to go wrong). They think something else is equal to Allah. Perhaps they even do lip service to Allah, but their heart is in their fetish.—unlike the heart of the righteous, who are wholly devoted and absorbed in the love of Allah. If only the unrighteous could see the consequences, they would see the terrible Penalty, and that all Power is in Allah's hands, not in that of any one else. Who are these others who are used as fetishes by the misguided? It may be: (1) creatures of their own imagination, or of their faculties misused; the idea lying behind idols is akin to this, for no intelligent idol-worshipper owns to worshipping stocks and stones; or (2) good leaders whose names have been misused out of perversity to erect them to a position of equality with Allah: or (3) Powers of evil that deliberately mislead. When it comes to the inevitable consequences of blasphemy and the rejection of Allah, the eyes of all are opened and these false and artificial relations dissolve. The idea which was created into a fetish disowns its follower, i.e. is seen to have no reasonable basis in the life of the follower, and the follower is forced to renounce it as false. The good leaders whose names were misused would of course disown the misuse of their names, and the evil ones would take an unholy delight in exposing the facts. The Reality is now irresistible, but alas! at what cost?

168. Cf. iii. 156, viii 36, xix. 39, lxix. 50, xxv. 23.
168. O ye people!
Eat of what is on earth,
Lawful and good;\(^{169}\)
And do not follow
The footsteps of Satan
For he is to you
An avowed enemy.

169. For he commands you
What is evil
And shameful,
And that ye should say
Of Allah that of which
Ye have no knowledge.

170. When it is said to them:
“Follow what Allah hath revealed:”
They say: “Nay! we shall follow
The ways of our fathers.”
What! even though their fathers
Were void of wisdom and guidance?

171. The parable of those
Who reject Faith is
As if one were to shout
Like a goat-herd, to things

169. We now come to the regulations about food. First (ii. 168-71) we have an appeal to all people, Muslims, Pagans, as well as the People of the Book; then (ii 172-73) to the Muslims specially; then (ii. 174-76) to the sort of men who then (as some do now) either believe in too much formalism or believe in no restrictions at all. Islam follows the Golden Mean. All well-regulated societies lay down reasonable limitations. These become incumbent on all loyal members of any given society, and show what is “lawful” in that society. But if the limitations are reasonable, as they should be, the “lawful” will also coincide more and more with what is “good.”

**Good:** Taiyib = Pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, pleasing to the taste.

The general principle then would be: what is lawful and what is good, should be followed, not what is evil, or shameful, or foisted on by false ascription to divine injunctions, or what rests merely on the usage of ancestors, even though the ancestors were ignorant or foolish. An example of a shameful custom would be that among the Pagan Arabs of taking congealed blood and eating it fried.
That listen to nothing
But calls and cries: 170
Deaf, dumb, and blind. 171
They are void of wisdom.

172. O ye who believe!
Eat of the good things
That We have provided for you.
And be grateful to Allah,
If it is Him ye worship. 172

173. He hath only forbidden you
Dead meat, 173 and blood,
And the flesh of swine,
And that on which
Any other name hath been invoked
Besides that of Allah. 174
But if one is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Then is he guiltless.
*For Allah is Oft-Forgiving
Most Merciful.*

174. Those who conceal
Allah’s revelations in the Book,
And purchase for them
A miserable profit,—
They swallow into themselves
Naught but Fire;
Allah will not address them
On the Day of Resurrection,
Nor purify them:
Grievous will be
Their Chastisement.

175. They are the ones
Who buy Error
In place of Guidance
And Torment in place
Of Forgiveness.
Ah! what boldness
(They show) for the Fire!

176. (Their doom is) because
Allah sent down the Book
In truth but those who seek
Causes of dispute in the Book

175. “They eat nothing but fire into their bellies” is a literal translation that produces an effect of rude inelegance which is not in the Arabic words. Even in the matter of food and drinks, the mission of Islam is to avoid the extremes of lawlessness on the one hand and extreme formalism on the other. It has laid down a few simple and very reasonable rules. Their infraction causes loss of health or physical powers in any case. But if there is further a spirit of subjective rebellion or fraud—passing off in the name of religion something which is far from the purpose,—the consequences become also moral and spiritual. Then it becomes a sin against Faith and Spirit. Continuing the physical simile, we actually swallow fire into ourselves. Imagine the tortures which we should have if we swallowed fire into our physical body! They would be infinitely worse in our spiritual state, and they would go on to the Day of Resurrection, when we shall be deprived even of the words which the Judge speaks to a reasonable culprit, and we shall certainly not win His Grace and Mercy.
176. From the mere physical regulation we are at once lifted up into the sphere of morals and faith. For the one acts and reacts on the other. If we are constantly carping at wholesome regulations, we shall do nothing but cause division and schisms among the people, and ordered society would tend to break up.

177. As if to emphasise again a warning against deadening formalism, we are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of Allah and the love of his fellow-men. We are given four heads: (1) our faith should be true and sincere; (2) we must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men; (3) we must be good citizens, supporting social organisation: and (4) our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances. They are interconnected, and yet can be viewed separately.

178. Faith is not merely a matter of words. We must realise the presence and goodness of Allah. When we do so, the scales fall from our eyes: all the falsities and fleeting nature of the Present cease to enslave us, for we see the Last Day as if it were to-day. We also see Allah’s working in His world and in us: His angels, His Messengers and His Message are no longer remote from us, but come within our experience.

179. Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from love, and from no other motive. In this respect, also, our duties take various forms, which are shown in reasonable gradation: our kith and kin; orphans (including any persons who are without support or help); people who are in real need but who never ask (it is our duty to find them out, and they come before those who ask); the stranger, who is entitled to laws of hospitality; the people who ask and are entitled to ask, *i.e.*, not merely lazy beggars, but those who seek our assistance in some form or another (it is our duty to respond to them); and the slaves (we must do all we can to give or buy their freedom). Slavery has many insidious forms, and all are included.
180. Charity and piety in individual cases do not complete our duties. In prayer and
charity, we must also look to our organised efforts: where there is a Muslim State, these
are made through the State, in facilities for public prayer, and public assistance, and for
the maintenance of contracts and fair dealing in all matters.

181. Then come the Muslim virtues of firmness and patience. They are to "preserve
the dignity of man, with soul erect" (Burns). Three sets of circumstances are specially
mentioned for the exercise of this virtue: (1) bodily pain or suffering, (2) adversities or
injuries of all kinds, deserved and undeserved, and (3) periods of public panic, such as
war, violence, pestilence, etc.

182. Note first that this verse and the next make it clear that Islam has much
mitigated the horrors of the pre-Islamic custom of retaliation. In order to meet the strict
claims of justice, equality is prescribed, with a strong recommendation for mercy and
forgiveness. To translate qisāṣ, therefore, by retaliation, is I think incorrect. The Latin
legal term Lex Talionis may come near it, but even that is modified here. In any case
it is best to avoid technical terms for things that are very different. "Retaliation" in
English has a wider meaning, equivalent almost to returning evil for evil, and would more
fitly apply to the blood-feuds of the Days of Ignorance. Islam says: if you must take a
life for a life, at least there should be some measure of equality in it, the killing of the
slave of a tribe should not involve a blood feud where many free men would be killed;
but the law of mercy, where it can be obtained by consent, with reasonable compensation,
would be better.

Our law of equality only takes account of three conditions in civil society: free for
free, slave for slave, woman for woman. Among free men or woman, all are equal: you
cannot ask that because a wealthy, or high-born, or influential man is killed, his life is
equal to two or three lives among the poor or the lowly. Nor, in cases of murder, can
you go into the value or abilities of a slave. A woman is mentioned separately because
her position as a mother or an economic worker is different. She does not form a third
class, but a division in the other two classes. One life having been lost, do not waste =
many lives in retaliation: at most, let the Law take one life under strictly prescribed conditions, and shut the door to private vengeance or tribal retaliation. But if the aggrieved party consents (and this condition of consent is laid down to prevent worse evils), forgiveness and brotherly love is better, and the door of Mercy is kept open. In Western law, no felony can be compounded.

183. The jurists have carefully laid down that the law of *qisas* refers to murder only. *Qisas* is not applicable to manslaughter, due to a mistake or an accident. There, there would be no capital punishment.

184. *The brother*: the term is perfectly general: all men are brothers in Islam.

185. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees, out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit or his friends should equally be generous and recognise the good-will of the other side.
186. There are rules of course for the disposal of intestate property. But it is a good thing that a dying man or woman should, of his own free-will, think of his parents and his next of kin, not in a spirit of injustice to others, but in a spirit of love and reverence for those who have cherished him. He must, however, do it "according to reasonable usage": the limitations will be seen further on.

187. A verbal will is allowed but it is expected that the lastor will be just to his heirs and not depart from what is considered equitable. For this reason definite shares were laid down for heirs later (see. Q. iv. 11 etc). These define or limit the testamentary power, but do not abrogate it. For example, amongst kin there are persons (e.g., an orphan grandson in the presence of surviving sons) who would not inherit under the intestate scheme, and the testator might like to provide for them. Again, there may be outsiders for whom he may wish to provide, and jurists have held that he has powers of disposition up to one-third of his property. But he must not be partial to one heir at the expense of another, or attempt to defeat lawful creditors. If he tries to do this, those who are witnesses to his oral disposition may interfere in two ways. One way would be to persuade the testator to change his bequest before he dies. The other way would be, after death, to get the interested parties together and ask them to agree to a more equitable arrangement. In such a case they are acting in good faith, and there is no fraud. They are doing nothing wrong. Islam approves of every lawful device for keeping brethren at peace, without litigation and quarrels. Except for this, the changing of the provisions of a Will is a crime, as it is under all Law.
SECTION 23.

183. O ye who believe!
   Fasting is prescribed to you
   As it was prescribed\textsuperscript{188}
   To those before you,
   That ye may (learn)
   Self-restraint.-

184. (Fasting) for a fixed\textsuperscript{189}
   Number of days;
   But if any of you is ill,
   Or on a journey,\textsuperscript{190}
   The prescribed number
   (Should be made up)
   From days later.
   For those who can do it\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{188.} As it was prescribed: this does not mean that the Muslim fast is like the other fasts previously observed, in the number of days, in the time or manner of the fast, or in other incidents; it only means that the principle of self-denial by fasting is not a new one.

\textsuperscript{189.} This verse should be read with the following verses, 185-88, in order that the incidents of the physical fast may be fully understood with reference to its spiritual meaning.

The Muslim fast is not meant for self-torture. Although it is stricter than other fasts, it also provides alleviations for special circumstances. If it were merely a temporary abstention from food and drink, it would be salutary to many people, who habitually eat and drink to excess. The instincts for food, drink, and sex are strong in the animal nature, and temporary restraint from all these enables the attention to be directed to higher things. This is necessary through prayer, contemplation and acts of charity, not of the showy kind, but by seeking out those really in need. Certain standards are prescribed, but much higher standards are recommended.

\textsuperscript{190.} For journeys, a minimum standard of three marches is prescribed by some Commentators: others make it more precise by naming a distance of 16 farsaks, equivalent to 48 miles. A journey of 8 or 9 miles on foot is more tiring than a similar one by bullock cart. There are various degrees of fatigue in riding a given distance on horseback or by camel or in a comfortable train or by motor car or by steamer, aeroplane, or airship. In my opinion the standard must depend on the means of locomotion and on the relative resources of the traveller. It is better to determine it in each case according to circumstances.

\textsuperscript{191.} Those who can do it with hardship: such as aged people, or persons specially circumstanced. The Shaf'is would include a woman expecting a child, or one who is nursing a baby, but on this point opinion is not unanimous, some holding that they ought to put in the fasts later, when they can.
185. Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down The Qur-an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) For guidance and judgment\(^{192}\) (Between right and wrong). So every one of you Who is present (at his home) During that month Should spent it in fasting, But if any one is ill, Or on a journey, The prescribed period (Should be made up) By days later. Allah intends every facility For you: He does not want To put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete The prescribed period, And to glorify Him\(^{193}\) In that He has guided you; And perchance ye shall be grateful.

192. Judgment (between right and wrong): *Furqān* = the criterion or standard by which we judge between right and wrong. See ii. 53 n.

193. The regulations are again and again coupled with an insistence on two things: (a) the facilities and concessions given, and (b) the spiritual significance of the fast, without which it is like an empty shell without a kernel. If we realise this, we shall look upon Ramadhan, not as a burden, but as a blessing, and shall be duly grateful for the lead given to us in this matter.
186. When My servants
   Ask thee concerning Me,
   I am indeed
Close (to them): I respond
To the prayer of every
Suppliant when he calleth on Me:
Let them also, with a will,
Listen to My call,
And believe in Me:
That they may walk
In the right way.\(^{194}\)

187. Permitted to you
On the night of the fasts,
Is the approach to your wives.
They are your garments
And ye are their garments.\(^{195}\)
Allah knoweth what ye
Used to do secretly among
yourselves:
But He turned to you
And forgave you;
So now associate with them,
And seek what Allah
Hath ordained for you,\(^{196}\)
And eat and drink,
Until the white thread

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194. These verses 186 and 188 are not foreign to the subject of Ramadhān, but emphasise its spiritual aspect. Here we are told of Prayer and the nearness of Allah, and in 188 we are asked not to “eat up” other people’s substance.

195. Men and women are each other’s garments: i.e., they are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment. The question of sex is always delicate to handle: here we are told that even in such matters a clear, open, and honest course is better than fraud or self-deception. The sex instinct is classed with eating and drinking, an animal thing to be restrained, but not to be ashamed of. The three things are prohibited during the fast by day, but permitted after the fast is broken at night till the next fast commences.

196. There is difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of this. I would connect this as a parallel clause with the clause “eat and drink”, which follows, all three being governed by “until the white thread”, etc. That is, all three things must stop when the fast begins again in the early morning. Or it may mean: What is permitted is well enough, but seek the higher things ordained for you.
Of dawn appear to you
Distinct from its black thread; Then complete your fast
Till the night appears But do not associate
With your wives While ye are in retreat
In the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah:
Approach not night thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear
His Signs to men: that They may learn self-restraint.

188. And do not eat up Your property among yourselves For vanities, nor use it As bait for the judges, With intent that ye may Eat up wrongfully and knowing A little of (other) people’s property.

197. Those in touch with Nature know the beautiful effects of early dawn. First appear thin white indefinable streaks of light in the east; then a dark zone supervenes; followed by a beautiful pinkish white zone clearly defined from the dark. This is the true dawn; after the fast begins.

198. Till the night appears: From the actual practice of the Holy Prophet, this is rightly interpreted to mean: “Till sunset.”

199. This verse refers to the known Islamic practice called i’tikāf which means retreating to mosques for devotion and worship. The Prophet (peace be on him) used to retreat to the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan.

200. I construe these limits as applying to the whole of the regulations about fasts.

201. Besides the three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose of fasts is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained. Ordinarily honest men are content if they refrain from robbery, theft, or embezzlement. Two more subtle forms of the greed are mentioned here. One is where one uses one’s own property or property under one’s own control—“among yourselves” in the Text—for vain or frivolous uses. Under the Islamic standard this is also greed. Property carries with it its own responsibilities. If we fail to understand or fulfil them, we have not learnt the full lesson of self-denial by fasts.
202. There were many superstitions connected with the New Moon, as there are to the present day. We are told to disregard such superstitions. As a measure of time, where the lunar calendar is used; the New Moon is one great sign, for which people watch with eagerness. Muslim festivals, including the Pilgrimage, are fixed by the appearance of the New Moon. The Arabs, among other superstitions, had one which made them enter their houses by the back door during or after the Pilgrimage. This is disapproved, for there is no virtue in any such artificial restrictions. All virtue proceeds from the love and fear of Allah.

203. This is a Muslim proverb now, and much might be written about its manifold meanings. A few may be noted here. (1) If you enter a society, respect its manners and customs. (2) If you want to achieve an object honourably, go about it openly and not "by a backdoor." (3) Do not beat about the bush. (4) If you wish success in an undertaking, provide all the necessary instruments for it.

The subject of the New Moon provides a good transition between the Ramadhan fast, which begins and ends with the New Moon, the Pilgrimage, whose ten days commence with the New Moon, and the War which Islam had to wage in self-defence against the Pagans, who wanted to exclude them from the Pilgrimage after they had driven them out of house and home.

204. War is permissible in self-defence, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed: women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.
191. And slay them
Wherever ye catch them,  
And turn them out
From where they have  
Turned you out;
For Persecution
Is worse than slaughter;
But fight them not\(^{205}\)
At the Sacred Mosque,  
Unless they (first)  
Fight you there;
But if they fight you,  
Slay them.
Such is the reward  
Of those who reject faith\(^ {206}\)

192. But if they cease,  
Allah is Oft-Forgiving,  
Most Merciful.

193. And fight them on  
Until there is no more  
Persecution

\(^{205}\) This passage is illustrated by the events that happened at Hudaibiya in the sixth year of the Hijra, though it is not clear that it was revealed on that occasion. The Muslims were by this time a strong and influential community. Many of them were exiles from Makkah, where the Pagans had established an intolerant autocracy, persecuting Muslims, preventing them from visiting their homes, and even keeping them out by force from performing the Pilgrimage during the universally recognised period of truce. This was intolerance, oppression, and autocracy to the last degree, and the mere readiness of the Muslims to enforce their rights as Arab citizens resulted without bloodshed in an agreement which the Muslims faithfully observed. The Pagans, however, had no scruples in breaking faith, and it is unnecessary here to go into subsequent events.

In general, it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will not acquiesce in wrong-doing, and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion which they hold sacred. Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty, and a constant striving by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness.

\(^{206}\) Suppress faith: in the narrower as well as the larger sense! If they want forcibly to prevent you from exercising your sacred rites, they have declared war on your religion, and it would be cowardice to ignore the challenge or to fail in rooting out the tyranny.
And the religion becomes Allah's. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression.

194. The prohibited month For the prohibited month, and so for all things prohibited, there is the law of equality. If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress ye likewise against him. But fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.

195. And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah, and make not your own hands 208. If the opposite party cease to persecute you, your hostility ends with them as a party, but it does not mean that you become friends to oppression. Your fight is against wrong: there should be no rancour against men.

209. Haram = prohibited, sacred. The month of Pilgrimage (Zul-Hijja) was a sacred month, in which warfare, was prohibited by Arab custom. The month preceding (Zul-Qa'da) and the month following (Muḥarram) were included in the prohibition, and Muḥarram was specially called al-Ḥaram. In Rajab, also, war was prohibited. If the pagan enemies of Islam broke that custom and made war in the prohibited months, the Muslims were free also to break that custom but only to the same extent as the others broke it. Similarly the territory of Makkah was sacred, in which war was prohibited. If the enemies of Islam broke that custom, the Muslims were free to do so to that extent. Any convention is useless if one party does not respect it. There must be a law of equality. Or perhaps the word reciprocity may express it better.

210. At the same time the Muslims are commanded to exercise self-restraint as much as possible. Force is a dangerous weapon. It may have to be used for self-defence or self-preservation, but we must always remember that self-restraint is pleasing in the eyes of Allah. Even when we are fighting, it should be for a principle, not out of passion.
Contribute to (your) destruction, 211
But do good;
For Allah loveth those
Who do good.

And complete
The Hajj or 'umra 212
In the service of Allah,
But if ye are prevented
(From completing it),
Send an offering
For sacrifice,
Such as ye may find,
And do not shave your heads
Until the offering reaches
The place of sacrifice.
And if any of you is ill, 213

211. Every fight requires the wherewithals for the fight, the “sinews of war.” If the war is just and in the cause of Allah, all who have wealth must spend it freely. That may be their contribution to the Cause, in addition to their personal effort, or if for any reason they are unable to fight. If they hug their wealth, perhaps their own hands are helping in their own self-destruction. Or if their wealth is being spent, not in the Cause of Allah, but in something which pleases their fancy, it may be that the advantage goes to the enemy, and they are by their action helping their own destruction. In all things, their standard should be, not selfishness, but the good of their brethren, for such good is pleasing to Allah.

212. See, ii. 158, n. 161. The Hajj is the complete pilgrimage, of which the chief rites are performed during the first twelve or thirteen days of the month of Zul-hijja. The 'Umra is a less formal pilgrimage at any time of the year. In either case, the intending pilgrim commences by putting on a simple garment of unsewn cloth in two pieces when he is some distance yet from Makkah. The putting on of the pilgrim garb (ihram) is symbolical of his renouncing the vanities of the world. After this and until the end of the pilgrimage he must not wear other clothes, or ornaments, anoint his hair, use perfumes, hunt, or do other prohibited acts. The completion of the pilgrimage is symbolised by the shaving of the head for men and the cutting off of a few locks of the hair of the head for women, the putting off of the ihram and the resumption of the ordinary dress.

Here we are told: (1) that having once undertaken the pilgrimage, we must complete it; (2) that we must do it not for worldly ends, but as a symbol of our service and worship to Allah; (3) that if we are prevented, for any reason, from completing the rites, a sacrifice should be offered where the prevention took place.

213. If any one is taken ill after putting on the ihram, so that he has to put on other clothes, or if he has trouble or skin disease in his head or insects in his hair, and he has to shave his head before completion, he should fast (three days, say the Commentators), or feed the poor, or offer sacrifice.
Or has an ailment in his scalp,
(Necessitating shaving).
(He should) in compensation
Either fast, or feed the poor,
Or offer sacrifice;
And when ye are
In peaceful conditions (again).\(^{214}\)
If any one wishes
To continue the 'umra
On to the hajj,
He must make an offering
Such as he can afford.
But if he cannot afford it,
He should fast
Three days during the hajj.
And seven days on his return.
Making ten days in all.
This is for those
Whose household
Is not in (the precincts)\(^{215}\)
Of the Sacred Mosque.
And fear Allah.
And know that Allah
Is strict in punishment.\(^{216}\)

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\(^{214}\) When this was revealed, the city of Makkah was in the hands of the enemies of Islam, and the regulations about the fighting and the pilgrimage came together and were interconnected. But the revelation provides, as always, for the particular occasion, and also for normal conditions. Makkah soon passed out of the hands of the enemies of Islam. People sometimes came long distances to Makkah before the Pilgrimage season began. Having performed the 'Umra, they stayed on for the formal Hajj. In case the pilgrim had spent his money, he is shown what he can do, rich or poor, and yet hold his head high among his fellows, as having performed all rites as prescribed.

\(^{215}\) For residents in Makkah, the question does not arise. They are there every day, and there is no question of 'Umra for them.

\(^{216}\) This closes the section about the duties of fighting and introduces the connected question of pilgrimage in a sort of transition. Fighting is connected with fear, and while it is meritorious to obey Allah, we are warned that we must not allow our selfish passions to carry us away, because it is in such times of stress that our spirit is tested. Verse 195 ended with a benediction for those who do good. This verse ends with a warning to those who take advantage of Allah's cause to transgress the limits, for the punishment is equally sure. The next verse shows us the pitfalls we must avoid in a large concourse of people.
SECTION 25.

197. For Hajj

Are the months well known? 217
If any one undertakes
That duty therein,
Let there be no obscenity,
Nor wickedness,
Nor wrangling
In the Hajj.
And whatever good
Ye do, (be sure)
Allah knoweth it.
And take a provision 218
(With you) for the journey,
But the best of provisions

217. The months well known: the months of Shawwāl, Zul-qa’da, and Zul-hijja (up to the 10th or the 13th) are set apart for the rites of Hajj. That is to say, the first rites may begin as early as the beginning of Shawwāl, with a definite approach to Makkah but the chief rites are concentrated on the first ten days of Zul-hijja, and specially on the 8th, 9th and 10th of that month, when the confluence of pilgrims reaches its height. The chief rites may be briefly enumerated: (1) The wearing of the pilgrim garment (ihram) from certain points definitely fixed on all the roads to Makkah after this the pilgrimage prohibitions come into operation and the pilgrim is dedicated to worship and prayer and the denial of vanities; (2) the going round the Ka'ba seven times (tawaf), typifying activity, with the kissing of the little Black Stone built into the wall, the symbol of concentration in the love of Allah; (3) after a short prayer at the Station of Abraham (Q. ii. 125), the pilgrim goes to the hills Safa and Marwa (Q. ii. 158), the symbols of patience and perseverance; (4) the great Sermon (Khuṭba) on the 7th of Zul-hijja, when the whole assembly listens to an exposition of the meaning of Hajj; (5) the visit on the eighth, of the whole body of pilgrims to the Valley of Minā (about six miles north of Makkah, where the pilgrims halt and stay the night, proceeding on the ninth to the plain and hill of ‘Arafa, about five miles further north, which is also called the Mount of Mercy; (5) the tenth day, the ‘Id Day, the day of Sacrifice, when the sacrifice is offered in the Valley of Minā, the head is shaved or the hair trimmed, the tawaf al-ifāda and the symbolic ceremony of casting seven pebbles at the Jamarat is performed on the first occasion: it is continued on subsequent days, both rites are connected with the story of Abraham: this is the ‘Id-ul-Adhāh; note that the ceremony is connected with the rejection of evil in thought, word, and deed. A stay of two or three days after this is prescribed: these three days are called Tashriq days.

218. It is recommended that pilgrims should come with provisions, so that they should not be compelled to resort to begging. But, as usual, our thought is directed at once from the physical to the spiritual. If provisions are required for a journey on earth, how much more important to provide for the final journey into the future world? The best of such provisions is right conduct, which is the same as the fear of Allah.
198. It is no crime in you
If ye seek of the bounty
Of your Lord (during pilgrimage). 219
Then when ye pour down
From (Mount) ‘Arafat,
Celebrate the praises of Allah
At the Sacred Monument, 220
And celebrate His praises
As He has directed you,
Even though, before this,
Ye went astray. 221

199. Then return from the place
Whence it is usual
For the multitude 222
So to do, and ask
For Allah’s forgiveness.
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

200. So when ye have
Accomplished your rites,
Celebrate the praises of Allah,

219. Legitimate trade is allowed, in the interests both of the honest trader, who can thus meet his own expenses, and of the generality of pilgrims, who would otherwise be greatly inconvenienced for the necessaries of life. But the profit must be sought as from the “bounty of Allah.” There should be no profiteering, or trade “tricks.” Good honest trade is a form of service to the community, and therefore to Allah.

220. About midway between ‘Arafat and Minâ (see n. 217 to ii. 197) is a place called Muzdalifâ where the Holy Prophet offered up a long prayer. It has thus become a Sacred Monument and pilgrims are directed to follow that example on their return. A special reason for this is given in the note following.

221. Certain arrogant tribes living in Makkah used not to go to ‘Arafat with the crowd but to stop short at Muzdalifâ. They are rebuked for their arrogance and told that they must perform all the rites like the rest of the pilgrims. There is equality in Islam.

222. See the last note. Towards the end of the Pilgrimage the crowd is very great, and if any people loitered after ‘Arafat, it would cause great confusion and inconvenience. The pace has therefore to be quick for every one, a very salutary regulation. Every member of the crowd must think of the comfort and convenience of the whole mass.
225. Our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts, both our profits and our losses may be delayed. But in Allah's books there is no delay. Our actions go before us. (See ii. 95. n.)

226. The Appointed Days: the three days after the tenth, when the Pilgrims stay on in the Valley of Minā for prayer and praise. They are the days of Tashriq (see ii. 200, n. 223). It is optional for pilgrims to leave on the second or third day.

223. After the Pilgrimage, in Pagan times, the pilgrims used to gather in assemblies in which the praises of ancestors were sung. As the whole of the pilgrimage rites were purified in Islam, so this aftermath of the Pilgrimage was also purified. It was required from pilgrims to stay on two or three days after the Day of Sacrifice, but they must use them in prayer and praise to Allah. See ii. 203 below.

224. If you hasten to get all the good things of the world, and only think of them and pray for them, you would lose the higher things of the future. The proper Muslim attitude is neither to renounce this world nor to be so engrossed in it as to forget the future life.

225. Our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts, both our profits and our losses may be delayed. But in Allah's books there is no delay. Our actions go before us. (See ii. 95. n.)
And if any one stays on, 
There is no blame on him, 
If his aim is to do right. 
Then fear Allah, and know 
That ye will surely 
Be gathered unto Him.

204. There is the type of man 227 
Whose speech 
About this world's life 
May dazzle thee, 
And he calls Allah to witness 
About what is in his heart; 
Yet is he the most contentious 
Of enemies.

205. When he turns his back, 
His aim everywhere 
Is to spread mischief 
Through the earth and destroy 
Crops and progeny 
But Allah loveth not mischief.

206. When it is said to him, 
"Fear Allah," 
He is led by arrogance 
To (more) crime. 
Enough for him is Hell;— 
An evil bed indeed 
(To lie on) 228

207. And there is the type of man 
Who gives his life

227. The two contrasted types of men mentioned in ii. 200 and 201 are here further particularised: the glib hypocrite who appears worldly-wise but plans harm, contrasted with the sincere believer who is prepared to suffer martyrdom for his faith. The Commentators give names of people who exemplified these types. The mischief-maker has a smooth tongue and indulges in plausible talk with many oaths. He appears to be worldly-wise, and though you may despise him for his worldliness, you may not realise his frauds. Behind your back he is an implacable enemy. He stirs up quarrels, and causes all sorts of mischief to you or your friends. He can never win Allah’s love, and we are warned against his tricks.

228. According to the English saying, “As you have made your bed, so you must lie in it.”
229. This second type of man—firm, sincere, devoted, willing to give his life for the faith that is in him—was common in early Islam. Such men were its pillars. Through persecution, obloquy, torture, threat to their own lives or the lives of those dear to them, they stood by their leader and many of them gave their lives. That is what established Islam. We are asked in the next verse to follow this type and shun the other or evil type. If we do that, our Cause is safe.

230. If you backslide after the conviction has been brought home to you, you may cause some inconvenience to the Cause, or to those who counted upon you, but do not be so arrogant as to suppose that you will defeat Allah’s Power and Wisdom. The loss will be your own.

231. If faith is wanting, all sorts of excuses are made to resist the appeal of Allah. They might and do say: “Oh yes! we shall believe if Allah appears to us with His angels in His glory!” In other words they want to settle the question in their way, and not in Allah’s way. That will not do. The decision in all questions belongs to Allah. If we are true to Him, we wait for His times and seasons, and do not expect Him to wait on ours.
SECTION 26

211. Ask the Children of Israel232
How many Clear (Signs)
We have sent them.
But if any one,
After Allah's favour
Has come to him,
Substitutes (something else),
Allah is strict in punishment.233

212. The life of this world
Is alluring to those
Who reject faith,
And they scoff at those
Who believe.
But the righteous
Will be above them
On the Day of Resurrection;
For Allah bestows His abundance
Without measure
On whom He will.234

213. Mankind was one single nation.
And Allah sent Messengers
With glad tidings and warnings;
And with them He sent
The Book in truth,
To judge between people
In matters wherein
They differed;
But the People of the Book,

232. The Israelies under Moses were shown Allah's glory and many clear Signs and yet they went after their own ways, and preferred their own whims and fancies. So do people in all ages. But let them not deceive themselves. Allah's justice is sure, and when it comes, it will be strict and unmistakable to those who reject His grace.

233. Cf. ii. 196 (end) where the question was of those who do not fear Allah. Here the question is of those who reject Allah's Signs.

234. Allah's gifts in this world seem unequal, and sometimes those get them who seem to deserve them least. Allah's bounty is unlimited to the just as well as the unjust. In His wisdom He may give to whomsoever He pleases. The account is not taken now, but will be taken in the end, when the balance will be redressed.
Three questions arise in charity: (1) What shall we give? (2) to whom shall we give? and (3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand: it may be advice; it may be a kind word; “whatever ye do that is good” is charity. On the other hand, if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it. Or if you give something...
Is for parents and kindred
And orphans
And those in want
And for wayfarers.
And whatever ye do
That is good,—Allah
Knoweth it well.

216. Fighting is prescribed
Upon you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible
That ye dislike a thing
Which is good for you,
And that ye love a thing
Which is bad for you.
But Allah knoweth,
And ye know not.

SECTION 27

217. They ask thee
Concerning fighting
In the Prohibited Month. Say: "Fighting therein
Is a grave (offence);
But graver is it
In the sight of Allah

with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a madman, or a drug or sweets or even money to some one whom you want to entrap or corrupt, it is no charity but a gift of damnation. To whom should you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have the first claim on you? If you are not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity.

Every gift is judged by its unselfish character: the degree of need or claim is a factor which you should consider: if you disregard it, there is something selfish behind it. How should it be given? As in the sight of Allah; this shuts out all pretence, show, and insincerity.

236. To fight in the cause of Truth is one of the highest forms of charity. What can you offer that is more precious than your own life? But here again the limitations come in. If you are a mere brawler, or a selfish aggressive person, or a vainglorious bully, you deserve the highest censure. Allah knows the value of things better than you do.

To prevent access
To the path of Allah
To deny Him,
To prevent access
To the Sacred Mosque,
And drive out its members.

Tumult and oppression\(^{239}\)
Are worse than slaughter.
Nor will they cease
Fighting you until
They turn you back
From your faith
If they can.
And if any of you
Turn back from their faith
And die in unbelief,
Their works will bear no fruit
In this life
And in the Hereafter;
They will be
Companions of the Fire
And will abide therein.

218. Those who believed
And those who suffered exile
And fought (and strove and
struggled)
In the path of Allah—
They have the hope

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238. The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Makkah caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until Allah permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Month, though they were driven to fight during that period against their own feeling in self defence. But their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied Allah, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter.

239. Cf. ii. 191. 193, where a similar phrase occurs. *Fitna* = trial, temptation, as in ii. 102; or tumult, sedition, oppression, as here; M.M.A., H.G.S., and M.P. translate “persecution” in this passage, which is also legitimate, seeing that persecution is the suppression of some opinion by violence, force, or threats.
240. **Wine:** *Khamr:* literally understood to mean the fermented juice of the grape; applied by analogy to all fermented liquor, and by further analogy to any intoxicating liquor or drug. There may possibly be some benefit in it, but the harm is greater than the benefit, especially if we look at it from a social as well as an individual point of view.

241. **Gambling:** *maisir:* literally a means of getting, something too easily, getting a profit without working for it; hence gambling. The form most familiar to the Arabs was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery: the arrows were marked and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. Something, e.g., the carcass of a slaughtered animal, was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small. Whether you got a big share or a small share, or nothing, depended on pure luck. The principle on which the objection is based is: that, you gain what you have not earned, or lose on a mere chance. Dice and wagering are rightly held to be within the definition of gambling.

242. **Hoarding** is no use either to ourselves, or to any one else. We should use the wealth we need; any superfluities we must spend in good works or in charity.

243. **Gambling and intemperance** are social as well as individual sins. They may ruin us in our ordinary every-day worldly life. In case it is suggested that there is no harm in a little indulgence, we are asked to think over all its aspects, social and individual, worldly and spiritually.
Concerning orphans.\textsuperscript{244}

Say: "The best thing to do
Is what is for their good;
If ye mix
Their affairs with yours,
They are your brethren;
But Allah knows
The man who means mischief
From the man who means good.
And if Allah had wished,
He could have put you
Into difficulties: He is indeed
Exalted in Power, Wise."\textsuperscript{245}

\textbf{221. Do not marry}

Unbelieving\textsuperscript{245-A} woman
Until they believe:
A slave woman who believes
Is better than an unbelieving\textsuperscript{245-A} woman.

Even though she allure you.
Nor marry (your girls)
To unbelievers until
They believe:
A man slave who believes
Is better than an unbeliever\textsuperscript{245-A}

\textsuperscript{244} For Orphans the best rule is to keep their property, household, and accounts separate, lest there should be any temptation to get a personal advantage to their guardian by mixing them with the guardian’s property, household or accounts,—also to keep clear of any ideas of marriage, where this fiduciary relation exists. Q. vi. 152 may possibly suggest complete separation. But it may be an economy and an advantage to the orphan to have his property and accounts administered with the guardian’s property and accounts and to have him live in the guardian’s household, or to marry into the guardian’s family, especially where the orphan’s property is small and he or she has no other friend. The test is: what is best in the orphan’s interests? If the guardian does fall into temptation, even if human law does not detect him, he is told he is sinning in Allah’s sight and that should keep him straight.

\textsuperscript{245} The idea in Islam is not to make Allah’s Law a burdensome fetter, but to ease a man’s path in all kinds of difficult situations by putting him on his honour and trusting him. The strictest probity is demanded of him, but if he falls short of it, he is told that he cannot escape Allah’s punishment even though he may evade human punishment.

\textsuperscript{245-A} Literally “pagan”.

246. Marriage is a most intimate communion, and the mystery of sex finds its highest fulfilment when intimate spiritual harmony is combined with the physical link. As religion is a real influence in life to both parties or to either party, a difference in this vital matter must affect the lives of both more profoundly than differences of birth, race, language, or position in life. It is therefore only right that the parties to be married should have the same spiritual outlook. If two persons love each other, their outlook in the highest things of life must be the same. Note that religion is not here a mere label or a matter of custom or birth. The two persons may have been born in different religions, but if, by their mutual influence, they come to see the truth in the same way, they must openly accept the same rites and the same social brotherhood. Otherwise the position will become impossible individually and socially.

247. Azan: hurt, pollution. Both aspects must be remembered. Physical cleanliness and purity make for health, bodily and spiritual. But the matter should be looked at from the woman’s point of view as well as the man’s. To her there is danger of hurt, and she should have every consideration. In the animal world, instinct is a guide which is obeyed. Man should in this respect be better: he is often worse.
Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting Allah. To uphold such a hope is to give glad tidings to people of faith. It would only be unrepentant sinners who would fear the meeting. Note how the most sensuous matters are discussed frankly and immediately taken up into the loftiest regions of spiritual upliftment.

248. *Haihu*: A comprehensive word referring to manner, time, or place. The most delicate matters are here referred to in the most discreet and yet helpful terms. In sex morality, manner, time, and place are all important: and the highest standards are set by social laws, by our own refined instinct of mutual consideration, and above all, by the light shed by the highest Teachers from the wisdom which they receive from our Maker. Who loves purity and cleanliness in all things.

249. Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, or to be treated lightly, or to be indulged to excess. It is as solemn a fact as any in life. It is compared to a husbandman’s tilth; it is a serious affair to him: he sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. But he chooses his own time and mode of cultivation. He does not sow out of season nor cultivate in a manner which will injure or exhaust the soil. He is wise and considerate and does not run riot. Coming from the simile to human beings, every kind of mutual consideration is required, but above all, we must remember that even in these matters there is a spiritual aspect. We must never forget our souls, and that we are responsible to Allah.

It was carnal-minded men who invented the doctrine of original sin: “Behold,” says the Psalmist. “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalms 11. 5). This is entirely repudiated by Islam, in which the office of father and mother is held in the highest veneration. Every child is born pure. Celibacy is not necessarily a virtue, and may be a vice.

250. Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting Allah. To uphold such a hope is to give glad tidings to people of faith. It would only be unrepentant sinners who would fear the meeting. Note how the most sensuous matters are discussed frankly, and immediately taken up into the loftiest regions of spiritual upliftment.
In your oaths against
Doing good, or acting rightly,
Or making peace
Between persons;
For Allah is One
Who heareth and knoweth\(^{251}\)
All things.

225. Allah will not
Call you to account
For thoughtlessness
In your oaths,
But for the intention
In your hearts,\(^{252}\)
And He is
Oft-forgiving
Most Forbearing.

226. For those who take
An oath for abstention
From their wives,
A waiting for four months
Is ordained;
If then they return,
Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful

227. But if their intention
Is firm for divorce,
Allah heareth

\(^{251}\) The Arabs had many special kinds of oaths, for each of which they had a special name in their language. Some of them related to sex matters, and caused misunderstanding, alienation, division, or separation between husband and wife. This and the following three verses refer to them. In ii. 224 we are first of all told in perfectly general terms that we are not to make an oath in the name of Allah an excuse for not doing the right thing when it is pointed out to us, or for refraining from doing something which will bring people together. If we were swayed by anger or passion or mere caprice, Allah knows our inmost hearts, and right conduct, and not obstinacy or quibbling is what He demands from us.

\(^{252}\) It has been held that thoughtless oaths, if there is no intention behind them, can be expiated by an act of charity.
S.2 A.227-228

And knoweth all things.253

228. Divorced women
Shall wait concerning themselves
For three monthly periods.
And it is not lawful for them
To hide what Allah
Hath created in their wombs.
If they have faith
In Allah and the Last Day.
And their husbands
Have the better right
To take them back
In that period, if
They wish for reconciliation.254
And women shall have rights
Similar to the rights
Against them, according
To what is equitable;
But men have a degree

253. Verses 225-27 should be read together with verse 224. The latter, though it is perfectly general, leads up to the other three.

The Pagan Arabs had a custom very unfair to women in wedlock, and this was suppressed by Islam. Sometimes, in a fit of anger or caprice, a husband would take an oath by Allah not to approach his wife. This deprived her of conjugal rights, but at the same time kept her tied to him indefinitely, so that she could not marry again. If the husband was remonstrated with, he would say that his oath by Allah bound him. Islam in the first place disapproved of the thoughtless oaths, but insisted on proper solemn intentional oaths being scrupulously observed. In a serious matter like that affecting a wife, if the oath was put forward as an excuse, the man is told that it is no excuse at all. Allah looks to intention, not mere thoughtless words. The parties are allowed a period of four months to make up their minds and see if an adjustment is possible. Reconciliation is recommended, but if they are really determined against reconciliation, it is unfair to keep them tied indefinitely.

254. Islam tries to maintain the married state as far as possible, especially where children are concerned, but it is against the restriction of the liberty of men and women in such vitally important matters as love and family life. It will check hasty action as far as possible, and leave the door to reconciliation open at many stages. Even after divorce a suggestion of reconciliation is made, subject to certain precautions (mentioned in the following verses) against thoughtless action. A period of waiting ('iddat) for three monthly courses is prescribed, in order to see if the marriage conditionally dissolved is likely to result in issue. But this is not necessary where the divorced woman is a virgin: Q. xxxiii. 49. It is definitely declared that women and men shall have similar rights against each other.
SECTION 29.

229. A divorce is only Permissible twice; after that, The parties should either hold Together on equitable terms. Or separate with kindness.

It is not lawful for you, (Men), to take back Any of your gifts (from your wives). Except when both parties Fear that they would be Unable to keep the limits Ordained by Allah.

If ye (judges) do indeed

255. The difference in economic position between the sexes makes the man’s rights and liabilities a little greater than the woman’s. Q. iv. 34 refers to the duty of the man to maintain the woman, and to a certain difference in nature between the sexes. Subject to this, the sexes are on terms of equality in law, and in certain matters the weaker sex is entitled to special protection.

256. Where divorce for mutual incompatibility is allowed, there is danger that the parties might act hastily, then repent, and again wish to separate. To prevent such capricious action repeatedly, a limit is prescribed. Two divorces (with a reconciliation between) are allowed. After that the parties must definitely make up their minds, either to dissolve their union permanently, or to live honourable lives together in mutual love and forbearance—to “hold together on equitable terms,” neither party worrying the other nor grumbling nor evading the duties and responsibilities of marriage.

257. If a separation is inevitable, the parties should not throw mud at each other, but recognise what is right and honourable on a consideration of all the circumstances. In any case a man is not allowed to ask back for any gifts or property he may have given to the wife. This is for the protection of the economically weaker sex. Lest that protective provision itself work against the woman’s freedom, an exception is made in the next clause.

258. All other prohibitions and limits prescribed here are in the interests of good and honourable lives for both sides, and in the interests of a clean and honourable social life, without public or private scandals. If there is any fear that in safeguarding her economic rights, her very freedom of person may suffer, the husband refusing the dissolution of marriage, and perhaps treating her with cruelty, then, in such exceptional cases, it is permissible to give some material consideration to the husband, but the need and equity of this should be submitted to the judgment of impartial judges. i.e., properly constituted courts. A divorce of this kind is called Khula’.
Fear that they would be
Unable to keep the limits
Ordained by Allah.
There is no blame on either
Of them if she give
Something for her freedom
These are the limits
Ordained by Allah;
So do not transgress them
If any do transgress
The limits ordained by Allah.
Such persons wrong
(Themselfs as well as others).

230. So if a husband
Divorces his wife (irrevocably).
He cannot, after that,
Re-marry her until
After she has married
Another husband and
He has divorced her.
In that case there is
No blame on either of them
If they re-unite, provided
They feel that they
Can keep the limits
Ordained by Allah.
Such are the limits
 Ordained by Allah,
Which He makes plain
To those who know

259. Wrong (themselves as well as others): Žālimān: for the root meaning of Žulm
see n. 51. ii. 35.

260. This is in continuation of the first sentence of ii. 229. Two divorces followed
by re-union are permissible; the third time the divorce becomes irrevocable, until the
woman marries some other man and he divorces her. This is to set an almost impossible
condition. The lesson is: if a man loves a woman he should not allow a sudden gust of
temper or anger to induce him to take hasty action. What happens after two divorces,
if the man takes her back? See n. 261 to ii. 231.
When ye divorce
Women, and they (are about to) fulfil
The term of their ('iddat),
Either take them back
On equitable terms
Or set them free
On equitable terms:
But do not take them back
To injure them, (or) to take
Undue advantage;
If anyone does that,
He wrongs his own soul.
Do not treat Allah's Signs
As a jest,
But solemnly rehearse
Allah's favours on you,
And the fact that He
Sent down to you
The Book
And Wisdom,
For your instruction.
And fear Allah.

261. If the man takes back his wife after two divorces, he must do so only on equitable terms, i.e., he must not put pressure on the woman to prejudice her rights in any way, and they must live clean and honourable lives, respecting each other's personalities. There are here two conditional clauses: (1) when ye divorce women, and (2) when they fulfil their 'iddat: followed by two consequential clauses, (3) take them back on equitable terms, or (4) set them free with kindness. The first is connected with the third and the second with the fourth. Therefore if the husband wishes to resume the marital relations, he need not wait for 'iddat. But if he does not so wish, she is free to marry someone else after 'iddat. For the meaning of 'iddat see n. 254 above.

262. Let no one think that the liberty given to him can be used for his own selfish ends. If he uses the law for the injury of the weaker party, his own moral and spiritual nature suffers.

263. These difficult questions of sex relations are often treated as a joke. But they profoundly affect our individual lives, the lives of our children, and the purity and well-being of the society in which we live. This aspect of the question is reiterated again and again.

264. Rehearse: zikr. Cf. ii. 151 and n. 156. We are asked to remember in our own minds, and to proclaim and praise, and be proud of Allah's favours on us. His favours are immeasurable: not the least are His Revelations, and the wisdom which He has given to us to enable us to judge and act up to His guidance.
The termination of a marriage bond is a most serious matter for family and social life. And every lawful device is approved which can equitably bring back those who have lived together, provided only there is mutual love and they can live on honourable terms with each other. If these conditions are fulfilled, it is not right for outsiders to prevent or hinder re-union. They may be swayed by property or other considerations. This verse was occasioned by an actual case that was referred to the holy Prophet in his lifetime.

As this comes in the midst of the regulations on divorce, it applies primarily to cases of divorce, where some definite rule is necessary, as the father and mother would not, on account of the divorce, probably be on good terms, and the interests of the children must be safeguarded. As, however, the wording is perfectly general, it has been held that the principle applies equally to the father and mother in wedlock: each must fulfil his or her part in the fostering of the child. On the other hand, it is provided that the child shall not be used as an excuse for driving a hard bargain on either side. By mutual consent they can agree to some course that is reasonable and equitable, both as regards the period before weaning (the maximum being two years) and the engagement of a wet-nurse, or (by analogy) for artificial feeding. But the mother’s privileges must =

And know that Allah is well acquainted with all things.

SECTION 30

232. When ye divorce Women, and they fulfil The term of their (‘iddat), Do not prevent them from marrying Their (former) husbands, If they mutually agree On equitable terms. This instruction Is for all amongst you, Who believe in Allah And the Last Day. That is (the course Making for) most virtue And purity amongst you. And Allah knows, And ye know not.

233. The mothers shall give suck To their offspring

265. The termination of a marriage bond is a most serious matter for family and social life. And every lawful device is approved which can equitably bring back those who have lived together, provided only there is mutual love and they can live on honourable terms with each other. If these conditions are fulfilled, it is not right for outsiders to prevent or hinder re-union. They may be swayed by property or other considerations. This verse was occasioned by an actual case that was referred to the holy Prophet in his lifetime.

266. As this comes in the midst of the regulations on divorce, it applies primarily to cases of divorce, where some definite rule is necessary, as the father and mother would not, on account of the divorce, probably be on good terms, and the interests of the children must be safeguarded. As, however, the wording is perfectly general, it has been held that the principle applies equally to the father and mother in wedlock: each must fulfil his or her part in the fostering of the child. On the other hand, it is provided that the child shall not be used as an excuse for driving a hard bargain on either side. By mutual consent they can agree to some course that is reasonable and equitable, both as regards the period before weaning (the maximum being two years) and the engagement of a wet-nurse, or (by analogy) for artificial feeding. But the mother’s privileges must =
Not be curtailed simply because by mutual consent she does not nurse the baby. In a matter of this kind the ultimate appeal must be to godliness, for all legal remedies are imperfect and may be misused.

266-A. i.e. in case of divorce.
Four months and ten days\textsuperscript{267}
When they have fulfilled
Their term, there is no blame
On you if they dispose
Of themselves in a just
And reasonable manner.
And Allah is well acquainted
With what ye do.

235. There is no blame
On you if ye make
An indirect offer of betrothal
Or hold it in your hearts.\textsuperscript{268}
Allah knows that ye
Cherish them in your hearts:
But do not make a secret contract
With them except
That you speak to them
In terms honourable, nor resolve
Of marriage till the term
Prescribed is fulfilled.
And know that Allah
Knoweth what is in your hearts.
And take heed of Him;
And know that Allah is
Oft-forgiving. Most Forbearing.

\textsuperscript{267} The 'Iddat of widowhood (four months and ten days) is longer than the 'Iddat of divorce (three monthly courses. ii. 228). In the latter the only consideration is to ascertain if there is any unborn issue of the marriage dissolved. This is clear from xxxiii. 49, where it is laid down that there is no 'Iddat for virgin divorcées. In the former there is in addition the consideration of mourning and respect for the deceased husband. In either case, if it is proved that there is unborn issue, there is of course no question of remarriage for the woman until it is born. Meanwhile her maintenance on a reasonable scale is chargeable to the late husband's estate.

\textsuperscript{268} A definite contract of remarriage for the woman during her period of 'Iddat of widowhood is forbidden as obviously unseemly, as also any secrecy in such matters. It would bind the woman at a time when she is not fitted to exercise her fullest judgment. But circumstances may arise when an offer (open for future consideration but not immediately decided) may be to her interests, and this is permissible.
269. The law declares in such a case half the dower fixed shall be paid by the man to the woman. But it is open to the woman to remit the half due to her or to the man to remit the half which he is entitled to deduct, and thus pay the whole.

270. Him in whose hands is the marriage tie: According to Hanafi doctrine this is the husband himself, who can ordinarily by his act dissolve the marriage. It therefore behoves him to be all the more liberal to the woman and pay her the full dower even if the marriage was not consummated.
238. Guard strictly
Your (habit of) prayers.
Especially the Middle Prayer;\(^{271}\)
And stand before Allah
In a devout (frame of mind).

239. If ye fear (an enemy),\(^{272}\)
Pray on foot, or riding,
(As may be most convenient),
But when ye are
In security, celebrate
Allah's praises in the manner
He has taught you,
Which ye knew not (before).

240. Those of you
Who die and leave widows
Should bequeath
For their widows
A year's maintenance
Without expulsion;\(^{273}\)
But if they leave
(The residence),
There is no blame on you
For what they do
With themselves,
Provided it is reasonable.
And Allah is Exalted in Power,
Wise.

\(^{271}\) The Middle Prayer: \(\text{\textit{Salatul-wus\rqah}}\): may be translated "the best or the most excellent prayer." Authorities differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of authorities seems to be in favour of interpreting this as the \(\text{\textit{Asr}}\) prayer (in the middle of the afternoon). This is apt to be most neglected, and yet this is the most necessary, to remind us of Allah in the midst of our worldly affairs.

\(^{272}\) Verses 238-239 are parenthetical, introducing the subject of prayer in danger. This is more fully dealt with in iv. 101-03.

\(^{273}\) Opinions differ whether the provision (of a year's maintenance, with residence), for a widow is abrogated by the share which the widow gets (one-eighth or one-fourth) as an heir (Q. iv. 12). I do not think it is. The bequest (where made) takes effect as a charge on the property, but the widow can leave the house before the year is out, and presumably the maintenance then ceases.
241. For divorced women
Is a suitable Gift
This is a duty
On the righteous.

242. Thus doth Allah
Make clear His Signs
To you: in order that
Ye may understand.

SECTION 32.

243. Didst thou not
Turn by vision to those
Who abandoned their homes,
Though they were thousands
(In number), for fear of death?
Allah said to them: “Die”:
Then He restored them to life. 274
For Allah is full of bounty
To mankind, but
Most of them are ungrateful.

244. Then fight in the cause
Of Allah, and know that Allah
Heareth and knoweth all things. 275

274. We now return to the subject of Jihad, which we left at ii. 214-216. We are
to be under no illusion about it. If we are not prepared to fight for our faith, with our
lives and all our resources, both our lives and our resources will be wiped out by our
enemies. As to life, Allah gave it, and a coward is not likely to save it. It has happened
again and again in history that men who tamely submitted to be driven from their homes
although they were more numerous than their enemies, had the sentence of death
pronounced on them for their cowardice, and they deserved it. But Allah gives further
and further chances in His mercy. This is a lesson to every generation. The Commentators
differ as to the exact episode referred to, but the wording is perfectly general, and so
is the lesson to be learnt from it.

275. For Allah’s cause we must fight, but never to satisfy our own selfish passions
or greed, for the warning is repeated: “Allah heareth and knoweth all things”: all deeds,
words, and motives are perfectly open before Him, however we might conceal them from
men or even from ourselves. See ii. 216, n. 236.
245. Who is he
That will loan to Allah
A beautiful loan,\(^276\) which Allah
Will double unto his credit
And multiply many times?
It is Allah that giveth (you)
Want or Plenty.
And to Him shall be
Your return.

246. Has thou not
Turned thy vision to the Chiefs
Of the Children of Israel
After (the time of) Moses\(^277\)
They said to a Prophet\(^278\)
(That was) among them:

\(245.\) Spending in the cause of Allah is called metaphorically “a beautiful loan”. It is excellent in many ways: (1) it shows a beautiful spirit of self-denial; (2) in other loans there may be a doubt as to the safety of your capital or any return thereon; here you give to the Lord of All, in Whose hands are the keys of want or plenty; giving you may have manifold blessings, and withholding, you may even lose what you have. If we remember that our goal is Allah, can we turn away from His cause?

\(277.\) The next generation after Moses and Aaron was ruled by Joshua, who crossed the Jordan and settled the tribes in Palestine. His rule lasted for 25 years, after which there was a period of 320 years when the Israelites had a chequered history. They were not united among themselves, and suffered many reverses at the hands of the Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes of Palestine. They frequently lapsed into idolatry and deserted the worship of the true God. From time to time a leader appeared among them who assumed dictatorial powers. Acting under a sort of theocratic commission from Allah, he pointed out their backslidings, re-united them under His banner, and restored, from time to time and place to place, the power of Israel. These dictators are called Judges in the English translation of the Old Testament. The last of their line was Samuel, who marks the transition towards the line of Kings on the one hand and of the later Prophets on the other. He may be dated approximately about the 11th century B.C.

\(278.\) This was Samuel. In his time Israel had suffered from much corruption within and many reverses without. The Philistines had made a great attack and defeated Israel with great slaughter. The Israelites, instead of relying on Faith and their own valour and cohesion, brought out their most sacred possession, the Ark of the Covenant, to help them in the fight. But the enemy captured it, carried it away, and retained it for seven months. The Israelites forgot that wickedness cannot screen itself behind a sacred relic. Nor can a sacred relic help the enemies of faith. The enemy found that the Ark brought nothing but misfortune for themselves, and were glad to abandon it. It apparently remained twenty years in the village (qaryya) of Ya‘arim (Kirjath-jeearim): 1, Samuel, vii. 2. Meanwhile the people pressed Samuel to appoint them a king. They thought that a king would cure all their ills, whereas what was wanting was a spirit of union and discipline and a readiness on their part of fight in the cause of Allah.
"Appoint for us a King, that we
May fight in the cause of Allah,"
He said; "Is it not possible?" 279
If ye were commanded
To fight, that ye
Will not fight?" They said:
“How could we refuse
To fight in the cause of Allah,
Seeing that we were turned out
Of our homes and our families?”
But when they were commanded
To fight, they turned back.
Except a small band
Among them. But Allah
Has full knowledge of those
Who do wrong.

247. Their Prophet said to them;
“Allah hath appointed
Talîl" 280 as king over you,”
They said: “How can he
Exercise authority over us
When we are better fitted
Than he to exercise authority,
And he is not even gifted,
With wealth in abundance?”
He said: Allah hath
Chosen him above you,
And hath gifted him
Abundantly with knowledge

279. Samuel knew as a Prophet that the people were fickle and only wanted to cover their own want of union and true spirit by asking for a king. They replied with spirit in words, but when it came to action, they failed. They hid themselves in caves and rocks, or ran away, and even those who remained “followed him trembling”: I. Samuel. xiii. 6-7.

280. Talîl is the Arabic name for Saul, who was tall and handsome, but belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel. His worldly belongings were slender, and it was when he went out to search for some asses which had been lost from his father’s house that he met Samuel and was anointed king by him. The people’s fickleness appeared immediately he was named. They raised all sorts of petty objections to him. The chief consideration in their minds was selfishness: each one wanted to be leader and king himself, instead of desiring sincerely the good of the people as a whole, as a leader should do.
And bodily prowess: Allah
Granteth His authority to whom
He pleaseth; Allah is
All-embracing, and He knoweth
All things."

248. And (further) their Prophet
Said to them: "A Sign
Of his authority
Is that there shall come
To you the Ark of the Covenant,281
With (an assurance) therein
Of security282 from your Lord,
And the relics left
By the family of Moses
And the family of Aaron,
Carried by angels.283
In this is a Symbol
For you if ye indeed
Have faith."

SECTION 33.

249. When Tālūt set forth
With the armies, he said:284

281. Ark of the Covenant: Tābūt: a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5ft. X 3ft. X 3ft. See Exod. xxv. 10-22. It was to contain the "testimony of Allah", or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Moses and Aaron. Its Gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat." This was a sacred possession to Israel. It was lost to the enemy in the early part of Samuel's ministry: see n. 278 to ii. 246: when it came back, it remained in a village for twenty years, and was apparently taken to the capital when kingship was instituted. It thus became a symbol of unity and authority.

282. Security: sakina = safety, tranquillity, peace. Later Jewish writings use the same word for a symbol of Allah's Glory in the Tabernacle or tent in which the Ark was kept, or in the Temple when it was built by Solomon.

283. Carried by angels: these words refer to the Tābūt or Ark.

284. A Commander is hampered by a large force if it is not in perfect discipline and does not whole-heartedly believe in its Commander. He must get rid of all the doubtful ones, as did Gideon before Saul, and Henry V. in Shakespeare's story long afterwards. Saul used the same test as Gideon: he gave a certain order when crossing a stream: the greater part disobeyed, and were sent back. Gideon's story will be found in Judges, vii. 2-7.
“Allah will test you
At the stream; if any
Drinks of its water.
He goes not with my army:
Only those who taste not
Of it go with me:
A mere sip out of the hand
Is excused.” But they
Drank of it, except a few.
When they crossed the river,—
He and the faithful ones with him,—
They said: “This day”\(^{285}\)
We cannot cope
With Goliath and his forces.”
But those who were convinced
That they must meet Allah,
Said: “How oft, by Allah’s will,
Hath a small force
Vanquished a big one?
Allah is with those
Who steadfastly persevere.”

250. When they advanced
To meet Goliath and his forces.
They prayed: “Our Lord!
Pour out constancy on us
And make our steps firm:
Help us against those
That reject faith.”

251. By Allah’s will,
They routed them;
And David\(^{286}\) slew Goliath;

285. Even in the small band that remained faithful, there were some who were appalled by the number of the enemy when they met him face to face, and saw the size and strength of the enemy Commander, the giant Goliath (Jālūt). But there was a very small band who were determined to face all odds because they had perfect confidence in Allah and in the cause for which they were fighting. They were for making a firm stand and seeking Allah’s help. Of that number was David: see next note.

286. Note how the whole story is compressed into a few words as regards narration, but its spiritual lessons are dwelt upon from many points of view. The Old Testament is mainly interested in the narrative, which is full of detail, but says little about the =
universal truths of which every true story is a parable. The Qur-ān assumes the story, but tells the parable.

David was a raw youth, with no arms or armour. He was not known even in the Israelite camp, and the giant Goliath mocked him. Even David's own elder brother chid him for deserting his sheep, for he was a poor shepherd lad to outward appearance, but his faith had made him more than a match for the Philistine hosts. When Saul offered his own armour and arms to David, the young hero declined, as he had not tried them, while his shepherd's sling and staff were his well-tried implements. He picked up five smooth pebbles on the spot from the stream, and used his sling to such effect that he knocked down Goliath. He then used Goliath's own sword to slay him. There was consternation in the Philistine army: they broke and fled, and were pursued and cut to pieces.

Apart from the main lesson that if we would preserve our national existence and our faith it is our duty to fight with courage and firmness, there are other lessons in David's story: (1) numbers do not count, but faith, determination and the blessing of Allah; (2) size and strength are of no avail against truth, courage, and careful planning; (3) the hero tries his own weapons, and those that are available to him at the time and place, even though people may laugh at him; (4) if Allah is with us, the enemy's weapon may become an instrument of his own destruction; (5) personality conquers all dangers, and puts heart into our own wavering friends; (6) pure faith brings Allah's reward, which may take many forms: in David's case it was Power, Wisdom, and other gifts; see next note.

287. David was not only a shepherd, a warrior, a king, a wise man, and a prophet, but was also endowed with the gifts of poetry and music.

288. Allah's plan is universal. He loves and protects all His creatures and His bounties are for all the worlds (i. 2 n.). To protect one He may have to check another, but we must never lose faith that His love is for all in boundless measure.
253. Those Messengers
We endowed with gifts,
Some above others: 289
To some of them Allah spoke; 290
Others He raised
To degrees (of honour); 291
To Jesus the son of Mary
We gave Clear (Signs); 292
And strengthened him
With the Holy Spirit. 292-A
If Allah had so willed,
Succeeding generations
Would not have fought
Among each other, after
Clear (Signs) had come to them
But they (chose) to wrangle
Some believing and others
Rejecting. If Allah had so willed,
They would not have fought

289. Different gifts and different modes of procedure are prescribed to Allah’s Messengers in different ages, and perhaps their degrees are different though it is not for us mortals, with our imperfect knowledge, to make any difference between one and another of Allah’s Messengers (ii. 136). As this winds up the argument about fighting, three illustrations are given from the past, how it affected Allah’s Messengers. To Moses Allah spoke directly: he led his men for forty years through the wilderness, mainly fighting against the unbelief of his own people; he organised them to fight with the sword for Palestine, but was raised to Allah’s mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David was chosen by Allah. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time, became a king, a Prophet and waged successful wars. Jesus was “strengthened with the holy spirit”: he was given no weapons to fight, and his mission was of a more limited character. In Muhammad’s mission these and other characters were combined. Gentler than Jesus, he organised on a vaster scale than Moses, and from Madinah he ruled and gave laws, and the Qur-an has a vaster scope than the Scriptures before.

290. Moses: see note above.

291. There is a two-fold sense: they were raised to high posts of honour, and they rose by degrees.

292. Cf. ii. 87. See n. 401 to iii. 62.

292-A. “Holy spirit,” according to commentators signifies Gabriel.
Each other; but Allah
Does what He wills.\(^{293}\)

SECTION 34.

254. O ye who believe!
Spend out of (the bounties)\(^{294}\)
We have provided for you,
Before the Day comes
When no bargaining
(Will avail), nor friendship
Nor intercession.\(^{295}\)
Those who reject Faith—they
Are the wrong-doers

255. Allah! There is no god
But He,—the Living,
The Self-subsisting, Supporter of all\(^{296}\)

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\(^{293}\) If some power of choice was to be given to man, his selfishness inevitably caused divisions. It must not be supposed that it frustrates Allah's Plan. He carries it out as He will.

\(^{294}\) Spend, i.e., give away in charity, or employ in good works, but do not hoard. Good works would in Islam include everything that advances the good of one that is in need whether a neighbour or a stranger or that advances the good of the community, or even the good of the person himself to whom Allah has given the bounty. But it must be real good and there should be no admixture of baser motives, such as vainglory, or false indulgence, or encouragement of idleness, or playing off one person against another. The bounties include mental and spiritual gifts as well as wealth and material gifts.

\(^{295}\) Cf. ii. 123 and ii. 48.

\(^{296}\) This is the \textit{Ayat-ul-Kursi}, the "Verse of the Throne" Who can translate its glorious meaning, or reproduce the rhythm of its well-chosen and comprehensive words. Even in the original Arabic the meaning seems to be greater than can be expressed in words.

The attributes of Allah are different from anything we know in our present world: He lives, but His life is self-subsisting and eternal: it does not depend upon other beings and is not limited to time and space. The attribute of \textit{Qayyum} includes not only the idea of "Self-subsisting" but also the idea of "Keeping up and maintaining all life." His life being the source and constant support of all derived forms of life. Perfect life is perfect activity, in contrast to the imperfect life which we see around us, which is not only subject to death but to the need for rest or slowed-down activity, (something which is between activity and sleep, for which I in common with other translators have used the word "slumber") and the need for full sleep itself. But Allah has no need for rest or sleep. His activity, like His life, is perfect and self-subsisting. Contrast with this the expression used in Psalms lxxxviii. 65. "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."
No slumber can seize Him
Nor sleep. His are all things
In the heavens and on earth.
Who is thee can intercede
In His presence except
As He permitteth? He knoweth
What (appeareth to His creatures
As) Before or After
Or Behind them. 297
Nor shall they compass
Aught of His knowledge
Except as He willeth.
His Throne doth extend 298
Over the heavens
And the earth, and He feeleth
No fatigue in guarding
And preserving them 299
For He is the Most High.
The Supreme (in glory).

296. Let there be no compulsion 300
In religion: Truth stands out

297. After we realise that His Life is absolute Life. His Being is absolute Being.
while others are contingent and evanescent, our ideas of heaven and earth vanish like
shadows. Such reality as our heavens and our earth possess is a reflection of His absolute
Reality. The pantheist places the wrong accent when he says that everything is He. The
truth is better expressed when we say that everything is His. How then can any creatures
stand before Him as of right, and claim to intercede for a fellow-creature? But He in
His Wisdom and Plan may grade His creatures and give one superiority over another.
Then by His will and permission such a one may intercede or help according to the laws
and duties laid on him. Allah's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by Time
or Space. To us, His creatures, these conditions always apply. His knowledge and our
knowledge are therefore in different categories, and our knowledge only gets some
reflection of Reality when it accords with His Will and Plan.

298. Throne: seat. In our thoughts we exhaust everything when we say "the heavens
and the earth". Well, then, in everything is the working of Allah's power, and will, and
authority. Everything of course includes spiritual things as well as things of sense.

299. A life of activity that is imperfect or relative would not only need rest for
carrying on its own activities, but would be in need of double rest when it has to look
after and guard, or cherish, or help other activities. In contrast with this is the Absolute
Life, which is free from any such need or contingency. For it is supreme above anything
that we can conceive.

300. Compulsion is incompatible with religion: because (1) religion depends upon
faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force: (2) Truth and Error =
Clear from Error: whoever Rejects Tagut\(^{300-A}\) and believes In Allah hath grasped The most trustworthy Hand-hold, that never breaks.\(^{301}\) And Allah heareth And knoweth all things.

257. Allah is the Protector Of those who have faith: From the depths of darkness He leads them forth Into light. Of those Who reject faith the patrons Are the Tagut from light They will lead them forth Into the depths of darkness. They will be Companions Of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever).

SECTION 35.

258. Hast thou not Turned thy thought to one Who disputed with Abraham\(^{302}\) About his Lord, because Allah had granted him

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300-A. 'Tagut' here means; anything worshipped beside Allah.

301. Hand-hold: something which the hands can grasp for safety in a moment of danger. It may be a loop or a handle, or anchor. If it is without flaw, so that there is no danger of breaking our safety is absolutely assured so long as we hold fast to it. Our safety then depends on our own will and faith: Allah's help and protection will always be unfailing if we hold firmly to Allah and trust in Him.

302. The three verses 258-260 have been the subject of much controversy as to the exact meaning to be attached to the incidents and the precise persons alluded to, whose names are not mentioned. In such matters, where the Qur-án has given no names and the Holy Prophet has himself given no indication, it seems to me useless to speculate, and still worse to put forward positive opinions. In questions of learning, speculations are
Power? Abraham said:
"My Lord is He Who Giveth life and death."
He said: "I give life and death."
Said Abraham: "But it is Allah That causeth the sun To rise from the East:
Do thou then cause it To rise from the West."
Thus was he confounded Who (in arrogance) rejected Faith. Nor doth Allah Give guidance To a people unjust. 303

259. Or (take) the similitude
Of one who passed
By a hamlet, all in ruins 304

= often interesting. But it seems to me that the meaning of the Qur-ān is so wide and universal that we are in danger of missing the real and eternal meaning if we go on disputing about minor points. All three incidents are such as may happen again and again in any prophet’s life-time, and be seen in impersonal vision at any time. Here they are connected with Al-Mustafā’s vision as shown by the opening words of verse 258.

303. The first point illustrated is the pride of power, and the impotence of human power as against Allah’s power. The person who disputed with Abraham may have been Nimrod or some ruler in Babylonia, or indeed elsewhere. I name Babylonia as it was the original home of Abraham (Ur of the Chaldees), and Babylon prided herself on her arts and sciences in the ancient world. Science can do many wonderful things: it could then: it can now. But the mystery of Life baffled science then, as it continues to baffle science now, after many centuries of progress. Abraham had faith, and referred back everything to the true Creator. A sceptical ruler might jestingly say: “I have the power of life and death.” A man of science might say: “We have investigated the laws of life and death.” Different kinds of powers lie in the hands of kings and men of knowledge. The claim in both cases is true in a very limited sense. But Abraham confounded the claimer by going back to fundamentals. “If you had the ultimate power, why could you not make the sun rise from the West?”

304. This incident is referred variously (1) to Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones (Ezekiel. xxxvii 1-10); (2) to Nehemiah’s visit to Jerusalem in ruins after the Captivity, and to its re-building (Nehemiah, i. 12-20); and (3) to ‘Uzair, or Ezra, or Esdras, the scribe, priest, and reformer, who was sent by the Persian King after the Captivity to Jerusalem, and about whom there are many Jewish legends. As to (1), there are only four words in this verse about bones. As to (2) and (3), there is nothing specific to connect this verse with either. The wording is perfectly general, and we must understand it as general. I think it does refer not only to individual, but to national, death and resurrection.
305. A man is in despair when he sees the destruction of a whole people, city, or civilisation. But Allah can cause resurrection as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before Allah. The doubter thinks that he has been dead or "tarried thus" a day or less when the period has been a century. On the other hand, the food and drink which he left behind is intact, and as fresh as it was when he left it. But the donkey is not only dead, but nothing but bones is left of it. And before the man's eyes, the bones are reunited, clothed with flesh and blood, and restored to life. Moral: (1) Time is nothing to Allah; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in Allah's hand; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in Allah.
Thou givest life to the dead.”

He said: “Dost thou not Then believe?” He said: “Yea! but to satisfy My own heart.”

He said: “Take four birds; Tie them (cut them into pieces), Then put a portion of them: On every hill, and call to them: They will come to thee (Flying) with speed. Then know that Allah Is Exalted in Power, Wise.”

SECTION 36

261. The parable of those Who spend their wealth In the way of Allah is that Of a grain of corn: it groweth Seven ears, and each ear Hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase To whom He pleaseth: And Allah careth for all And He knoweth all things.

262. Those who spend Their wealth in the cause Of Allah, and follow not up

306. Verse 258, we saw, illustrated Allah’s power over Life and Death, contrasted with man’s vain boasts or imaginings. Verse 259 illustrated how Time is immaterial to Allah’s working; things, individuals and nations are subject to laws of life and death, which are under Allah’s complete control, however much we may be misled by appearances.

307. Abraham had complete faith in Allah’s power, but he wanted, with Allah’s permission, to give an explanation of that faith to his own heart and mind.

308. A portion of them: Juz-an. The Commentators understand this to mean that the birds were to be cut up and pieces of them were to be put on the hills. The cutting up or killing is not mentioned but they say that it is implied by an ellipsis, as the question is how Allah gives life to the dead.
309. A very high standard is set for charity. (1) It must be in the way of Allah. (2) It must expect no reward in this world. (3) It must not be followed by references or reminders to the act of charity. (4) Still less should any annoyance or injury be caused to the recipient, e.g., by boasting that the giver relieved the person in the hour of need. Indeed, the kindness and the spirit which turns a blind eye to other people's faults or shortcomings is the essence of charity: these things are better than charity if charity is spoilt by tricks that do harm. At the same time, while no reward is to be expected, there is abundant reward from Allah—material, moral, and spiritual—according to His own good pleasure and plan. If we spend in the way of Allah, it is not as if Allah was in need of our charity. On the contrary our short-comings are so great that we require His utmost forbearance before any good that we can do can merit His praise or reward. Our motives are so mixed that our best may really be very poor if judged by a very strict standard.

310. False charity, “to be seen of men,” is really no charity. It is worse, for it betokens a disbelief in Allah and the Hereafter. “Allah seeth well whatever ye do” (ii. 265). It is compared to hard barren rock on which by chance has fallen a little soil. Good rain, which renders fertile soil more fruitful, washes away the little soil which this rock had, and exposes its nakedness. What good can hypocrites derive even from the little wealth they may have amassed?
311. True charity is like a field with good soil on a high situation. It catches good showers of rain, the moisture penetrates the soil, and yet its elevated situation keeps it well-drained, and healthy favourable conditions increase its output enormously. But supposing even that the rain is not abundant, it catches dew and makes the most of any little moisture it can get, and that is sufficient for it. So a man of true charity is spiritually healthy; he is best situated to attract the bounties of Allah, which he does not hoard selfishly but circulates freely. In lean times he still produces good works, and is content with what he has. He looks to Allah’s pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul.

312. The true nature of charity having been explained in three parables (ii. 261, 264, 265) a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health: how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up, thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labour and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasance, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our...
Of fruit, while he is stricken
With old age, and his children
Are not strong (enough\textsuperscript{313})
To look, after themselves—
That it should be caught
In a whirlwind,
With fire therein,
And be burnt up?
Thus doth Allah make clear
To you (His) Signs;
That ye may consider.

SECTION 37

267. O ye who believe!
Give of the good things
Which ye have (honourably)\textsuperscript{314}
earned,
And of the fruits of the earth
Which We have produced

\textsuperscript{313} Not strong (enough): \textit{du‘afā’-u}: literally weak, decrepit, infirm, possibly referring to both health and will or character.

\textsuperscript{314} According to the English proverb “Charity covers a multitude of sins”. Such a sentiment is strongly disapproved in Islam. Charity has value only if (1) something good is given, (2) which has been honourably earned or acquired by the giver, or (3) which can be referred to as a bounty of Allah, (1) may include such things as are of use and value to others though they may be of less use to us or superfluous to us on account of our having acquired something more suitable for our station in life; for example, discarded clothes, or an old horse or a used motor car; but if the horse is vicious, or the car engine so far gone that it is dangerous to use, then the gift is worse than useless; it is positively harmful, and the giver is a wrong doer. (2) applies to fraudulent company-promoters, who earn great credit by giving away in charity some of their ill-gotten gains, or to robbers (even if they call themselves by high-sounding names) who “rob Peter to pay Paul”. Islam will have nothing to do with tainted property. Its economic code requires that every gain should be honest and honourable. Even “charity” would not cover or destroy the taint, (3) lays down a test in cases of a doubtful gain. Can we refer to it =
For you, and do not aim\textsuperscript{315} at anything which is bad, out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive except with closed eyes.\textsuperscript{316} And know that Allah is free of all wants, and worthy of all praise.\textsuperscript{317}

268. Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties.\textsuperscript{318} And Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.

\text\ as a gift of Allah? Obviously the produce of honest labour or agriculture can be so referred to. In modern commerce and speculation there is much of quite the contrary character, and charity will not cover the taint. Some kind of art, skill, or talent are God-given: it is the highest kind of charity to teach them or share their product. Others are the contrary: they are bad or tainted. In the same way some professions or services may be tainted, if these tend to moral harm.

315. The preceding note tries to indicate some of the things which are bad or tainted. We should not even think of acquiring them for ourselves, soothing our conscience by the salve that we shall practise charity out of them.

316. \textit{Closed eyes} imply disgust or connivance because of some feature which we would not openly acknowledge.

317. To dedicate tainted things to Allah is a dishonour to Allah, Who is independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honour and praise.

318. Good and evil draw us opposite ways and by opposite motives, and the contrast is well marked out in charity. When we think of doing some real act of kindness or charity, we are assailed with doubts and fear of impoverishment; but evil supports any tendency to selfishness, greed, or even to extravagant expenditure for show, or self-indulgence, or unseemly appetites. On the other hand, Allah draws us on to all that is kind and good, for that way lies the forgiveness of our sins, and greater real prosperity and satisfaction. No kind or generous act ever ruined any one. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As Allah knows all our motives and cares for all, and has everything in His power, it is obvious which course a wise man will choose. But wisdom is rare, and it is only wisdom that can appreciate true well-being and distinguish it from the false appearance of well-being.
269. He granteth wisdom
To whom He pleaseth;
And he to whom wisdom
Is granted receiveth
Indeed a benefit overflowing;
But none will receive admonition
But men of understanding

270. And whatever ye spend
In charity or
Whatever vow you make,
Be sure Allah knows it all.
But the wrong-doers
Have no helpers.

271. If ye disclose (acts) charity, even so
It is well,
But if ye conceal them,
And make them reach
Those (really) in need,
That is best for you:
It will remove from you
Some of your (stains
Of) evil. And Allah
Is well acquainted
With what ye do.

272. It is not for you
To guide them to the right path.

319. It is better to seek no publicity in charity. But if it is known there is no harm. If it is for public purposes, it must necessarily be known, and a pedantic show of concealment may itself be a fault. The harm of publicity lies in motives of ostentation. We can better reach the really deserving poor by quietly seeking for them. The spiritual benefit ensures to our own souls, provided our motives are pure, and we are really seeking the good pleasure of Allah.

320. In connection with charity this means that we relieve those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. Allah will give light according to His wisdom. Incidentally it adds a further meaning to the command. “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (ii. 256). For compulsion may not only be by force, but by economic necessity. In matters of religion we must not even compel by a bribe of charity. The chief motive in charity should be Allah's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This was addressed in the first instance to Al-Muṣṭafā in Madinah but it is of universal application.
But Allah guides
To the right path
Whom He pleaseth.
Whatever of good ye give
Benefits your own souls,
And ye shall only do so
Seeking the "Face" \(^{321}\)
Of Allah. Whatever good
Ye give, shall be
Rendered back to you,
And ye shall not
Be dealt with unjustly.

273. (Charity is) for those
In need, who, in Allah's cause \(^{322}\)
Are restricted (from travel).
And cannot move about
In the land, seeking
(For trade or work):
The ignorant man thinks,
Because of their modesty,
That they are free from want.
Thou shalt know them
By their (unfailing) mark:
They beg not importunately
From all and sundry.
And whatever of good
Ye give, be assured
Allah knoweth it well.

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321. See note to ii. 112. *Wajh* means literally: face, countenance; hence, favour, glory, Self, Presence.

322. Indiscriminate acts of so-called charity are condemned as they may do more harm than good (see ii. 262). The real beneficiaries of charity are here indicated. They must be in want. And the want must be due to some honourable cause. For example, they may be doing some unpaid service, such as teaching, or acquiring knowledge or skill, or be in exile for their faith, or in other ways be prevented from seeking employment or doing strenuous work. "Allah's cause" must not be narrowly interpreted. All sincere and real service to humanity comes within the definition. Such men do not beg from door to door. It is the duty of those who are well-to-do, or the Public Purse, to find them out.
SECTION 38.

274. Those who (in charity)\textsuperscript{323} Spend of their goods By night and by day, In secret and in public, Have their reward With their Lord: On them shall be no fear, Nor shall they grieve.

275. Those who devour usury\textsuperscript{324} Will not stand except As stands one whom The Satan by his touch Hath driven to madness.\textsuperscript{325} That is because they say: "Trade is like usury,"\textsuperscript{326}

\textsuperscript{323.} We recapitulate the beauty of charity (i.e., unselfish giving of one's self or one's goods) before we come to its opposite, i.e., the selfish grasping greed of usury against those in need or distress. Charity instead of impoverishing you will enrich you: you will have more happiness and less fear. Contrast it with what follows—the degradation of the grasping usurer.

\textsuperscript{324.} Usury is condemned and prohibited in the strongest possible terms. There can be no question about the prohibition. When we come to the definition of Usury there is room for difference of opinion. Hadhrat 'Umar, according to Ibn Kathir, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Prophet left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had had more light from the Prophet. Our 'Ulmā, ancient and modern, have worked out a great body of literature on Usury, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam.

\textsuperscript{325.} An apt simile: whereas legitimate trade or industry increases the prosperity and stability of men and nations, a dependence on Usury would merely encourage a race of idlers, cruel blood-suckers, and worthless fellows who do not know their own good and therefore akin to madmen.

\textsuperscript{326.} Owing to the fact that interest occupies a central position in modern economic life, and specially since interest is the very life blood of the existing financial institutions, a number of Muslims have been inclined to interpret it in a manner which is radically different from the understanding of Muslim scholars throughout the last fourteen centuries and is also sharply in conflict with the categorical statements of the Prophet (peace be on him). According to Islamic teachings any excess on the capital is riba (interest). Islam accepts no distinction, in so far as prohibition is concerned, between reasonable and exorbitant rates of interest, and thus what came to be regarded as the difference between usury and interest; nor between returns on bonus for consumption and those for production purposes and so on.
327. The contrast between charity and unlawful grasping of wealth began at ii. 274, where this phrase occurs as a theme. Here the theme finishes with the same phrase. The following four verses refer to further concessions on behalf of debtors, as creditors are asked to (a) give up even claims arising out of the past on account of usury, and (b) to give time for payment of capital if necessary, or (c) to write off the debt altogether as an act of charity.
279. If ye do it not, 
Take notice of war.
From Allah and His Messenger: 
But if ye repent 
Ye shall have 
Your capital sums: 
Deal not unjustly, 
And ye shall not 
Be dealt with unjustly.

280. If the debtor is 
In a difficulty, 
Grant him time 
Till it is easy 
For him to repay. 
But if ye remit it 
By way of charity, 
That is best for you 
If ye only knew.

281. And fear the Day 
When ye shall be 
Brought back to Allah. 
Then shall every soul 
Be paid what it earned, 
And none shall be 
Dealt with unjustly.

SECTION 39.

282. O ye who believe! 
When ye deal with each other, 
In transactions involving 
Future obligations 
In a fixed period of time, 
Reduce them to writing.

328. This is not war for opinions, but an ultimatum of war for the liberation of debtors unjustly dealt with and oppressed.

329. The first part of the verse deals with transactions involving future payment or future consideration, and the second part with transactions in which payment and delivery are made on the spot. Examples of the former are if goods are bought now and payment...
Let a scribe write down
Faithfully as between
The parties: let not the scribe
Refuse to write: as Allah\(^\text{330}\)
Has taught him,
So let him write.
Let him who incurs
The liability dictate,
But let him fear Allah
His Lord
And not diminish
Aught of what he owes.
If the party liable
Is mentally deficient,
Or weak, or unable
Himself to dictate,\(^\text{331}\)
Let his guardian
Dictate faithfully,
And get two witnesses,
Out of your own men.\(^\text{332}\)
And if there are not two men,
Then a man and two women,
Such as ye choose,
For witnesses,

\(^{=}\) is promised at a fixed time and place in the future, or if cash is paid now and delivery is contracted for at a fixed time and place in the future. In such cases a written document is recommended, but it is held that the words later on in this verse, that it is “juster... more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts,” etc., imply that it is not obligatory in law. Examples of the latter kind—cash payment and delivery on the spot—require no evidence in writing, but apparently oral witnesses to such transactions are recommended.

330. The scribe in such matters assumes a Judiciary capacity; he should therefore remember to act as in the presence of Allah, with full justice to both parties. The art of writing he should look upon as a gift from Allah, and he should use it as in His service. In an illiterate population the scribe’s position is still more responsible.

331. Possibly the person “mentally deficient, or weak, or unable to dictate,” may also be incapable of making a valid contract, and the whole duty would be on his guardian, who again must act in perfect good faith, not only protecting but vigilantly promoting the interests of his ward.

332. It is desirable that the men (or women) who are chosen as witness should be from the circle to which the parties belong, as they would best be able to understand the transaction, and be most easily available if their evidence is required in future.
So that if one of them errs.
The other can remind her.
The witnesses
Should not refuse
When they are called on
(For evidence).
Disdain not to reduce
To writing (your contract)
For a future period,
Whether it be small
Or big; it is juster
In the sight of Allah,
More suitable as evidence,
And more convenient
To prevent doubts
Among yourselves
But if it be a transaction
Which ye carry out
On the spot among yourselves,
There is no blame on you
If ye reduce it not
To writing.
But take witnesses
Whenever ye make
A commercial contract;
And let neither scribe
Nor witness suffer harm.
If ye do (such harm),
It would be wickedness
In you. So fear Allah;
For it is Allah
That teaches you.
And Allah is well acquainted
With all things.\textsuperscript{333}

\textsuperscript{333}. Commercial morality is here taught on the highest plane and yet in the most practical manner, both as regards the bargains to be made, the evidence to be provided, the doubts to be avoided, and the duties and rights of scribes and witnesses. Probity even in worldly matters is to be, not a mere matter of convenience or policy, but a matter of conscience and religious duty. Even our every-day transactions are to be carried out as in the presence of Allah.
283. If ye are on a journey, 
And cannot find 
A scribe, a pledge 
With possession (may serve 
The purpose). 334
And if one of you 
Deposits a thing 
On trust with another, 335
Let the trustee 
(Faithfully) discharge 
His trust, and let him 
Fear Allah his Lord. 
Conceal not evidence; 
For whoever conceals it, 
His heart is tainted 336
With sin. And Allah 
Knoweth all that ye do.

SECTION 40.

284. To Allah belongeth all 
That is in the heavens 
And on earth. Whether 
Ye show what is in your minds 
Or conceal it, Allah

334. A pledge or security stands on its own independent footing, though it is a very convenient form of closing the bargain where the parties cannot trust each other, and cannot get a written agreement with proper witnesses.

335. The law of Deposit implies great trust in the Depositary on the part of the Depositor. The Depositary becomes a trustee, and the doctrine of Trust can be further developed on that basis. The trustee’s duty is to guard the interests of the person on whose behalf he holds the trust and to render back the property and accounts when required according to the terms of the trust. This duty again is linked to the sanction of Religion, which requires a higher standard than Law.

336. It sometimes happens that if some inconvenient piece of evidence is destroyed or concealed, we gain a great advantage materially. We are warned not to yield to such a temptation. The concealment of evidence has a serious effect on our own moral and spiritual life, for it taints the very source of higher life, as typified by the heart. The heart is also the seat of our secrets. We are told that the sin will reach our most secret being, though the sin may not be visible or open to the world. Further, the heart is the seat of our affections, and false dealing taints all our affections.
Calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, And punisheth whom He pleaseth. For Allah hath power Over all things.

285. The Messenger believeth In what hath been revealed To him from his Lord, As do the men of faith, Each one (of them) believeth In Allah, His angels, His books, and His Messengers. 337 "We make no distinction (they say) Between one and another Of his Messengers." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, 339 Our Lord, and to Thee Is the end of all journeys."

286. On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater Than it can bear. 340 It gets every good that it earns,

337. This Sûra started with the question of faith (ii. 3-4), showed us various aspects of Faith and the denial of Faith, gave us ordinances for the new People of Islam as a community, and now rounds off the argument again with a confession of Faith and of its practical manifestation in conduct ("we hear and we obey"), and closes on a note of humility, so that we may confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and pray for Allah's help and guidance.

338. Cf. ii. 253, n. 289. It is not for us to make any distinction between one and another of Allah's Messengers: we must honour them all equally, though we know that Allah in His wisdom sent them with different kinds of mission and gave them different degrees of rank.

339. When our faith and conduct are sincere, we realise how far from perfection we are, and we humbly pray to Allah for the forgiveness of our sins. We feel that Allah imposes no burden on us that we cannot bear, and with this realisation in our hearts and in the confession of our lips, we go to Him and ask for His help and guidance.

340. Cf. ii. 233. In that verse the burden was in terms of material wealth: here it is in terms of spiritual duty. Assured by Allah that He will accept from each soul just such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further on for the fulfilment of that promise.
341. We must not be arrogant, and think that because Allah has granted us His favour and mercy we have no need to exert ourselves, or that we are ourselves superior to those before us. On the contrary, knowing how much they failed, we pray that our burdens should be lightened, and we confess our realisation that we have all the greater need for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

And so we end the whole argument of the Sūra with a prayer for Allah's help, not in our own selfish ends, but in our resolve to uphold Allah's truth against all Unbelief.
APPENDIX 1.

The abbreviated Letters (Al-Muqatta‘āt)

Certain Suras have certain initials prefixed to them, which are called the "Abbreviated letters." A number of conjectures have been made as to their meaning. Opinions are divided as to the exact meaning of each particular letter or combination of letters, and it is agreed that only Allah knows their exact meaning.

Their presence is not inconsistent with the character of the Qur-ān as a "plain book." The book of nature is also a plain book, but how few can fully understand it? Every one can get out of the Qur-ān plain guidance for his life according to his capacity for spiritual understanding. As his capacity grows, so will his understanding grow. The whole Book is a Record for all time. It must necessarily contain meanings that only gradually unfold themselves to humanity.

This is not a mystery of the same class as "mysteries" by which we are asked to believe against the dictates of reason. If we are asked to believe that one is three and three is one, we can give no intelligible meaning to the words. If we are asked to believe that certain initials have a meaning which will be understood in the fullness of time, we are asked to draw upon Faith, but we are not asked to do any violence to our reason.

I shall try to discuss some of the probable meanings of any particular abbreviated letters or set of abbreviated letters on the first occasion on which it appears in the Qur-ān. But it may be desirable here to take a general view of the facts of their occurrence to help us in appreciating the various views which are held about them.

There are 29 letters in the Arabic alphabet (counting hamza and alif as two letters), and there are 29 Sūras which have abbreviated letters prefixed to them. One of these Sūras (S. xlii.) has two sets of abbreviated letters, but we need not count this Sūra twice. If we take the half of the alphabet, omitting the fraction, we get 14, and this is the number of letters which actually occur in the Muqatta‘āt.

The 14 letters, which occur in various combinations, are:

اء ك ه ح ط ي ر ع م س ق ن
The science of phonetics tells us that our vocal sounds arise from the expulsion of the air from the lungs, and the sounds are determined by the way in which the breath passes through the various organs of speech, e.g., the throat (guttural), or the various positions of the tongue to the middle or front of the palate or to the teeth, or the play of the lips. Everyone of these kinds of sounds is represented in these letters.

Let us now examine the combinations.

Three of these letters occur alone, prefixed each to only one Sūra. The letters and Sūras are:

- S. xxxviii.
- S. l.
- S. bxxviii.

The combinations of two letters occur in ten Sūras as shown below. Three of them occur only once each, but the fourth ḥām occurs in seven consecutive Sūras.

- S. xx.
- S. xxvii.
- S. xxxvi.
- S. xl.
- S. xli.
- S. xlii.
- S. xliii.
- S. xlv.
- S. xlv.
- S. xlvi.

Note that S. xlii. has a double combination of abbreviated letters, one of two followed by one of three. See under combinations of five.

There are three combinations of three letters each, occurring as follows in 13 Sūras:

- S. ii.
- S. iii.
- S. xxix.
- S. xxx.
- S. xxxi.
- S. xxxii.
- S. x.
- S. xi.
- S. xii.
- S. xiv.
- S. xv.
Combinations of four letters occur twice, each only once:

- S. vii. 
- S. xiii.

* Note that the three preceding and the two following Sūras have the triple letters. أَلْلَهَ.

Finally there remain the combinations of five letters, each of which occurs once only, as follows:

- S. xix. 
- S. xlii.

In S.xlii. the حَمْم and عَسَق are put in separate verses. From that point of view they may be considered two separate combinations. The first combination has already been listed under the group of two-letter combinations.

This arithmetical analysis brings certain facts into prominence. I do not know how far they have a bearing on the inner meaning of the Muqatta‘āt.

The combinations of abbreviated letters that run in a series in consecutive Sūras is noticeable. For example, حَمْم occurs in seven consecutive Sūras from xl. to xlivi. The combination أَلْلَهَ occurs in six consecutive Sūras x. to xv., but in one of them (S. xiii.) it is modified to أَلْلَهَ connecting it with the أَلْلَهَ series. The أَلْلَهَ series covers 6 Sūras. It begins with S. ii. and S. iii., which are practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, and ends with the four consecutive Sūras xxix. to xxxii. I call S. ii. and S. iii. practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, because S. i. is considered a general introduction to the Qur-ān, and the first Sūpārā is commonly known as أَلْلَهَ, the first verse of S. ii. The combination طَلْسَطْسُ is prefixed to S. xxvi. and S. xxviii., but the intervening S. xxvii. has the combination طَسْطِسْ, which may be considered a syncopated form, or the three-letter combination طَسْطِسْ may be considered an extended form of طَسْطِس. Again the question arises: does the مَ in حَمْم, أَلْلَهَ, and طَسْطِس, stand for the same signification, or does it mean a different thing in each case? We may generalise and say that there are three series of six, and one series of three, and the others occur all singly.

We should logically look for a common factor in the Sūras bearing the same initials, and this factor should be different for Sūras bearing other initials. In all cases where the abbreviated letters occur, there is some mention of the Qur-ān or the Book. The Itqān makes an exception in the case of three Sūras ‘Ankabūt (S. xxix), Rūm (S. xxx), and Nūn (S. lxviii). But a close perusal will show that these Sūras are no exceptions. In xxix. 27 we have a reference to
the Book remaining in the family of Abraham, and later on we have a whole
Section, devoted to the Book, with special reference to the continuity of
revelation in the previous Books and the Qur-ān (xxix. 45-51). In xxx. 58 there
is express mention of the Qur-ān, and the whole argument of the Sūra leads
up to the intimate relation between Allah’s “Signs” in nature (xxx. 20-27) and
His revelation in the Qur-ān. In S. lxviii, the very first verse begins the theme
with the Pen as the instrument of writing, exhorts Al-Muṭṭafā to stand forth
boldly to proclaim the Message, and ends (lxviii. 52) with the declaration that it
is a Message for all the worlds.

These are general considerations, which I have thought it most convenient
to present in the form of an Appendix.

* * *
INTRODUCTION TO SURA AL-IMRĀN, 3

This Sūra is cognate to Sūra II. but the matter is here treated from a different point of view. The references to Badr (Ramadhan. H. 2) and Uḥud (Shawwal. H. 3.) give a clue to the dates of those passages.

Like Sūra II. it takes a general view of the religious history of mankind, with special reference to the People of the Book, proceeds to explain the birth of the new People of Islam and their ordinances, insists on the need of struggle and fighting in the cause of Truth, and exhorts those who have been blessed with Islam to remain constant in Faith, pray for guidance, and maintain their hope for the Future.

The new points of view developed are: (1) The emphasis is here laid on the duty of the Christians to accept the new light: the Christians are here specially appealed to, as the Jews were specially appealed to in the last Sūra: (2) the lessons of the battles of Badr and Uḥud are set out for the Muslim community; and (3) the responsibilities of that community are insisted on both internally and in their relations to those outside.

Summary.— Allah having revealed His Book, confirming previous revelations, we must accept it in all reverence, try to understand its meaning, and reject the base motives which make Truth unacceptable to those who reject Faith. (iii. 1-20).

The People of the Book had only a portion of the Book, and if they reject the complete Book, the People of Faith must part company with them, and their day is done. (iii. 21-30).

The story of the family of ‘Imrān (the father of Mary) leads us from the Mosaic Dispensation to the miracles connected with the birth of Jesus and his ministry. (iii. 31-63).

Allah's revelation being continuous, all people are invited to accept its completion in Islam, and controversies are deprecated. The Muslims are asked to hold together in union and harmony, and are promised security from harm from their enemies, and enjoined to seek friendship among their own people. (iii. 64-120).

The battle of Badr showed how Allah helps and upholds the virtuous, and how patience, perseverance, and discipline find their reward; on the other hand, the lessons of Uḥud must be learnt, not in despair, but in the exercise of the higher virtues and in contempt of pain and death. (iii. 121-148).

The misfortunes at Uḥud are shown to be due to the indiscipline of some, the indecision- and selfishness of others, and cowardice on the part of the Hypocrites, but no enemy can hurt Allah's Cause. (iii. 149-180).

The taunts of the enemy should be disregarded, and sincere prayer offered to Allah, Who would grant His servants success and prosperity, (iii. 181-200).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M. 342

2. Allah! There is no god But He, the Living, The Self-Subsisting, The Supporter of all. 343

3. It is He Who sent down To thee (step by step), In truth, the Book, Confirming what went before it; And He sent down the Torah (Of Moses) and the Gospel344 (Of Jesus).

4. Before this, As a guide to mankind, And He sent down the Criterion345 (Of judgment between right and wrong).

Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah Will suffer the severest Chastisement and Allah Is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution.

342. See note to ii. 1.

343. Cf. ii. 255.

344. In some editions the break between verses 3 and 4 occurs here in the middle of the sentence, but in the edition of Hāfiz ‘Uthmān, followed by the Egyptian Concordance Fath-ur-Rahmān, the break occurs at the word Fiqrān. In verse-divisions our classicists have mainly followed rhythm. As the word Fiqrān from this point of view is parallel to the word Intiqām, which ends the next verse. I have accepted the verse-division at Fiqrān as more in consonance with Quranic rhythm. It makes no real difference to the numbering of the verses, as there is only a question of whether one line should go into verse 3 or verse 4.

345. Criterion: Fiqrān: for meaning see ii. 53 n. 68.
5. From Allah, verily
  Nothing is hidden
  On earth or in the heavens.

6. He it is Who shapes you
  In the wombs as He pleases. 346
  There is no god but He,
  The Exalted in Might,
  The Wise.

7. He it is Who has sent down
  To thee the Book:
  In it are verses
  Basic or fundamental
  Clear (in meaning);
  They are the foundation 347
  Of the Book: others
  Are not entirely clear. But those
  In whose hearts is perversity follow
  The part thereof that is not entirely
  clear.

Seeking discord, and searching
For its interpretation,
But no one knows
Its true meanings except Allah.

346. Who can penetrate the mystery of life when a new life is just being born, except Allah? The reference to the mystery of birth prepares us for the mystery of the birth of Jesus mentioned in iii. 41 and the following verses.

347. This passage gives us an important clue to the interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān. Broadly speaking it may be divided into two portions, not given separately, but intermingled: viz. (1) the nucleus or foundation of the Book, literally "the mother of the Book". (2) the part which is not entirely clear. It is very fascinating to take up the latter, and exercise our ingenuity about its meaning, but it refers to such profound matters that are beyond human language and though people of wisdom may get some light from it, no one should be dogmatic, as the final meaning is known to Allah alone. The Commentators usually understand the verses "of established meaning" (muhkam) to refer to the categorical orders of the Share'at (or the Law), which are plain to everyone's understanding. But perhaps the meaning is wider: the "mother of the Book" must include the very foundation on which all Law rests, the essence of Allah's Message, as distinguished from the various illustrative parables, allegories, and ordinances.
And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in it, the whole of it is from our Lord:” and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.

8. “O Lord!” (they say), “Let not our hearts deviate now after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thee: for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure.

9. “Our Lord! Thou art He that will gather mankind together against a Day about which there is no doubt; for Allah never fails in His promise.”

SECTION 2.

10. Those who reject faith, neither their possessions nor their progeny will avail them aught against Allah: they are fuel for the Fire.

11. (Their plight will be) no better than that

348. One reading, rejected by the majority of Commentators, but accepted by Mujahid and others, would not make a break at the point here marked Waq Lázim, but would run the two sentences together. In that case the construction would run: “No one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firm in knowledge. They say”, etc.

349. This is the prayer of those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. The more they know the more they realise how little they know. But they have faith. The glimpses they get of Truth they wish to hold fast in their hearts, and they pray to Allah to preserve them from deviating even from what light they have got. They are sure of their eventual return to Allah, when all doubts will be solved.
Of the people of Pharaoh,\(^{350}\)
And their predecessors:
They denied our Signs,
And Allah called them to account
For their sins.
For Allah is strict
In punishment.

12. Say to those who reject Faith:
"Soon will ye be vanquished\(^{351}\)
And gathered together
To Hell,—an evil bed
Indeed (to lie on)!

13. "There has already been
For you a Sign
In the two armies
That met (in combat):\(^{352}\)
One was fighting in the Cause

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350. From the beginning of the world, sin, oppression, arrogance, and want of Faith have gone together. The Pharaoh of the time of Moses relied upon his power, his territory, his armies, and his resources to mock at Moses the messenger of Allah and to oppress the people of Moses. Allah saved the Israelite and punished their oppressors through many plagues and calamities.

351. As Moses warned the Egyptians, so the warning is here sounded to the Pagan Arabs, the Jews and the Christians, and all who resisted Faith, that their resistance would be in vain. Already the battle of Badr (referred to in the next verse) had been a warning how Faith must conquer with the help of Allah. The next few decades saw the Byzantine and the Persian Empires overthrown because of their arrogance and their resistance to the Law of Allah.

352. This refers to the battle of Badr in Ramadān in the second year of the Hijra. The little exiled community of Makkān Muslims, with their friends in Madinah had organised themselves into a God-fearing community, but were constantly in danger of being attacked by their Pagan enemies of Makkah in alliance with some of the disaffected elements (Jews and Hypocrites) in or near Madinah itself. The design of the Makkans was to gather all the resources they could, and with an overwhelming force, to crush and annihilate Mūhammad and his party. To this end Abū Sufyān was leading a richly-laden caravan from Syria to Makkah. He called for armed aid from Makkah. The battle was fought in the plain of Badr, about 150 kilometers south-west of Madinah. The Muslim force consisted of only about 313 men, mostly ill-armed, but they were led by Mūhammad, and they were fighting for their Faith. The Makkān army, well-armed and well-equipped, numbered over a thousand and had among its leaders some of the most experienced warriors of Arabia, including Abū Jahl, the inveterate foe and persecutor of Islam. Against all odds the Muslims won a brilliant victory, and many of the enemy leaders, including Abū Jahl, were killed.
Of Allah, the other
Resisting Allah; these saw
With their own eyes
Twice their number.\(^{353}\)
But Allah doth support
With His aid whom He pleaseth.
In this is a lesson
For such as have eyes to see."

14. Fair in the eyes of men
Is the love of things they covet:\(^{354}\)
Women and sons;
Heaped-up hoards
Of gold and silver; horses
Branded (for blood and excellence);
And (wealth of) cattle
And well-tilled land.
Such are the possessions
Of this world's life;
But with Allah
Is the best of the goals
(To return to).

15. Say: Shall I give you
Glad tidings of things
Far better than those?
For the righteous are Gardens
In nearness to their Lord

353. It was impossible, without the miraculous aid of Allah, for such a small and ill-equipped force as was the Muslim band, to defeat the large and well-found force of the enemy. But their Faith firmness, zeal, and discipline won them divine aid. Enemy prisoners stated that the enemy ranks saw the Muslim force to be many times larger than it was.

354. The pleasures of this world are first enumerated: women for love; sons for strength and pride; hoarded riches, which procure all luxuries; the best and finest pedigree horses; cattle, the measure of wealth in the ancient world, as well as the means and symbols of good farming in the modern world; and broad acres of well-tilled land. By analogy, we may include, for our mechanized age, machines of all kinds—tractors, motor-cars, aeroplanes, the best internal-combustion engines, etc., etc. In "heaped-up hoards of gold and silver," the Arabic word translated hoards is qanāṭir plural of quintār, which literally means a Talent of 1.200 ounces of gold.
With rivers flowing beneath; 
Therein is their eternal home; 
With spouses purified\(^{355}\) 
And the good pleasure of Allah. 
For in Allah’s sight 
Are (all) His servants.—

16. (Namely), those who say: 
“Our lord! we have indeed 
Believed: forgive us, then, 
Our sins, and save us 
From the agony of the Fire;”—

17. Those who show patience. 
(Firmness and self-control;\(^{356}\) 
Who are true (in word and deed); 
Who worship devoutly; 
Who spend (in the way of Allah); 
And who pray for forgiveness 
In the early hours of the morning\(^{357}\)

18. There is no god but He: 
That is the witness of Allah, 
His angels, and those endued 
With knowledge, standing firm\(^{358}\) 
On justice. There is no god but He 
The Exalted in Power, 
The Wise.

\(^{355}\) Cf. ii. 25 and n. 44.

\(^{356}\) \(\textit{Sabr}\) (\(\textit{Ṣābirīn}\)) includes many shades of meaning: I have specified three here, \(viz.\), patience, firmness, and self-control. See ii. 45 and ii. 153 and notes thereon.

\(^{357}\) True servants of Allah are described in iii. 16 and 17. They have faith, humility, and hope (iii. 16); and they have certain virtues (iii. 17) \(viz.\), (1) patience, steadfastness, self-restraint, and all that goes under the full definition of \(\textit{Sabr}\); this shows a certain attitude of mind: (2) in all their dealings they are true and sincere as they are also in their promises and words; this marks them out in social conduct: (3) further, their spiritual worship is earnest and deep, an inner counterpart of their outward conduct: (4) their worship of Allah shows itself in their love of their fellow-men, for they are ready and liberal in charity: and (5) their self-discipline is so great that the first thing they do every morning is humbly to approach their God.

\(^{358}\) Allah Himself speaks to us through His revelations (through angels) and through His Creation, for all Nature glorifies Allah. No thinking mind, if it only judges the matter fairly, can fail to find the same witness in his own heart and conscience. All this points to the Unity of Allah, His exalted nature, and His wisdom.
19. The Religion before Allah

Is Islam (submission to His Will):

Nor did the People of the Book

Dissent therefrom except

Through envy of each other, through selfish contumacy or obstinacy, through sheer contrary-mindedness, or desire to resist or rebel. Cf. ii. 90, and ii. 213.

20. So if they dispute with thee,

Say: “I have submitted

My whole self to Allah

And so have those

Who follow me.”

And say to the People of the Book

And to those who are unlearned:

“Do ye (also) submit yourselves?”

If they do, they are in right guidance,

But if they turn back,

Thy duty is to convey the Message;

And in Allah’s sight

Are (all) His servants.

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359. Bagyan: through envy, through selfish contumacy or obstinacy, through sheer contrary-mindedness, or desire to resist or rebel. Cf. ii. 90, and ii. 213.

360. Wajh: whole self. See n. 114 to ii. 112.

361. The People of the Book may be supposed to know something about the previous religious history of mankind. To them the appeal should be easy and intelligible, as all Religion is one, and it is only being renewed in Islam. But the appeal is also made to the Pagan Arabs, who are unlearned, and who can well be expected to follow the example of one of their own, who received divine enlightenment, and was able to bring new knowledge to them. A great many of both these classes did so. But the few who resisted Allah’s grace, and actually threatened and persecuted those who believed, are told that Allah will look after His own.

362. Note the literary skill in the argument as it proceeds. The mystery of birth faintly suggests that we are coming to the story of Jesus. The exposition of the Book suggests that Islam is the same religion as that of the People of the Book. Next we are told that the People of the Book made their religion one-sided, and through the priesthood of the family of ’Imrân, we are brought to the story of Jesus, who was rejected by a body of the Jews as Muḥammad was rejected by a body of both Jews and Christians.
21. As to those who deny
The Signs of Allah, and in defiance
Of right, slay the prophets,
And slay those who teach
Just dealing with mankind,
Announce to them a grievous chastisement.

22. They are those whose works
Will bear no fruit
In this world
And in the Hereafter,
Nor will they have
Anyone to help.

23. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those
Who have been given a portion
Of the Book? They are
Invited to the Book of Allah,
To settle their dispute,
But a party of them
Turn back and decline
(The arbitration).

363. Right; haqq has many shades of meaning; (1) right, in the sense of having a right to something; (2) right, in the sense of straight conduct, as opposed to wrong; (3) truth; (4) justice. All these shades are implied here.

364. Examples of the Prophets slain were: “the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar”: Matt. xxiii. 35. Cf. Q. ii. 61. n. 75. Again, John the Baptist (Yahyá, noble, chaste, a prophet, of the goodly company of the righteous. Q. iii. 39), was bound, imprisoned, and beheaded, and his head presented to a dancing harlot: Matt. xiv. 1-11.

365. Cf. ii. 217. end.

366. A portion of the Book. I conceive that Allah’s revelation as a whole throughout the ages is “The Book”. The Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus were portions of the Book. The Qur-an completes the revelation and is par excellence the Book of Allah.

367. The Commentators mention a particular incident when a dispute was submitted by the Jews for arbitration to the Holy Prophet. He appealed to the authority of their own books, but they tried to conceal and prevaricate. The general lesson is that the
24. This because they say:
"The Fire shall not touch us
But for a few numbered days".  
For their forgeries deceive them
As to their own religion.

25. But how (will they fare)
When We gather them together
Against a Day about which
There is no doubt,
And each soul will be paid out
Just what it has earned,
Without (favour or) injustice?

26. Say: "O Allah!
Lord of Power (and Rule),
Thou givest Power
To whom Thou pleasest,
And Thou strippest off Power
From whom Thou pleasest:
Thou enduest with honour
Whom Thou pleasest,
And Thou bringest low
Whom Thou pleasest:
In Thy hand is all Good.

27. "Thou causest the Night
To gain on the Day.

= People of the Book should have been the first to welcome in Muhammad the living exponent of the Message of Allah as a whole, and some of them did so: but others turned away from guilty arrogance, relying on corrupted texts and doctrines forged out of their own fancies, though they were not conformable to reason and good sense.

368. Cf. Q. ii. 80.

369. Another glorious Passage, full of meaning. The governing phrase in it all is: "In Thy hand is all Good." What is the standard by which we may judge Good? It is Allah's Will. Therefore when we submit to Allah's Will, and real Islam illuminates us, we see the highest Good. There has been and is much controversy as to what is the Highest Good. To the Muslim there is no difficulty: it is the Will of Allah. He must ever strive to learn and understand that Will. But once in that fortress, he is secure. He is not troubled with the nature of evil.
And Thou causest the Day
to gain on the Night; Thou bringest the Living
out of the Dead,
And Thou bringest the Dead
out of the Living,
And Thou givest sustenance
to whom Thou pleasest,
without measure. 372

370. True in many senses. In every twenty-four hours, night merges into day, and
day into night, and there is no clear boundary between them. In every solar year, the
night gains on the day after the summer solstice, and the day gains on the night after
the winter solstice. But further, if light and darkness are viewed as symbols of (a)
knowledge and ignorance, (b) happiness and misery, (c) spiritual insight and spiritual
blindness, Allah’s Plan or Will works here too as in the physical world, and in His hand
is all Good.

371. We can interpret Dead and Living in even more senses than Day and Night: death
physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual. Life and Death may also apply to collective,
group, or national life. And who has ever solved the mystery of Life? But Faith refers
it to Allah’s Will and Plan.

372. Again true in all the senses suggested in the two previous notes. The only
Eternal Reality is Allah. All else has its basis and sustenance from Him. Lest our little
minds create fear out of “nicely calculated less or more”, we are told at once that Allah’s
bounty is without measure or account.

373. If Faith is a fundamental matter in our lives our associations and friendships will
naturally be with those who share our Faith. “Evil communications corrupt good
manners”: and evil company may corrupt Faith. In our ordinary every-day affairs of
business, we are asked to seek the help of Believers rather than Unbelievers. Only in
this way can our community be strong in organisation and unity. But where there is no
question of preference, or where in self-defence we have to take the assistance of those
not belonging to our Faith, that is permissible. In any case we must not weaken our
Brotherhood: we must try to make it stronger if possible.
29. Say: "Whether ye hide What is in your hearts Or reveal it, Allah knows it all: He knows what is In the heavens, And what is on earth. And Allah has power Over all things.

30. "On the Day when every soul Will be confronted With all the good it has done, And all the evil it has done, It will wish there were A great distance Between it and its evil. But Allah cautions you (To fear) Him And Allah is full of kindness To those that serve Him."

SECTION 4.

31. Say: "If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you And forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

32. Say: "Obey Allah And His Messenger": But if they turn back, Allah loveth not those Who reject Faith.

33. Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family Of Abraham, and the family Of 'Imran above all people,-
34. Offspring, one of the other; 374
And Allah heareth
And knoweth all things.

35. Behold! wife of 'Imrān 375
Said: "O my Lord! I do
Dedicate into Thee
What is in my womb
For Thy special service:" 376
So accept this of me:
For Thou hearest
And knowest all things."

36. When she was delivered,
She said: "O my Lord!
Behold! I am delivered
Of a female child!"
And Allah knew best
What she brought forth— 377
"And is not the male

374. The Prophets in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dispensation form one family literally. But the argument is wider. All men of faith form one family. If you love and obey Allah, love and obey His Messenger; your love, obedience and discipline will be the test of your Faith.

375. Now we begin the story of Jesus. As a prelude we have the birth of Mary and the parallel story of John the Baptist, Yahyā the son of Zakariya. Yahyā’s mother Elisabeth was a cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke i. 36), and therefore John and Jesus were cousins by blood, and there was a spiritual cousinhood in their birth and career. Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron (Luke i. 5), of a priestly family which went back to Aaron the brother of Moses and son of ‘Imrān. Her husband Zakariya was actually a priest, and her cousin Mary was presumably also of a priestly family. By tradition Mary’s mother was called Hannah (in Latin, Anna, and in English, Anne), and her father was called ‘Imrān. Hannah is therefore both a descendant of the priestly house of ‘Imrān and the wife of ‘Imrān,—a woman of ‘Imrān” in a double sense.

376. Muharrar = freed from all worldly affairs and specially dedicated to Allah’s service. She expected a son, who was to be a special devotee, a miraculous son of the old age of his parents, but Allah gave her instead a daughter. But that daughter was Mary the mother of Jesus, the chosen one among the women: iii. 42.

377. The mother of Mary expected a male child. Was she disappointed that it was a female child? No, for she had Faith, and she knew that Allah’s Plan was better than any wishes of hers. Mary was no ordinary girl: only Allah knew what it was that her mother brought forth.
Like the female.\textsuperscript{378}

I have named her Mary,
And I commend her
And her offspring
To Thy protection
From Satan
The Rejected."

37. Right graciously
Did her Lord accept her:
He made her grow
In purity and beauty:
To the care of Zakariya
Was she assigned.
Every time that he entered
(Her) chamber to see her,
He found her supplied
With sustenance. He said:
"O Mary! Whence (comes) this
To you?" She said:
"From Allah: for Allah
Provides sustenance
To whom He pleases,
Without measure.\textsuperscript{379}

38. There did Zakariya
Pray to his Lord! saying:
'O my Lord! Grant unto me
From Thee a progeny

\textsuperscript{378} The female child could not be devoted to Temple service under the Mosaic law, as she intended. But she was marked out for a special destiny as a miracle-child, to be the mother of the miracle-child Jesus. She was content to seek Allah's protection for her against all evil. There is a certain sense of pride in the girl on the part of the mother.

\textsuperscript{379} Mary grew under Allah's special protection. Her sustenance, under which we may include both her physical needs and her spiritual food, came from Allah, and her growth was indeed a "goodly growth" which I have tried to express in the Text by the words "purity and beauty". Some apocryphal Christian writings say that she was brought up in the Temple to the age of twelve like a dove, and that she was fed by angels.
That is pure: for Thou
Art He that heareth prayer! 380

39. While he was standing
In prayer in the chamber,
The angels called unto him:
"Allah doth give thee
Glad tidings of Yahyā,
Confirming the truth
Of a Word from Allah, 381 and (be
Besides) noble, chaste,
And a Prophet,—
Of the (goodly) company
Of the righteous."

40. He said: "O my Lord!
How shall I have a son,
Seeing I am very old,
And my wife is barren?"
"Thus," was the answer,
"Doth Allah accomplish
What He willeth."

41. He said: "O my Lord!
Give me a Sign!"
"Thy Sign," was the answer,
"Shall be that thou
Shalt speak to no man
For three days
But with signals.
Then celebrate
The praises of thy Lord
Again and again.

380. The birth of Mary, the mother of Jesus, of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus, and of Jesus, the prophet of Israel, whom Israel rejected, occurred in that order chronologically, and are told in that order. They are all inter-connected. Zakariya prayed for no ordinary son. He and his wife were past the age of parenthood. Seeing the growth of Mary, he prayed for some child from Allah,—"from Thee, a progeny that is pure". To his surprise, he is given a son in the flesh, ushered in by a special Sign.

381. Notice: "a Word from Allah", not "the Word of Allah", the epithet that mystical Christianity uses for Jesus. As stated in iii. 59 below, Jesus was created by a miracle, by Allah's word "Be", and he was.
42. Behold! the angels said:
"O Mary! Allah hath chosen thee
And purified thee—chosen thee
Above the women of all nations.

43. "O Mary! worship
The Lord devoutly:
Prostrate thyself,
And bow down (in prayer)
With those who bow down."

44. This is part of the tidings
Of the things unseen,383
Which We reveal unto thee
(O Prophet!) by inspiration:
Thou wast not with them
When they cast lots
With pens,384 as to which
Of them should be charged
With the care of Mary:
Nor wast thou with them
When they disputed (the point).385

382. Mary the mother of Jesus was unique, in that she gave birth to a son by a special miracle, without the intervention of the customary physical means. This of course does not mean that she was more than human, any more than that her son was more than human. She had as much need to pray to Allah as anyone else. The Christian dogma, in all sects except the Unitarian, holds that Jesus was Allah and the son of Allah. The worship of Mary became the practice in the Roman Catholic Church, which calls Mary the Mother of Allah. This seems to have been endorsed by the Council of Ephesus in 431, in the century before Muhammad was born to sweep away the corruptions of the Church of Christ. For 'ālāmin as meaning all nations, see iii. 96, n. 423.

383. Things unseen: belong to a realm beyond the reach of human perception and therefore it would be unseemly to dispute or speculate about them.

384. Aqlām. For the Arab custom of casting lots with arrows, see ii. 219, n. 241.

385. Christian apocryphal writings mention the contention between the priests as to the honour of taking charge of Mary, and how it was decided by means of rods or reeds in favour of Zakariya.
45. Behold! the angels said:
   “O Mary! Allah giveth thee
   Glad tidings of a Word
   From Him: his name
   Will be Christ Jesus,386
   The son of Mary, held in honour
   In this world and the Hereafter
   And of (the company of) those
   Nearest to Allah;387
46. “He shall speak to the people
   In childhood and in maturity.388
   And he shall be (of the company)
   Of the righteous.”
47. She said: “O my Lord!389
   How shall I have a son
   When no man hath touched me?”
   He said: “Even so;
   Allah createth
   What He willeth:
   When He hath decreed
   A matter, He but saith
   To it, ‘Be,’ and it is!
48. “And Allah will teach him
   The Book and Wisdom,
   The Torah and the Gospel,
49. “And (appoint him)
   A messenger to the Children
   Of Israel, (with this message):

386. *Christ*: Greek, *Christos* = anointed: kings and priests were anointed to symbolise consecration to their office. The Hebrew and Arabic form is *Masih*.


388. The ministry of Jesus lasted only about three years, from 30 to 33 years of his age, when in the eyes of his enemies he was crucified. But the Gospel of Luke (ii. 46) describes him as disputing with the doctors in the Temple at the age of 12, and even earlier, as a child, he was “strong in spirit, filled with wisdom” (Luke ii. 40). Some apocryphal Gospels describe him as preaching from infancy.

389. She was addressed by angels, who gave her Allah’s message. In reply she speaks as to Allah. In reply, apparently an angel again gives Allah’s message.
"I have come to you,
With a Sign from your Lord,
In that I make for you
Out of clay, as it were,
The figure of a bird,
And breathe into it,
And it becomes a bird
By Allah’s leave:390
And I heal those
Born blind, and the lepers,
And I bring the dead into life
By Allah’s leave;
And I declare to you
What ye eat, and what ye store391
In your houses. Surely
Therein is a Sign for you
If ye did believe;

50. ‘(I have come to you),
To attest the Torah
Which was before me.
And to make lawful
To you part of what was
(Before) forbidden to you;
I have come to you
With a Sign from your Lord.
So fear Allah,
And obey me.

51. ‘It is Allah
Who is my Lord
And your Lord;
Then worship Him.
This is a Way
That is straight.”’

390. This miracle of the clay birds is found in some of the apocryphal Gospels; those of curing the blind and the lepers and raising the dead are in the canonical Gospels. The original Gospel (see iii. 48) was not the various stories written afterwards by disciples, but the real Message taught direct by Jesus.

391. This clause refers generally to a prophetic knowledge of what is not known to other people.
52. When Jesus found Unbelief on their part He said: "Who will be My helpers to (the work Of) Allah? Said the Disciples: 'We are Allah's helpers We believe in Allah, And do thou bear witness That we are Muslims.'

53. "Our Lord! we believe In what Thou hast revealed, And we follow the Messenger; Then write us down Among those who bear witness."

54. And (the unbelievers) Plotted and planned, And Allah too planned, And the best of planners Is Allah.

SECTION 6.

55. Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee And raise thee to Myself

392. The story of Jesus is told with special application to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Note the word helpers (Anṣār) in this connection, and the reference to plotters in iii. 54. It was the one Religion—the Religion of Allah, which was in essence the religion of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. The argument runs: who do ye then now make divisions and reject the living Teacher? Islam is: bowing to the Will of Allah. All who have faith should bow to the Will of Allah and be Muslims.

393. The Arabic Makara has both a bad and a good meaning, that of making an intricate plan to carry out some secret purpose. The enemies of Allah are constantly doing that. But Allah—in whose hands is all good—has His plans also, against which the evil ones will have no chance whatever.

394. Read this with iv. 157, where it is said that "whereas they slew him not nor they crucified him but it was made dubious unto them. The guilt of the Jews remained, but Jesus was eventually taken up to Allah."
And clear thee (of the falsehoods)"
Of those who blaspheme;
I will make those
Who follow thee superior." To those who reject faith,
To the Day of Resurrection:
Then shall ye all
Return unto me,
And I will judge
Between you of the matters
Wherein ye dispute.

"As to those who reject faith,
I will punish them
With severe chastisement
In this world and in the Hereafter
Nor will they have
Anyone to help.

"As to those who believe
And work righteousness,
Allah will pay them (in full)
Their reward;
But Allah loveth not
Those who do wrong.

"This is what we rehearse
Unto thee of the Signs
And the Message
Of Wisdom."

395. Jesus was charged by the Jews with blasphemy as claiming to be Allah or the son of Allah. The Christians (except a few early sects which were annihilated by persecution, and the modern sect of Unitarians), adopted the substance of the claim, and made it the cornerstone of their faith. Allah clears Jesus of such a charge or claim.

396. Those who follow thee refers to those who followed Jesus in contrast to the Jews who rejected him.

397. All the controversies about dogma and faith will disappear when we appear before Allah. He will judge not by what we profess but by what we are.
59. The similitude of Jesus
Before Allah is as that of Adam: He created him from dust, Then said to him: “Be”: And he was.

60. The Truth
From thy Lord alone; So be not of those Who doubt

61. If any one disputes In this matter with thee, Now after (full) knowledge Hath come to thee, Say: “Come! let us Gather together,— Our sons and your sons, Our women and your women, Ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray. And invoke the curse Of Allah on those who lie!

398. After a description of the high position which Jesus occupies as a prophet, we have a repudiation of the dogma that he was Allah, or the son of Allah, or anything more than a man. If it is said that he was born without a human father, Adam was also so born. Indeed Adam was born without either a human father or mother. As far as our physical bodies are concerned they are mere dust. In Allah’s sight Jesus was as dust just as Adam was or humanity is. The greatness of Jesus arose from the divine command “Be”: for after that he was—more than dust—a great Prophet and teacher.

399. The truth does not necessarily come from priests, or from the superstitions of whole peoples. It comes from Allah, and where there is a direct revelation, there is no room for doubt.

400. In the year of Deputations, 10th of the Hijra, came a Christian embassy from Najrān (towards Yaman, about 150 miles north of Sana‘ā). They were much impressed on hearing this passage of the Qur-ān explaining the true position of Christ, and they entered into tributary relations with the new Muslim State. But ingrained habits and customs prevented them from accepting Islam as a body. The Holy Prophet, firm in his faith, proposed a Mubahala, i.e., a solemn meeting, in which both sides should summon not only their men, but their women and children, earnestly pray to Allah, and invoke the curse of Allah on those who should lie. Those who had a pure and sincere faith would not hesitate. The Christians declined, and they were dismissed in a spirit of tolerance with a promise of protection from the State in return for tribute.
401. We are now in a position to deal with the questions which we left over at ii. 87. Jesus is no more than a man. It is against reason and revelation to call him Allah or the son of Allah. He is called the son of Mary to emphasize this. He had no human father, as his birth was miraculous. But it is not this which raise him to his high position as a prophet, but because Allah called him to his office. The praise is due to Allah, Who by His word gave him spiritual strength—"strengthened him with the Holy spirit. The miracles which surround his story relate not only to the "Clear Signs" which he brought. It was those who misunderstood him who obscured his clear Signs and surrounded him with mysteries of their own invention.

402. In the abstract the People of the Book would agree to all three propositions. In practice they fail. Apart from doctrinal lapses from the unity of the One True God, there is the question of a consecrated Priesthood (among the Jews it was hereditary also), as if a mere human being—Cohen, or Pope, or Priest, or Brahman,—could claim superiority apart from his learning and the purity of his life, or could stand between man and Allah in some special sense. The same remarks apply to the worship of saints. They may be pure and sincere, but no one can protect us or claim Lordship over us except Allah. For Rabb, see i. 2. n. Abraham was a true Prophet of Allah, but he could not be called a Jew or a Christian as he lived long before the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Jesus was revealed.
If then they turn back,
Say ye: "Bear witness
That we (at least)
Are Muslims (bowing
To Allah's Will)."

65. Ye People of the Book!
Why dispute ye
About Abraham,
When the Torah and the Gospel
Were not revealed
Till after him?
Have ye no understanding?

66. Ah! Ye are those
Who fell to disputing
(Even) in matters of which
Ye had some Knowledge. But why dispute ye
In matters of which
Ye have no knowledge?
It is Allah Who knows,
And ye who know not!

67. Abraham was not a Jew
Nor yet a Christian;
But he was Upright,
And bowed his will to Allah's,
(Which is Islam).
And he joined not gods with Allah.

68. Without doubt, among men,
The nearest of kin to Abraham,
Are those who follow him,
As are also this Prophet
And those who believe:

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403. The number of sects among the Jews and Christians shows that they wrangled and disputed even about some of the matters of their own religion, of which they should have had some knowledge. But when they talk of Father Abraham, they are entirely out of court, as he lived before their peculiar systems were evolved.

404. Cf. ii. 135 and the whole argument in that passage.
And Allah is the Protector
Of those who have faith.

69. It is the wish of a section
Of the People of the Book
To lead you astray.
But they shall lead astray
(Not you), but themselves,
And they do not perceive!

70. Ye People of the Book!
Why reject ye
The Signs of Allah,
Of which ye are
(Yourself) witnesses?

71. Ye People of the Book!
Why do ye clothe
Truth with falsehood,
And conceal the Truth,
While ye have knowledge?

SECTION 8.

72. A section of the People
Of the Book say:
"Believe in the morning
What is revealed
To the Believers,
But reject it at the end
Of the day: perchance
They may (themselves)
Turn back;

405. There are many ways of preventing the access of people to the truth. One is
to temper with it, or trick it out in colours of falsehood: half-truths are often more
dangerous than obvious falsehoods. Another is to conceal it altogether. Those who are jealous of
a prophet of Allah, whom they actually see before them, do not allow his credentials
or virtues to be known, or vilify him, or conceal facts which would attract people to him.
When people do this of set purpose, against their own light ("of which ye are yourselves
witnesses"), they are descending to the lowest depths of degradation, and they are doing
more harm to themselves than to anyone else.

406. *Wajh* here has the sense of "beginning", early part. The cynics who plotted
against Islam actually asked their accomplices to join the believers and then repudiate
them.
73. “And believe no one
Unless he follows
Your religion.”
Say: “True guidance
Is the guidance of Allah:
(Fear ye) lest a revelation407
Be sent to someone (else)
Like unto that which was sent
Unto you? Or that those
(Receiving such revelation)
Should engage you in argument
Before your Lord?408
Say: “All bounties
Are in the hand of Allah:
He granteth them
To whom He pleaseth:
And Allah careth for all,
And He knoweth all things.”

74. For His Mercy He specially chooseth
Whom He pleaseth:
For Allah is the Lord
Of bounties unbounded

75. Among the People of the Book
Are some who, if entrusted
With a hoard of gold,409
Will (readily) pay it back;
Others, who, if entrusted
With a single silver coin,410

407. The two clauses following have been variously construed, and some translations leave the sense ambiguous. I have construed the conjunction “an” to mean “lest”, as it undoubtedly does in vii. 172. ‘an taquli’, etc.

408. Cf. ii. 76. The People of the Book were doubly annoyed at the Muslims: (1) that they should (being outside their ranks) receive Allah’s revelations, and (2) that having received such revelations, they should be able to convict them out of their own scriptures before their Lord.


410. Silver coin: dinār. In the later Roman Empire, the denarius was a small silver coin. It must have been current in Syria and the markets of Arabia in the time of the Prophet. It was the coin whose name is translated in the English Bible by the word penny.
Will not repay it unless
Thou constantly stoodest
Demanding, because,
They say: “there is no way
Over us as to the
Unlettered people,”\(^{411}\)
But they tell a lie against Allah,
And (well) they know it.

76. Nay,-Those that keep
Their plighted faith
And act aright,—verily
Allah loves those
Who act aright.

77. As for those who sell
The faith they owe to Allah
And their own solemn plighted word
For a small price,\(^{412}\)
They shall have no portion
In the Hereafter:
Nor will Allah
(Deign to) speak to them
Or look at them
On the Day of Judgment,
Nor will He cleanse them\(^{413}\)

\(^{411}\) Every race imbued with race arrogance resorts to this kind of moral or religious subterfuge. Even if its members are usually honest or just among themselves, they are contemptuous of those outside their circle, and cheat and deceive them without any qualms of conscience. This is a “lie against Allah.”

\(^{412}\) All our duties to our fellow creatures are referred to the service and faith we owe to Allah. But in the matter of truth an appeal is made to our self-respect as responsible beings: is it becoming that we should be false to our own word, to ourselves? And then we are reminded that the utmost we can gain by falsifying Allah’s word or being untrue to ourselves is but a miserable price. We get at best something very paltry as the price for selling our very souls.

\(^{413}\) Even on sinners—ordinary sinners—Allah will look with compassion and mercy: He will speak words of kindness and cleanse them of their sins. But those who are in active rebellion against Allah and sin against their own light,—what mercy can they expect?
It is not in reason or in the nature of things that Allah's messenger should preach against Allah. Jesus came to preach and convey the true message of Allah.

78. There is among them
A section who distort
The Book with their tongues;
(As they read) so that you would think
It is a part of the Book,
But it is no part
Of the Book; and they say,
"That is from Allah,"
But it is not from Allah:
It is they who tell
A lie against Allah,
And (well) they know it!

79. It is not (possible)
That a man, to whom
Is given the Book,
And Wisdom.
And the Prophetic Office,
Should say to people:
"Be ye my worshippers
Rather than Allah's":414
On the contrary
(He would say):
"Be ye worshippers
Of Him (Who is truly
The Cherisher of all)
For ye have taught
The Book and ye
Have studied it earnestly."

80. Nor would he instruct you
To take angels and prophets415
For Lords and Patrons.
What! would he bid you

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414. It is not in reason or in the nature of things that Allah's messenger should preach against Allah. Jesus came to preach and convey the true message of Allah.

415. Jesus was a prophet, and the Holy Spirit "with which he was strengthened" was the Angel who brought the revelations to him.
To unbelief after ye have
Bowed your will
(To Allah in Islam)?

SECTION 9.

81. Behold! Allah took
The Covenant of the Prophets,416
Saying: “I give you
A Book and Wisdom:
Then comes to you
A Messenger, confirming
What is with you;
Do ye believe in him
And render him help.”
Allah said: “Do ye agree,
And take this my Covenant
As binding on you?”
They said: “We agree.”
He said: “Then bear witness,
And I am with you
Among the witnesses.”

82. If any turn back
After this, they are
Perverted transgressors.

83. Do they seek
For other than the Religion

416. Cf. ii. 63. n. 78. The argument is: You (People of the Book) are bound by your own oaths, sworn solemnly in the presence of your own Prophets. In the Old Testament as it now exists, Muhammad is foretold in Deut. xviii. 18: and the rise of the Arab nation in Isaiah. xlii. 11. for Kedar was a son of Ismā’il and the name is used for the Arab nation: in the New Testament as it now exists. Muhammad is foretold in the Gospel of St. John. xiv. 16, xv. 26, and xvi. 7: the future Comforter cannot be the Holy Spirit as understood by Christians, because the Holy Spirit already was present, helping and guiding Jesus. The Greek word translated “Comforter” is “Paracletos”, which is an easy corruption from “Periclytos”, which is almost a literal translation of “Muhammad” or “Ahmad”: see Q lix. 6. Further, there were other Gospels that have perished, but of which traces still remain, which were even more specific in their reference to Muhammad; e.g., the Gospel of St. Barnabas, of which an Italian translation is extant in the State Library at Vienna. It was edited in 1907 with an English translation by Mr. Lonsdale and Laura Ragg.
84. Say: “We believe
In Allah, and in what
Has been revealed to us
And what was revealed
To Abraham, Ismā’īl;
Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes,
And in (the Books)
Given to Moses, Jesus,
And the Prophets,
From their Lord:
We make no distinction
Between one and another
Among them, and to Allah do we
Bow our will (in Islam).”

85. If anyone desires
A religion other than
Islam (submission to Allah) 418
Never will it be accepted

417. Allah’s Truth is manifest, and all that is good and true and sane and normal accepts it with joy. But even where there is “disease in the heart” (Q. ii. 10), or judgment is obscured by perversity, every creature must eventually see and acknowledge Allah and His power (ii. 167). Cf. R. Bridges: “Testament of Beauty”: iv. 1419-22:—“For God’s love is unescapable as nature’s environment, which if a man ignore or think to thrust it off, he is the ill-natured fool that runneth blindly on death.” All Nature adores Allah, and Islam asks for nothing peculiar or sectarian; it but asks that we follow our nature and make our will conformable to Allah’s Will as seen in Nature, history, and revelation. Its message is universal.

418. The Muslim position is clear. The Muslim does not claim to have a religion peculiar to himself. Islam is not a sect or an ethnic religion. In its view all Religion is one, for the Truth is one. It was the religion preached by all the earlier Prophets. It was the truth taught by all the inspired Books. In essence it amounts to a consciousness of the Will and Plan of Allah and a joyful submission to that Will and Plan. If any one wants a religion other than that, he is false to his own nature, as he is false to Allah’s Will and Plan. Such a one cannot expect guidance, for he has deliberately renounced guidance.
Of him; and in the Hereafter
He will be in the ranks
Of those who have lost.

86. How shall Allah
Guide those who reject
Faith after they accepted it
And bore witness
That the Messenger was true
And that Clear Signs
Had come unto them?
But Allah guides not
A people unjust.

87. Of such the reward
Is that on them (rests)
The curse of Allah,
Of His angels,
And of all mankind;—

88. In that will they dwell;
Nor will their punishment
Be lightened, nor respite
Be their (lot):—\(^{418-A}\)

89. Except for those that repent
(Even) after that.
And make amends;
For verily Allah
Is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

90. But those who reject
Faith after they accepted it.
And then go on adding
To their defiance of Faith,—
Never will their repentance
Be accepted: for they
Are those who have
Gone astray.

\(^{418-A}\) Cf. ii. 161-62.
91. As to those who reject Faith, and die rejecting—
Never would be accepted
From any such as much
Gold as the earth contains,
Though they should offer it
For ransom. For such
Is (in store) a chastisement grievous
And they will find no helpers.

SECTION 10.

92. By no means shall ye
Attain righteousness unless
Ye give (freely) of that\textsuperscript{419}
Which ye love: and whatever
Ye give,
Allah knoweth it well.

93. All food was lawful
To the Children of Israel,
Except what Israel\textsuperscript{420}
Made unlawful for himself
Before the Torah
Was revealed. Say:
"Bring ye the Torah
And study it,
If ye be men of truth."

\textsuperscript{419} The test of charity is: do you give something that you value greatly, something that you love? If you give your life in a Cause, that is the greatest gift you can give. If you give yourself, that is, your personal efforts, your talents, your skill, your learning, that comes next in degree. If you give your earnings, your property, your possessions, that is also a great gift; for many people love them even more than other things. And there are less tangible things, such as position, reputation, the well-being of those we love, the regard of those who can help us, etc. It is unselfishness that Allah demands, and there is no act of unselfishness, however small or intangible, but is well within the knowledge of Allah.

\textsuperscript{420} The Arabs ate the flesh of the camel, which is lawful in Islam, but it was prohibited by the Jewish Law of Moses (Leviticus xi. 4). But that Law was very strict because of the "hardness of heart" of Israel, because of Israel's insolence and iniquity (Q. vi. 146). Before it was promulgated Israel was free to choose its own food.
94. If any, after this, invent
   A lie and attribute it
   To Allah, they are indeed
   Unjust wrong-doers.

95. Say: "Allah speaketh
   The Truth: follow
   The religion of Abraham,
   The sane in faith: he
   Was not of the Pagans." 421

96. The first House (of worship)
   Appointed for men
   Was that at Bakka: 422
   Full of blessing
   And of guidance
   For all the worlds. 423

97. In it are Signs
   Manifest;
   The Station of Abraham; 424
   Whoever enters it
   Attains security; 425
   Pilgrimage thereto is a duty
   Men owe to Allah,—
   Those who can afford
   The journey; but if any
   Deny faith, Allah stands not
   In need of any of His creatures.

421. The greater freedom of Islam in the matter of the ceremonial law, compared
   with the Mosaic Law, is not a reproach but a recommendation. We go back to an older
   source than Judaism,—the institutions of Abraham. By common consent his Faith was
   sound, and he was certainly not a Pagan, a term contemptuously applied to the Arabs
   by the Jews.

422. Bakka: same as Makkah, perhaps an older name. The foundation of the Ka'ba
   goes back to Abraham.

423. 'Alamin: all the worlds (i. 2. ii.), all kinds of beings; all nations (iii. 42): all
   creatures (iii. 97).

424. Station of Abraham: see ii. 125 and n. 125.

425. See reference in last note.
98. Say: "O People of the Book! Why reject ye the Signs Of Allah, when Allah Is Himself witness To all ye do?"

99. Say: "O ye People of the Book! Why obstruct ye Those who believe, From the Path of Allah, Seeking to make it crooked, While ye were yourselves Witnesses (to Allah's Covenant)?
But Allah is not unmindful Of all that ye do."

100. O ye who believe! If ye listen To a faction Among the People of the Book, They would (indeed) Render you apostates After ye have believed!

101. And how would ye Deny Faith while unto you Are rehearsed the Signs Of Allah, and among you Lives the Messenger? Whoever holds Firmly to Allah Will be shown A Way that is straight.

SECTION 11.

102. O ye who believe! Fear Allah as He should be

426. Cf. iii. 81.

427. Fear is of many kinds: (1) the abject fear of the coward; (2) the fear of a child or an inexperienced person in the face of an unknown danger; (3) the fear of a reasonable man who wishes to avoid harm to himself or to people whom he wishes to protect; (4) the =
Feared, and die not
Except in a state of Islam.

103. And hold fast,
All together, by the Rope Which Allah (stretches out For you), and be not divided Among yourselves;
And remember with gratitude Allah’s favour on you;
For ye were enemies And He joined your hearts In love, so that by His Grace, Ye became brethren;
And ye were on the brink Of the Pit of Fire, And He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His Signs clear to you: That ye may be guided.

104. Let there arise out of you A band of people Inviting to all that is good, Enjoining what is right,

= reverence which is akin to love, for it fears to do anything which is not pleasing to the object of love. The first is unworthy of man; the second is necessary for one immature; the third is a manly precaution against evil as long as it is unconquered; and the fourth is the seed-bed of righteousness. Those mature in faith cultivate the fourth: at earlier stages, the third or the second may be necessary; they are fear, but not the fear of Allah. The first is a feeling of which anyone should be ashamed.

428. Our whole being should be permeated with Islam: it is not a mere veneer or outward show.

429. The simile is that of people struggling in deep water, to whom a benevolent Providence stretches out a strong and unbreakable rope of rescue. If all hold fast to it together, their mutual support adds to the chance of their safety.

430. Yathrib was torn with civil and tribal feuds and dissensions before the Messenger of Allah set his feet on its soil. After that, it became the City of the Prophet, Madinah, and unmatched Brotherhood, and the pivot of Islam. This poor quarrelsome world is a larger Yathrib: can we establish the sacred feet on its soil, and make it a new and larger Madinah?
431. Muflih, asthaha, falah: the root idea is attainment of desires; happiness, in this world and the next; success; prosperity; freedom from anxiety, care, or a disturbed state of mind; the opposite of 'azāb in the next verse, which includes: failure; misery; punishment or penalty; agony or anguish.

The ideal Muslim community is happy, untroubled by conflicts or doubts, sure of itself, strong, united, and prosperous: because it invites to all that is good; enjoins the right; and forbids the wrong—a master-stroke of description in three clauses.

432. The “face” (wa'jah) expresses our Personality, our inmost being. White is the colour of Light; to become white is to be illumined with Light, which stands for felicity, the rays of the glorious light of Allah. Black is the colour of darkness, sin, rebellion, misery; removal from the grace and light of Allah. These are the Signs of heaven and hell. The standard of decision in all questions is the justice of Allah.
108. These are the Signs
Of Allah: We rehearse them
To thee in Truth:
And Allah means
No injustice to any
Of His creatures.

109. To Allah belongs all
That is in the heavens
And earth: to Allah
Do all matters
Return. 433

SECTION 12.

110. Ye are the best
Of Peoples, evolved
For mankind.
Enjoining what is right,
Forbidding what is wrong,
And believing in Allah.

If only the People of the Book
Had faith, it were best
For them: among them
Are some who have faith,
But most of them
Are perverted transgressors.

111. They will do you no harm,
Barring a trifling annoyance:
If they come out to fight you,
They will show you their backs.
And no help shall they get.


434. The logical conclusion to a Universal Religion is a non-sectarian, non-racial, non-doctrinal, religion, which Islam claims to be. For Islam is just submission to the Will of Allah. This implies (1) Faith, (2) doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails, (3) eschewing wrong, being an example to others to eschew wrong, and having the power to see that wrong and injustice are defeated. Islam therefore lives, not for itself, but for mankind. The People of the Book, if only they had faith, would be Muslims, for they have been prepared for Islam. Unfortunately there is Unfaith, but it can never harm those who carry the banner of Faith and Right, which must always be victorious.
112. Shame is pitched over them (Like a tent) wherever They are found, Except when under a covenant (Of protection) from Allah And from men; they draw On themselves wrath from Allah. And pitched over them Is (the tent of) destitution. This because they rejected The Signs of Allah, and slew The Prophets in defiance of right. This because they rebelled And transgressed beyond bounds.

113. Not all of them are alike: Of the People of the Book Are a portion that stand (For the right); they rehearse The Signs of Allah all night long. And they prostrate themselves In adoration.

114. They believe in Allah And the Last Day; They enjoin what is right, And forbid what is wrong; And they hasten (in emulation) In (all) good works: They are in the ranks Of the righteous.

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435. Dhuribat. I think there is a simile from the pitching of a tent. Ordinarily a man's tent is a place of tranquillity and honour for him. The tent of the wicked wherever they are found is ignominy, shame, and humiliation. It is pity from Allah or from men that gives them protection when their pride has a fall. Using the same simile of tent in another way, their home will be destitution and misery.

436. Cf. iii. 21, n. 363.

437. In Islam we respect sincere faith and true righteousness in accordance with the Qur-ān and Sunnah. This verse, according to Commentators, refers to those People of the Book who eventually embraced Islam.
115. Of the good that they do.
Nothing will be rejected
Of them; for Allah knoweth well
Those that do right.

116. Those who reject Faith,-
Neither their possessions
Nor their (numerous) progeny
Will avail them aught against Allah:
They will be Companions
Of the Fire,—dwelling
Therein (for ever).438

117. What they spend
In the life
Of this (material) world
May be likened to a Wind
Which brings a nipping frost:
It strikes and destroys the harvest
Of men who have wronged
Their own souls: it is not Allah
That hath wronged them, but
They wrong themselves.439

118. O ye who believe!
Take not into your intimacy
Those outside your ranks:
They will not fail
To corrupt you. They

438. Cf. iii. 10.

439. False “spending” may be either in false “charity” or in having a “good time”. For the man who resists Allah’s purpose, neither of them is any good. The essence of charity is faith and love. Where these are wanting, charity is no charity. Some baser motive is there: ostentation, or even worse, getting a person into the giver’s power by a pretence of charity, something that is connected with the life of this grasping, material world. What happens? You expect a good harvest. But “while you think, good easy man, full surely your greatness is a-ripening,” there comes a nipping frost, and destroys all your hopes. The frost is some calamity, or the fact that you are found out! Or perhaps it is “High blown pride,” as in Shakespeare’s Henry VIII. ii. 3. In your despair you may blame blind Fate or you may blame Allah! Blind Fate does not exist, for there is Allah’s Providence, which is just and good. The harm or injustice has come, not from Allah, but from your own soul. You wronged your soul, and it suffered the frost. Your base motive brought you no good: it may have reduced you to poverty, shame, and disgrace. All the brave show of the wicked in this life is but a wind charged with evil to themselves.
Only desire for you to suffer: 
Rank hatred has already 
Appeared from their mouths: 
What their hearts conceal 
Is far worse. 
We have made plain 
To you the Signs, 
If ye have wisdom.

119. Ah! ye are those 
Who love them, 
But they love you not,— 
Though ye believe 
In the whole of the Book, 
When they meet you, 
They say, “We believe”;
But when they are alone, 
They bite off the very tips 
Of their fingers at you 
In their rage. Say: 
“Perish in your rage; 
Allah knoweth well 
All the secrets of the heart.”

120. If aught that is good 
Befalls you, it grieves them; 
But if some misfortune 
Overtakes you, they rejoice 
At it. But if ye are patient 
And do right, 
Not the least harm 
Will their cunning 
Do to you; for Allah 
Compasseth round about 
All that they do.

440. Islam gives you the complete revelation, “the whole of the Book,” though partial revelations have come in all ages. (Cf. iii. 23, and n. 366).

The battle of Uhud was a great testing time for the young Muslim community. Their mettle and the wisdom and strength of their Leader were shown in the battle of Badr (iii. 13 and note), in which the Makkans suffered a crushing defeat. The Makkans were determined to wipe off their disgrace and to annihilate the Muslims in Madinah. To this end they collected a large force and marched to Madinah. They numbered some 3,000 fighting men under Abī Sufyān, and they were so confident of victory that their women-folk came with them, and showed the most shameful savagery after the battle. To meet the threatened danger the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad Al-Mustafā, with his usual foresight, courage, and initiative, resolved to take his station at the foot of Mount Uhud, which dominates the city of Madinah some three miles to the north. Early in the morning, on the 7th of Shawwāl, A.H. 3 (January, 625), he made his dispositions for battle. Madinah winters are notoriously rigorous, but the warriors of Islam (700 to 1000 in number) were up early. A torrent bed was to their south, and the passes in the hills at their back were filled with 50 archers to prevent the enemy attack from the rear. The enemy were set the task of attacking the walls of Madinah, with the Muslims at their rear. In the beginning the battle went well for the Muslims. The enemy wavered, but the Muslim archers, in disobedience of their orders, left their posts to join in the pursuit and share in the booty. There was also treachery on the part of the 300 "Hypocrites" led by Abdullah ibn Ubay, who deserted. The enemy took advantage of the opening left by the archers, and there was severe hand-to-hand fighting, in which numbers told in favour of the enemy. Many of the Companions and Helpers were killed. But there was no rout. Among the Muslim martyrs was the gallant Ḥamza, a brother of the Prophet's father. The graves of the martyrs are still shown at Uhud. The Messenger himself was wounded in his head and face, and one of his front teeth was broken. Had it not been for his firmness, courage, and coolness, all would have been lost. As it was, the prophet, in spite of his wound, and many of the wounded Muslims, inspired by his example, returned to the field next day, and Abū Sufyān and his Makkán army thought it most prudent to withdraw. Madinah was saved, but a lesson in faith, constancy, firmness, and steadfastness was learnt by the Muslims.

The two parties wavering in their minds were probably the Banū Salma Khazrajī and the Banū Hārīthah, but they rallied under the Prophet's inspiration. That incident shows that man may be weak, but if he allows his weak will to be governed by the example of men of God, he may yet retrieve his weakness.
123. Allah had helped you
At Badr, when ye were
Helpless:
Then fear Allah: thus
May ye show your gratitude. 444

124. Remember thou saidst
To the Faithful: “Is it not enough
For you that Allah should help you
With three thousand angels
(Specially) sent down?” 445

125. “Yea,—if ye remain firm,
And act aright, even if
The enemy should rush here
On you in hot haste,
Your Lord would help you
With five thousand angels
Clearly marked 446

126. Allah made it but a message
Of hope for you, and an assurance
To your hearts: (in any case)
There is no victory
Except from Allah,
The Exalted, the Wise: 447

444. Gratitude to Allah is not to be measured by words. It should show itself in conduct and life. If all the Muslims had learnt the true lesson from the victory at Badr, their archers would not have left the posts appointed for them, nor the two tribes mentioned in the last note ever wavered in their faith.

445. Read verse 124 with the following five verses, to get its full signification.

446. Musawwim: this is the active voice of the verb, not to be confused with the passive voice in iii. 14, which has a different signification.

447. Whatever happens, whether there is a miracle or not, all help proceeds from Allah. Man should not be so arrogant as to suppose that his own resources will change the current of the world plan. Allah helps those who show constancy, courage, and discipline, and use all the human means at their disposal, not those who fold their hands and have no faith. But Allah’s help is determined on considerations exalted far above our petty human motive, and by perfect wisons, of which we can have only faint glimpses.
127. That He might cut off
A fringe of the Unbelievers\(^{448}\)
Or expose them to infamy,
And they should then
Be turned back,
Frustrated of their purpose.

128. Not for thee, (but for Allah),
Is the decision:
Whether He turn in mercy
To them, or punish them;
For they are indeed wrong-doers.\(^{449}\)

129. To Allah belongeth all
That is in the heavens
And on earth.
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth
And punisheth whom He pleaseth;
But Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

448. *A fringe of the Unbelievers*: an extremity, an end, either upper or lower. Here it may mean that the chiefs of the Makkah Pagans, who had come to exterminate the Muslims with such confidence, went back frustrated in their purpose. The shameless cruelty with which they and their women mutilated the Muslim corpses on the battle-field will stand recorded to their eternal infamy. Perhaps it also exposed their real nature to some of those who fought for them. e.g., Khālid ibn Al-Walid, who not only accepted Islam afterwards, but became one of the most notable champions of Islam. He was with the Muslims in the conquest of Makkah and later on, won distinguished honours in Syria and ‘Iraq.

449. Uḥud is as much a sign-post for Islam as Badr. For us in these latter days it carries an ever greater lesson. Allah’s help will come if we have faith, obedience, discipline, unity, and the spirit of acting in righteousness and justice. If we fail, His mercy is always open to us. But it is also open to our enemies, and those who seem to us His enemies. His Plan may be to bring sinners to repentance, and to teach us righteousness and wisdom through those who seem in our eyes to be rebellious or even defiant. There may be good in them that He sees and we do not—a humbling thought that must lead to our own self-examination and self-improvement.
SECTION 14.

130. O ye who believe!
Devour not Usury,\(^{450}\)
Doubled and multiplied;
But fear Allah; that
Ye may (really) prosper.\(^{451}\)

131. And fear the fire, which is prepared
For those who reject Faith:

132. And obey Allah
And the Messenger;
That ye may obtain mercy.

133. Be quick in the race
For forgiveness from your Lord
And for a Garden whose width
Is that (of the whole)
Of the heavens
And of the earth,\(^{452}\)
Prepared for the righteous,–

134. Those who spend (freely),\(^{453}\)
Whether in prosperity,
Or in adversity;
Who restrain anger,

450. Cf. ii. 275 and note. The last verse spoke of forgiveness, even to enemies. If such mercy is granted by Allah to erring sinners, how much more is it incumbent on us, poor sinners to refrain from oppressing our fellow-beings in need, in matters of mere material and ephemeral wealth? Usury is the opposite extreme of charity, unselfishness, striving, and giving of ourselves in the service of Allah and of our fellow-men.

451. Real prosperity consists, not in greed, but in giving,—the giving of ourselves and of our substance in the cause of Allah and Allah's truth and in the service of Allah's creatures.

452. The Fire (iii. 131) is, as always, contrasted with the Garden,—in other words. Hell contrasted with Heaven, we are told that its width alone is that of the whole of the heavens and the earth,—all the creation we can imagine.

453. Another definition of the righteous (vv. 134-35). So far from grasping material wealth, they give freely, of themselves and their substance, not only when they are well-off and it is easy for them to do so, but also when they are in difficulties, for other people may be in difficulties at the same time. They do not get ruffled in adversity, or get angry when other people behave badly, or their own good plans fail. On the contrary they redouble their efforts. For the charity—or good deed—is all the more necessary in =
And adversity. And they do not throw the blame on others. Even where such blame is due and correction is necessary, their own mind is free from a sense of grievance, for they forgive and cover other men's faults. This as far as other people are concerned. But we may be ourselves at fault, and perhaps we brought some calamity on ourselves. The righteous man is not necessarily perfect. In such circumstances his behaviour is described in the next verse.

454. The righteous man, when he finds he has fallen into sin or error, does not whine or despair, but asks for Allah's forgiveness, and his faith gives him hope. If he is sincere, that means that he abandons his wrong conduct and makes amends.

455. Sin is a sort of oppression of ourselves by ourselves. This follows from the doctrine of personal responsibility, as opposed to that of blind fate or of an angry God or gods lying in wait for revenge or injury on mankind.

456. Cf. Tennyson (In Memoriam): “Our little systems have their day. They have their day and cease to be: They are but broken lights of Thee, And Thou, O Lord! art more than they.” Only Allah's Truth will last, and it will gain the mastery in the end. If there is defeat, we must not be dejected, lose heart, or give up the struggle. Faith means hope, activity, striving steadfastly on to the goal.
Here is a plain statement
To men, a guidance
And instruction to those
Who fear Allah!

So lose not heart.
Nor fall into despair:
For ye must gain mastery
If ye are true in Faith.

If a wound hath touched you,\footnote{457}
Be sure a similar wound
Hath touched the others.
Such days (of varying fortunes)
We give to men and men
By turns: that Allah may know
Those that believe,
And that He may take
To Himself from your ranks
Martyr-witnesses (to Truth).
And Allah loveth not
Those that do wrong.

Sunan: different ways by which the ancient people like Ād, Thamud, the people of the Prophet Nūh were treated because of their arrogance, disobedience and rejection of faith.

\footnote{457} These general considerations apply in particular to the disaster at Uhud. (1) In a fight for truth, if you are hurt, be sure the adversary has suffered hurt also, the more so as he has no faith to sustain him. (2) Success or failure in this world comes to all at varying times: we must not grumble, as we do not see the whole of Allah's Plan. (3) Men's true mettle is known in adversity as gold is assayed in fire; Cf. also iii. 154, n. 467. (4) Martyrdom is in itself an honour and a privilege: how glorious is the fame of Ḥamza the Martyr? (5) If there is any dross in us, it will be purified by resistance and struggle. (6) When evil is given rope a little, it works out its own destruction; the orgies of cruelty indulged in by the Pagans after what they supposed to be their victory at Uhud filled up their cup of iniquity; it lost them the support and adherence of the best in their own ranks, and hastened the destruction of Paganism from Arabia. Cf. iii. 127 and ii. 448.
141. Allah's object also is to purge\(^{458}\)
Those that are true in Faith
And to deprive of blessing
Those that resist Faith.

142. Did ye think that ye
Would enter Heaven\(^{459}\)
Without Allah testing
Those of you who fought hard
(In His Cause) and
Remained steadfast?

143. Ye did indeed
Wish for Death
Before ye encountered it:
Now ye have seen it
With your own eyes,
(And ye flinch!)

SECTION 15.

144. Muhammad is no more\(^{460}\)
Than a Messenger: many
Were the Messengers that passed away
Before Him. If he died

458. The purge or purification was in two senses. (1) It cleared out the Hypocrites from the ranks of the Muslim warriors. (2) The testing-time strengthened the faith of the weak and wavering; for suffering has its own mission in life. The Prophet's example-wounded but staunch, and firmer than ever-put new life into the Community.

459. Cf. ii. 214.

460. This verse primarily applies to the battle of Uhud, in the course of which a cry was raised that the Messenger was slain. He had indeed been severely wounded, but Ţalḥa, Ābu Bakr, and Ali were at his side, and his own unexampled bravery saved the Muslim army from a rout. This verse was recalled again by Ābu Bakr when the Messenger actually died a natural death eight years later, to remind people that Allah, Whose Message he brought, lives for ever. And have need to remember this now and often for two reasons: (1) when we feel inclined to pay more than human honour to one who was the truest, the purest, and the greatest of men, and thus in a sense to compound for our forgetting the spirit of his teaching, and (2) when we feel depressed at the chances and changes of time, and forget that Allah lives and watches over us and over all His creatures now as in a history in the past and in the future.
5.3 A.144-146

Or were slain, will ye then
Turn back on your heels?
If any did turn back
On his heels, not the least
Harm will he do to Allah;
But Allah (on the other hand)
Will swiftly reward those
Who (serve him) with gratitude.

145. Nor can a soul die
Except by Allah’s leave,
The term being fixed
As by writing. If any
Do desire a reward
In this life, We shall give it\(^\text{461}\)
To him; and if any
Do desire a reward
In the Hereafter, We shall
Give it to him.
And swiftly shall We reward
Those that (serve us with) gratitude.

146. How many of the Prophets
Fought (in Allah’s way),
And with them (fought)
Large bands of godly men?
But they never lost heart
If they met with disaster
In Allah’s way, nor did
They weaken (in will)
Nor give in. And Allah
Loves those who are
Firm and steadfast.

461. There is a slight touch of irony in this. As applied to the archers at Uhud, who deserted their post for the sake of plunder, they might have got some plunder, but they put themselves and the whole of their army into jeopardy. For a little worldly gain, they nearly lost their souls. On the other hand, those who took the long view and fought with staunchness and discipline,—their reward was swift and sure. If they died, they got the crown of martyrdom. If they lived, they were heroes honoured in this life and the next.
147. All that they said was:
“Our Lord forgive us
Our sins and anything
We may have done
That transgressed our duty:
Establish our feet firmly,
And help us against
Those that resist
Faith.”

148. And Allah gave them
A reward in this world.
And the excellent reward
Of the Hereafter. For Allah
Loveth those who do good.

SECTION 16.

149. O ye who believe!
If ye obey the Unbelievers,
They will drive you back
On your heels, and ye
Will turn back (from Faith)
To your own loss.

150. Nay, Allah is your Protector,
And He is the best of helpers.

151. Soon shall We cast terror
Into the hearts of the Unbelievers,
For that they joined partners
With Allah, for which He had sent
No authority: their abode
Will be the Fire: and evil
Is the home of the wrong-doers!

152. Allah did indeed fulfil
His promise to you
When we with His permission
Were about to annihilate
Your enemy,—until ye flinched
And fell to disputing
About the order,\footnote{462}
And disobeyed it
After He brought you in sight
(Of the Victory) which ye covet.
Among you are some
That hanker after this world
And some that desire
The Hereafter. Then did He
Divert you from your foes
In order to test you.\footnote{463}
But He forgave you:
For Allah is full of grace
To those who believe.

153. Behold! ye were climbing up
The high ground, without even
Casting a side glance
At any one, and the Messenger
In your rear was calling you
Back. There did Allah give you
One distress after another
By way of requital,\footnote{464}
To teach you not to grieve

\footnote{462. The order was: not to leave the post and strictly to maintain discipline. Uhud was in the beginning a victory for the Muslims. Many of the enemy were slain, and they were retiring when a part of the Muslims, against orders, ran in pursuit, attracted by the prospects of booty. See note to iii. 121.}

\footnote{463. The disobedience seemed at first pleasant: they were chasing the enemy, and there was the prospect of booty. But when the gap was noticed by the enemy, they turned the flank round the hill and nearly overwhelmed the Muslims. Had it not been for Allah's grace, and the firmness of their Prophet and his immediate Companions, they would have been finished.}

\footnote{464. It would seem that a party of horsemen led by the dashing K\u0648\u0631\u0648\u062d ibn Al-walid came through the gap in the passes where the Muslim archers should have been, and in the confusion that arose, the retreating foe rallied and turned back on the Muslims. From the low ground on the bank of the valley the Muslims retreated in their turn and tried to gain the hill. They had a double loss: (1) they were baulked of the booty they had run after, and (2) their own lives and the lives of their whole army were in danger, and many lives were actually lost from their ranks. Their own lives being in danger, they had hardly time to grieve for the general calamity. But it steadied them, and some of them stood the test.}
For (the booty) that had escaped you
And for (the ill) that had befallen you.

For Allah is well aware
Of all that ye do.

154. After (the excitement)
Of the distress, He sent down
Calm on a band of you
Overcome with slumber.465
While another band
Was stirred to anxiety
By their own feelings,
Moved by wrong suspicions
Of Allah-suspicions due
To Ignorance. They said:
Have we any hand in the affair?466
Say thou: “Indeed, this affair
Is wholly Allah’s.” They hide
In their minds what they
Dare not reveal to thee.
They say (to themselves);
“If we had had anything
To do with this affair,
We should not have been
In the slaughter here.”
Say: “Even if you had remained
In your homes, those
For whom death was decreed
Would certainly have gone forth
To the place of their death”:

465. After the first surprise, when the enemy turned on them, a great part of the Muslims did their best, and seeing their mettle, the enemy withdrew to his camp. There was a lull; the wounded had rest; those who had fought the hard fight were visited by kindly Sleep, sweet Nature’s nurse. In contrast to them was the band of Hypocrites, whose behaviour is described in the next note.

466. The Hypocrites withdrew from the fighting. Apparently they had been among those who had been counselling the defence of Madinah within the walls instead of boldly coming out to meet the enemy. Their distress was caused by their own mental state: the sleep of the just was denied them: and they continued to murmur of what might have been. Only fools do so: wise men face actualities.
But (all this was)\textsuperscript{467} That Allah might test What is in your breasts And purge what is In your hearts. For Allah knoweth well The secrets of your hearts.

155. Those of you\textsuperscript{468} Who turned back On the day the two hosts Met,--it was Satan Who caused them to fail, Because of some (evil) They had done. But Allah Has blotted out (their fault): For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing.

SECTION 17.

156. O ye who believe! Be not like the Unbelievers. Who say of their brethren, When they are travelling Through the earth or engaged In fighting: "If they had stayed With us, they would not Have died, or been slain." This that Allah may make it A cause of sights and regrets

\textsuperscript{467} That testing by Allah is not in order that it may add to His knowledge, for He knows all. It is in order to help us subjectively, to mould our will, and purge us of any grosser motives, that will be searched out by calamity. If it is a hardened sinner, the test brings conviction out of his own self \textit{Cf. also iii. 140.}

\textsuperscript{468} It was the duty of all who were able to fight, to fight in the sacred cause at Uhud. But a small section were timid: they were not quite as bad as those who railed against Allah, or those who thoughtlessly disobeyed orders. But they still failed in their duty. It is our inner motives that Allah regards. These timorous people were forgiven by Allah. Perhaps they were given another chance: perhaps they rose to it and did their duty then.
In their hearts. It is Allah That gives Life and Death,\(^{469}\)
And Allah sees well
All that ye do.

157. And if ye are slain, or die,
In the way of Allah,
Forgiveness and mercy
From Allah are far better
Than all they could amass:\(^{470}\)

158. And if ye die, or are slain,
Lo! it is unto Allah
That ye are brought together.

159. It is part of the Mercy
Of Allah that thou dost deal
Gently with them.\(^{471}\)
Wert thou severe

\(^{469}\) It is want of faith that makes people afraid (1) of meeting death, (2) of doing their duty when it involves danger, as in travelling in order to earn an honest living, or fighting in a sacred cause. Such fear is part of the punishment for want of faith. If you have faith, there is no fear in meeting death, for it brings you nearer to your goal, nor in meeting danger for a sufficient cause, because you know that the keys of life and death are in Allah’s hands. Nothing can happen without Allah’s Will. If it is Allah’s Will that you should die, your staying at home will not save you. If it is His Will that you should live, the danger you incur in a just cause brings you glory. Supposing it is His Will that you should lose your life in the danger, there are three considerations that would make you eager to meet it: (1) dying in doing your duty is the best means of reaching Allah’s Mercy; (2) the man of faith knows that he is not going to an unknown country of which he has no news; he is going nearer to Allah; and (3) he is being “brought together” unto Allah; i.e., he will meet all his dear ones in faith: instead of the separation which the souls without faith fear, he looks forward to a surer reunion than is possible in this life.

\(^{470}\) Notice a beautiful little literary touch here. At first sight you would expect the second person here (“you could amass”), to match the second person in the earlier clause. But remember that the second person in earlier clause refers to the man of faith, and the third person in the last line refers to the Unbelievers; as if it said: “Of course you as a man of faith would not be for hoarding riches: your wealth,—duty and the mercy of Allah,—is far more precious than anything the Unbelievers can amass in their selfish lives.”

\(^{471}\) The extremely gentle nature of Muhammad endeared him to all, and it is reckoned as one of the Mercies of Allah. One of the Prophet’s titles is “A Mercy to all Creation.” At no time was this gentleness, this mercy, this long-suffering with human weaknesses, more valuable than after a disaster like that at Uhud. It is a quality, which then, as always, bound and binds the souls of countless men to him.
Or harsh-hearted,  
They would have broken away  
From about thee: so pass over  
(Their faults), and ask  
For (Allah's) forgiveness  
For them; and consult  
Them in affairs (of moment).  
Then, when thou hast  
Taken a decision,  
Put thy trust in Allah.  
For Allah loves those  
Who put their trust (in Him).

160. If Allah helps you,  
None can overcome you:  
If He forsakes you,  
Who is there, after that,  
That can help you?  
In Allah, then,  
Let Believers put their trust.

161. No prophet could (ever)\(^ {472} \)  
Act dishonestly  
If any person acts dishonestly  
He shall, on the Day  
Of Judgment, restore  
What he misappropriated;  
Then shall every soul

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\(^ {472} \) Besides the gentleness of his nature, Al-Muṣṭafā was known from his earliest life for his trustworthiness. Hence his title of Al-ʿAmin. Unscrupulous people often read their own low motives into other men, and their accusation, which is meant to injure, fastens on the various virtues for which the man they attack is well known. Some of the Hypocrites after Uḥūd raised some doubts about the division of the spoils, thinking to sow the seeds of poison in the hearts of the men who had deserted their posts in their craving for booty. Those low suspicions were never believed in by any sensible people, and they have no interest for us now. But the general principles here declared are of eternal value. (1) Prophets of Allah do not act from unworthy motives. (2) Those who act from such motives are the lowest of creatures, and they will make no profit, (3) A prophet of Allah is not to be judged by the same standard as a greedy creature. (4) In Allah's eyes there are various grades of men, and we must try to understand and appreciate such grades. If we trust our Leader, we shall not question his honesty without cause. If he is dishonest, he is not fit to be a leader.
What! When a single Disaster smites you.
Although ye smote (your enemies) With one twice as great.
Do ye say?—
"Whence is this?"
Say (to them):
"It is from yourselves:

Receive its due
Whatever it earned,—
And none shall be Dealt with unjustly.

162. Is the man who follows
The good pleasure of Allah
Like the man who draws On himself the wrath
Of Allah, and whose abode Is in Hell?—
A woeful refuge!

163. They are in varying grades
In the sight of Allah,
And Allah sees well All that they do.

164. Allah did confer
A great favour
On the Believers When He sent among them A Messenger from among Themselves, rehearsing Unto them the Signs Of Allah, purifying them, And instructing them In Scripture and Wisdom, While, before that, They had been In manifest error.

165. What! When a single Disaster smites you,
Although ye smote (your enemies) With one twice as great.
Do ye say?—
"Whence is this?"
Say (to them):
"It is from yourselves:

473. Cf. ii. 151.
474. If Uhud was a reverse to the Muslims, they had inflicted a reverse twice as great on the Makkans at Badr. This reverse was not without Allah’s permission, for He wanted to test and purify the faith of those who followed Islam, and to show them that they must strive and do all in their power to deserve Allah’s help. If they disobeyed orders and neglected discipline, they must attribute the disaster to themselves and not to Allah.

475. Test: literally know. See n. 467 to iii. 154.

476. The testing of the Hypocrites was the searching out of their motives and exposing them to the sight of their brethren, who might otherwise have been taken in. In the first place they gave counsels of caution: in their minds it was nothing but cowardice. In the second place, what they wished was not the good of the community but its being placed in a contemptible position. When others were for self-sacrifice, they were for ease and fair words. Pretending to be Muslims, they were nearer to Unbelief. Ironically they pretended to know nothing of fighting, and left their devout brethren to defend their faith and ideas. If that devout spirit did not appeal to them, they might at least have defended their city of Madinah when it was threatened,—defended their hearths and homes as good citizens.
A beautiful passage about the Martyrs in the cause of Truth. They are not dead: they live—and in a far higher and deeper sense than in the life they have left. Even those who have no faith in the Hereafter honour those that die in their cause, with the crown of immortality in the minds and memories of generations unborn. But in Faith we see a higher, truer, and less relative immortality. Perhaps “immortality” is not the right word in this connection, as it implies a continuation of this life. In their case, through the gateway of death, they enter the true real Life, as opposed to its shadow here.

The Martyrs not only rejoice at the bliss they have themselves attained. The dear ones left behind are in their thoughts: it is part of their glory that they have saved their dear ones from fear, sorrow, humiliation, and grief, in this life, even before they come to share in the glories of the Hereafter.

Note how the refrain: “on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve”: comes in here with a new and appropriate meaning. Besides other things, it means that the dear ones have no cause to grieve at the death of the Martyrs; rather have they cause to rejoice.
SECTION 18.

172. Of those who answered
The call of Allah
And the Messenger,
Even after being wounded, 479
Those who do right
And refrain from wrong
Have a great reward;—

173. Those to whom men said:
"A great army is gathering
Against you, so fear them":
But it (only) increased
Their Faith: they said:
"For us Allah sufficeth,
And He is the best
Guardian."

174. And they returned
With Grace and Bounty
From Allah: no harm
Ever touched them:
For they followed
The good pleasure of Allah:
And Allah is the Lord
Of bounties unbounded.

175. It is only the Satan
That suggests to you
The fear of his votaries:
Be ye not afraid
Of them, but fear Me,
If ye have Faith.

479. After the confusion at Uhud, men rallied round the Prophet. He was wounded, and they were wounded, but they were all ready to fight again. Abū Sufyān with his Makkans withdrew, but left a challenge with them to meet him and his army again at the fair of Badr Sugrā next year. The challenge was accepted, and a picked band of Muslims under their intrepid Leader kept the tryst, but the enemy did not come. They returned, not only unharmed, but enriched by the trade at the fair, and (it may be presumed) strengthened by the accession of new adherents to their cause.
176. Let not those grieve thee
Who rush headlong
Into Unbelief:
Not the least harm
Will they do to Allah:
Allah’s Plan is that He
Will give them no portion
In the Hereafter,
But a severe punishment.

177. Those who purchase
Unbelief at the price
Of faith,—
Not the least harm
Will they do to Allah,
But they will have
A grievous punishment.

178. Let not the Unbelievers
Think that Our respite
To them is good for themselves:
We grant them respite
That they may grow\(^{480}\)
In their iniquity:
But they will have
A shameful punishment.

179. Allah will not leave
The Believers in the state
In which ye are now,
Until He separates
What is evil
From what is good\(^ {481}\)

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480. That the cup of their iniquity may be full. The appetite for sin grows with what it feeds on. The natural result is that the sinner sinks deeper into sin. If there is any freedom of will, this naturally follows, though Allah’s Grace is always ready for the repentant. If the Grace is rejected, the increase of iniquity makes the nature of iniquity plainer to those who might otherwise be attracted by its glitter. The working of Allah’s Law is therefore both just and merciful. See also the next verse.

481. The testing of good men by calamities and evil men by leaving them in the enjoyment of good things is part of the trials of Allah, in which some freedom of choice is left to man. The psychological and subjective test is unfailure, and the separation is
Nor will Allah disclose
To you the secrets
Of the Unseen,482
But He chooses
Of His Messengers
Whom He pleases.
So believe in Allah
And His Messengers:
And if ye believe
And do right,
Ye have a great reward
Without measure.

180. And let not those
Who covetously withhold
Of the gifts which Allah
Hath given them of His Grace,483
Think that it is good for them:
Nay, it will be the worse
For them: soon it will
Be tied to their necks
Like a twisted collar.484
On the Day of Judgment.

= effected partly by the operation of the human wills, to which some freedom is allowed. But it must be effected, if only in the interests of the good.

482. Man in his weak state would be most miserable if he could see the secrets of the Future or the secrets of the Unseen. But things are revealed to him from time to time as may be expedient for him, by Messengers chosen for the purpose. Our duty is to hold fast by faith and lead a good life.

483. The gifts are of all kinds: material gifts, such as wealth, property, strength of limbs, etc., or intangible gifts, such as influence, birth in a given set, intellect, skill, insight, etc., or spiritual gifts of the highest kind. The spending of all these things (apart from what is necessary for ourselves) for those who need them, is charity, and purifies our own character. The withholding of them (apart from our needs) is similarly greed and selfishness, and is strongly condemned.

484. By an apt metaphor the miser is told that his wealth or the other gifts which he hoarded will cling round his neck and do him no good. He will wish he could get rid of them, but he will not be able to do so. According to the Biblical phrase in another connection they will hang like a millstone round his neck (Matt. xviii. 6). The metaphor here is fuller. He hugged his wealth or his gifts about him. They will become like a heavy collar, the badge of slavery, round his neck. They will be tied tight and twisted, and they will give him pain and anguish instead of pleasure. Cf. also xvii. 13.
To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; And Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

SECTION 19.

181. Allah hath heard the taunt of those who say: “Truly, Allah is indigent and we are rich!”—We shall certainly record their word and (their act) of slaying the Prophets in defiance of right, and We shall say: “Taste ye the Chastisement of the scorching Fire!

182. “This is because of the (unrighteous deeds) which your hands sent on before you. For Allah never do injustice to those who serve Him.”

183. They also said: “Allah took our promise not to believe in a messenger unless He showed us a sacrifice.”

485. Another metaphor is now introduced. Material wealth or property is only called ours during our short life here. So all gifts are ours in trust only; they ultimately revert to Allah, to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens or on earth.

486. In ii. 245 we read: “Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan?” In other places charity or spending in the way of Allah is metaphorically described as giving to Allah. The Holy Prophet often used that expression in appealing for funds to be spent in the way of Allah. The scoffers mocked and said: “So Allah is indigent and we are rich!” This blasphemy was of a piece with all their conduct in history, in slaying the Prophets and men of God.

487. For the expression “slaying in defiance of right,” Cf. iii. 21, and iii. 112.

488. Cf. ii. 95 and note.
Consumed by fire. (From heaven)." Say:
"There came to you
Messengers before me,
With Clear Signs
And even with what
Ye ask for: why then
Did ye slay them,
If ye speak the truth?"

Then if they reject thee,
So were rejected messengers
Before thee, who came
With Clear Signs,
And the Scriptures.
And the Book of Enlightenment.

Every soul shall have
A taste of death:
And only on the Day

489. Burn sacrifices figured in the Mosaic Law, and in the religious ceremonies long before Moses, but it is not true that the Mosaic Law laid down a fire from heavens on a burnt sacrifice as a test of the credentials of Prophets. Even if it had been so, did the Jews obey the Prophets who showed this Sign? In Leviticus ix. 23-24, we are told a burnt offering prepared by Moses and Aaron: "and there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat." Yet the people rebelled frequently against Moses. Abel's offering (sacrifice) was probably a burnt offering: it was accepted by Allah, and he was killed by Cain out of jealousy: Gen. iv. 3-8. Mosaic sacrifices were no longer-needed by the people of Jesus or the people of Muhammad.

490. The three things mentioned in the Text are: (1) Clear Signs (bāyi‘nāt); (2) zubur, and (3) kitāb-il-Munir. The signification of (1) I have explained in the note to iii. 62, as far as they relate to Jesus. In a more general sense, it means the clear evidence which Allah's dealings furnish about a Messenger of Allah having a true mission: e.g., Moses in relation to Pharaoh. (2) The word Zubur has been translated as scriptures. It comes from the root Zabara which implies something hard. The commentators are not agreed, but the prophetic writings which seemed to contemporaries difficult to understand may well be meant here. David's psalms (Zabur, iv. 163) may also come under this description. As to (3), there is no doubt about the literal meaning of the words, "the Book of Enlightenment". But what does it precisely refer to? I take it to mean the fundamental guide to conduct,—the clear rules laid down in all Dispensations to help men to lead good lives.

491. The death of the body will give a taste of death to the soul when the soul separates from the body. The soul will then know that this life was but a probation. And seeming inequalities will be adjusted finally on the Day of Judgment.
492. Cf. Longfellow’s Psalm of Life: “All this world’s a fleeting show. For man’s illusion given”. The only reality will be when we have attained our final goal.

493. Not wealth and possessions only (or want of them), are the means of our trial. All our personal talents, knowledge, opportunities, and their opposites,—in fact everything that happens to us and makes up our personality is a means of our testing. So is our Faith: we shall have to put up for it many insults from those who do not share it.

494. Truth—Allah’s Message—comes to any man or nation as a matter of sacred trust. It should be broadcast and published and taught and made clear to all within reach. Privileged priesthood at once erects a barrier. But worse,—when such priesthood tampers with the truth, taking what suits it and ignoring the rest, it has sold Allah’s gift for a miserable ephemeral profit; how miserable, it will learn when retributive justice comes.
And clear to mankind,
And not to hide it;
But they threw it away
Behind their backs;⁴⁹⁵
And purchased with it
Some miserable gain!
And vile was the bargain
They made!

188. Think not that those
Who exult in what they
Have brought about, and love
To be praised for what
They have not done,⁴⁹⁶
Think not that they
Can escape the Chastisement.
For them is a Chastisement
Grievous indeed.

189. To Allah belongeth
The dominion
Of the heavens
And the earth;
And Allah hath power
Over all things.

SECTION 20.

190. Behold! In the creation
Of the heavens and the earth,
And the alternation
Of Night and Day,⁴⁹⁷
There are indeed Signs
For men of understanding.—


⁴⁹⁶. A searching picture of the wordly wise! They may cause mischief and misery to others, but gloat over any glory it may bring them! They may trample down Allah’s truths, and enthrone false standards of worship. They may take credit for virtues they do not possess and seeming successes that come in spite of their despicable deceptions.

⁴⁹⁷. See ii. 164. The two items mentioned here are just brief symbols recalling the six or seven mentioned in the other passage. And those too are but brief symbols and reminders of the glorious majesty of Allah and His goodness to man.
191. Men who remember Allah
Standing, sitting,
And lying down on their sides,\(^{498}\)
And contemplate
The (wonders of) creation
In the heavens and the earth,
(With the saying):
“Our Lord not for naught
Hast Thou created (all) this!
Glory to Thee! Give us\(^{499}\)
Salvation from the Chastisement
Of the Fire.

192. “Our Lord! any whom Thou
Dost admit to the Fire,
Truly Thou coverest with shame,
And never will wrong-doers
Find any helpers!

193. “Our Lord! we have heard
The call of one calling
(Us) to Faith, ‘Believe ye
In the Lord,’ and we
Have believed. Our Lord!
Forgive us our sins,
Blot out from us
Our iniquities, and take
To Thyself our souls
In the company of the righteous.

194. “Our Lord! Grant us
What Thou didst promise
Unto us through Thy Messengers,
And save us from shame
On the Day of Judgment:
For Thou never breakest
Thy promise.”

\(^{498}\) That is, in all postures, which again is symbolical of all circumstances, personal, social, economic, historical and other.

\(^{499}\) It is the thought of Salvation that connects all these glories with man. Otherwise man would be a miserable, contemptible creature in these beauties and wonders of Nature. With his high destiny of Salvation he can be lifted even higher than these glories!
500. In Islam the equal status of the sexes is not only recognised but insisted on. If sex distinction, which is a distinction in nature, does not count in spiritual matters, still less of course would count artificial distinctions, such as rank, wealth, position, race, colour, birth, etc.

501. Here, and in iii. 198 below, and in many places elsewhere, stress is laid on the fact that whatever gift, or bliss will come to the righteous, its chief merit will be that it proceeds from Allah Himself. “Nearest to Allah” expresses it better than any other term.
And that which is from Allah
Is the best (bliss)
For the righteous.

199. And there are, certainly,
Among the People of the Book,
Those who believe in Allah,
In the revelation to you,
And in the revelation to them,
Bowing in humility to Allah:
They will not sell
The Signs of Allah
For a miserable gain!
For them is a reward
With their Lord,
And Allah is swift in account.

200. O ye who believe!
Persevere in patience
And constancy; vie
In such perseverance;
Strengthen each other;
And fear Allah;
That ye may prosper.

502. The full meaning of *Sabr* is to be understood here, *viz.*: Patience, perseverance, constancy, self-restraint, refusing to be cowed down. These virtues we are to exercise for ourselves and in relation to others; we are to set an example, so that others may vie with us, and we are to vie with them, lest we fall short; in this way we strengthen each other and bind our mutual relations closer, in our common service to Allah.

503. Prosperity (*falāḥ*) here and in other passages is to be understood in a wide sense, including prosperity in our mundane affairs as well as in spiritual progress. In both cases it implies happiness and the attainment of our wishes, purified by the love of Allah.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT An-Nisā', 4.

This Sūra is closely connected chronologically with Sūra III. Its subject-matter deals with the social problems which the Muslim community had to face immediately after Uhud. While the particular occasion made the necessity urgent, the principles laid down have permanently governed Muslim Law and social practice.

Broadly speaking, the Sūra consists of two parts: (1) that dealing with women, orphans, inheritance, marriage, and family rights generally, and (2) that dealing with the recalcitrants in the larger family, the community at Madinah, viz., the Hypocrites and their accomplices.

Summary.—It begins with an appeal to the solidarity of mankind, the rights of women and orphans, and the implications of family relationship, including an equitable distribution of property after death. (iv. 1-14).

While the decencies of family life should be enforced, women should be held in honour and their rights recognized, in marriage, property, and inheritance; and this principle of goodness should be extended to all beings, great and small. (iv. 15-42).

The sections in Madinah, not yet in the Muslim community, should not go after false gods, but should accept the authority of the Prophet, and obey him. Then it will be their privilege to be admitted to a great and glorious Fellowship. (iv. 43-70).

The Believers should organize in self-defence against their enemies, and beware of the secret plots and mischiefs of the Hypocrites; how deserters should be treated. (iv. 71-91).

Caution about the taking of life; recommendations for leaving places inimical to Islam; religious duties in the midst of war. (iv. 92-104).

Treachery and the lure of evil (iv. 105-126).

Women and orphans to be justly dealt with; Faith must go with justice, sincerity, and moderation in speech. (iv. 127-152).

An-Nisā', or The Women.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious
Most Merciful.

1. O mankind! fear
Your Guardian Lord,
Who created you
From a single Person,\(^{504}\)
Created, out of it,
His mate, and from them twain
Scattered (like seeds)
Countless men and women;
Fear Allah, through Whom\(^{505}\)
Ye demand your mutual (rights),
And be heedful of the wombs\(^{506}\)
(That bore you): for Allah
Ever watches over you.

2. To orphans restore their property
(When they reach their age),
Nor substitute (your) worthless things
For (their) good ones; and devour not

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504. *Nafs* may mean: (1) soul; (2) self; (3) person, living person; (4) will, good pleasure, as in iv. 4 below. *Minhâ*: I follow the construction suggested by Imam Râzî. The particle *min* would then suggest here a species, a nature, a similarity. The pronoun *hâ* refers of course to *Nafs*.

505. All our mutual rights and duties are referred to Allah. We are His creatures: His Will is the standard and measure of Allah; and our duties are measured by our conformity with His Will. “Our wills are ours, to make them Thine,” says Tennyson (In Memoriam). Among ourselves (human beings) our mutual rights and duties arise out of Allah’s Law, the sense of Right that is implanted in us by Him.

506. Among the most wonderful mysteries of our nature is that of sex. The unregenerate male is apt, in the pride of his physical strength, to forget the all-important part which the female plays in his very existence, and in all the social relationships that arise in our collective human lives. The mother that bore us must ever have our reverence. The wife, through whom we enter parentage, must have our reverence. Sex, which governs so much of our physical life, and has so much influence on our emotional and higher nature, deserves—not our fear, or our contempt, or our amused indulgence, but—our reverence in the highest sense of the term. With this fitting introduction we enter on a discussion of women, orphans, and family relationships.
Their substance (by mixing it up)\textsuperscript{507} With your own. For this is Indeed a great sin.

3. If ye fear that ye shall not Be able to deal justly With the orphans.\textsuperscript{508} Marry women of your choice, Two, or three, or four; But if ye fear that ye shall not Be able to deal justly (with them), Then only one, or That which your right hands possess. That will be more suitable, To prevent you From doing injustice.\textsuperscript{509}

4. And give the women (On marriage) their dower As an obligation; but if they, Of their own good pleasure, Remit any part of it to you, Take it and enjoy it With right good cheer.

507. Justice to orphans is enjoined, and three things are particularly mentioned as temptations in the way of a guardian: (1) He must not postpone restoring all his ward’s property when the time comes; subject to iv. 5 below. (2) If there is a list of property, it is not enough that that list should be technically followed: the property restored must be of equal value to the property received: the same principle applies where there is no list. (3) If property is managed together, or where perishable goods must necessarily be consumed, the strictest probity is necessary when the separation takes place, and this is insisted on. See also ii. 220 and note.

508. Notice the conditional clause about orphans, introducing the rules about marriage. This reminds us of the immediate occasion of the promulgation of this verse. It was after Uhud, when the Muslim community was left with many orphans and widows and some captives of war. Their treatment was to be governed by principles of the greatest humanity and equity. The occasion is past, but the principles remain. Marry the orphans if you are quite sure that you will in that way protect their interests and their property, with perfect justice to them and to your own dependants if you have any. If not, make other arrangements for the orphans.

509. The unrestricted number of wives of the “Times of Ignorance” was now strictly limited to a maximum of four, provided you could treat them with equality.
5. To those weak of understanding

Give not your property which Allah has assigned to you
To manage,
But feed and clothe them
Therewith, and speak to them
Words of kindness and justice.

6. Make trial of orphans

Until they reach the age
Of marriage; if then ye find
Sound judgment in them.
Release their property to them;
But consume it not wastefully,
Nor in haste against their growing up.
If the guardian is well-off,
Let him claim no remuneration,
But if he is poor, let him
Have for himself what is
Just and reasonable.
When ye release their property
To them, take witnesses
In their presence:
But all-sufficient

510. This applies to orphans, but the wording is perfectly general, and defines principles like those of Chancery in English Law and the Court of Wards in Indian Law. Property has not only its rights but also its responsibilities. The owner may not do just what he likes absolutely; his right is limited by the good of his family of which he is a member, and if he is incapable of understanding it, his control should be removed. This does not mean that he is harshly dealt with. On the contrary his interest must be protected, and he must be treated with special kindness because of his incapacity.

511. Your property: Ultimately all property belongs to Allah, and is intended for the support of his close relations. It is held in trust by a particular individual. If he is incapable, he is put aside but gently and with kindness. While his incapacity remains, the duties and responsibilities devolve on his guardian even more strictly than in the case of the original owner: for he may not take any of the profits for himself unless he is poor, and in that case his remuneration for his trouble must be on a scale that is no more than just and reasonable.

512. The age of marriage is the age when they reach their majority.
7. From what is left by parents
And those nearest related
There is a share for men
And a share for women.
Whether the property be small
Or large,—a determinate share.

8. But if at the time of division
Other relatives, or orphans,
Or poor, are present,
Give them out of the (property).
And speak to them
Words of kindness and justice.

9. Let those (disposing of an estate)
Have the same fear in their minds
As they would have for their own
If they had left a helpless family
behind:
Let them fear Allah, and speak
Appropriate words.

10. Those who unjustly
Eat up the property
Of orphans. eat up
A Fire into their own
Bodies: they will soon
Be enduring a blazing Fire!

513. It is good to take human witnesses when you faithfully discharge your trust; but remember that, however fully you satisfy your fellow-men when you give your account to them, there is a stricter account due from you to Allah. If you are righteous in Allah’s eyes, you must follow these stricter standards.

514. I have resisted the temptation to translate “next to kin,” as this phrase has a technical meaning in Indian Law, referring to certain kinds of heirs, whereas here the people meant are those whose inheritance is to be divided. The shares are specified. Here the general principles are laid down that females inherit as well as males, and that relatives who have no legal shares, orphans, and indigent people are not to be treated harshly, if present at the division.

515. It is a touching argument addressed to those who have to divide an estate. ‘How anxious would you be if you had left a helpless family behind? If others do so, help and be kind’.
SECTION 2.

11. Allah (thus) directs you 
As regards your children’s\(^{516}\) 
(Inheritance): to the male, 
A portion equal to that 
Of two females: if only 
Daughters, two or more.\(^{517}\) 
Their share is two-thirds 
Of the inheritance; 
If only one, her share 
Is a half. 

For parents, a sixth share 
Of the inheritance to each, 
If the deceased left children; 
If no children, and the parents 
Are the (only) heirs, the mother 
Has a third: if the deceased 
Left brothers (or sisters) 
The mother has a sixth. 
(The distribution in all cases 
Is) after the payment 
Of legacies and debts. 
Ye know not whether

516. The principles of inheritance law are laid down in broad outline in the Qur’an; the precise details have been worked out on the basis of the Prophet’s practice and that of his Companions, and by interpretation and analogy. Muslim jurists have collected a vast amount of learning on this subject, and this body of law is enough by itself to form the subject of life-long study. Here we shall deal only with the broad principles to be gathered from the Text, as interpreted by the Jurists.

(1) The power of testamentary disposition extends over only one-third of the Property; the remaining two-thirds are distributed among heirs as laid down. (2) All distribution takes place after the legacies and debts (including funeral expenses) have first been paid. (3) Legacies cannot be left to any of the heirs included in the scheme of distribution; or it will amount to upsetting the shares and undue preference of one heir to another. (4) Generally, but not always, the male takes a share double that of a female in his own category.

517. At first sight, the Arabic words seem to mean: “if more than two daughters.” But the alternative in the next clause is: “if only one daughter.” Logically, therefore, the first clause must mean: “if daughters, two or more.” This is the general interpretation, and is confirmed by the supplementary provision in iv. 176 at the end of the Sûra, which should be read along with this.
Your parents or your children
Are nearest to you
In benefit. These are
Settled portions ordained
By Allah: and Allah is
All-knowing, All-wise.

12. In what your wives leave,
Your share is a half,
If they leave no child,
But if they leave a child,
Ye get a fourth; after payment
Of legacies and debts.
In what ye leave;
Their share is a fourth,
If ye leave no child;
But if ye leave a child,
They get an eighth; after payment
Of legacies and debts.
If the man or woman
Whose inheritance is in question,

518. This verse deals with the portions allotted to (a) children, and (b) parents. The next verse deals with the portions allotted to (c) husband or wife of the deceased, and (d) collaterals. The children's shares are fixed, but their amount will depend upon what goes to the parents. If both parents are living, and there are also children, both father and mother take a sixth each: if only one parent is living, he or she takes his or her sixth; and the rest goes to the children. If the parents are living, and there is no child or other heir, the mother gets a third (and the father the remaining two-thirds); if there are no children, but there are brothers or sisters (this is interpreted strictly in the plural), the mother has a sixth, and the father apparently the residue, as the father excludes collaterals. This is far from being an exhaustive statement, but it establishes the proposition that children and parents have always some share if they survive, but their shares are affected by the existence and number of the heirs in these categories.

519. The husband takes a half of his deceased wife's property if she leaves no child, the rest going to residuaries; if she leaves a child, the husband gets only a fourth. Following the rule that the female share is generally half the male share, the widow gets a fourth of her deceased husband's property, if he leaves no children, and an eighth if he leaves children. If there are more widows than one, their collective share is a fourth or an eighth as the case may be; inter se they divide equally.
522. Debts (in which funeral expenses take first rank) and legacies are the first charge on the estate of a deceased person, before distribution takes place. But equity and fair dealing should be observed in all matters, so that no one’s interests are prejudiced. Thus funeral expenses should be reasonable; debts must be genuine and not reckless debts; and the shares must be calculated with fairness.

521. The word in Arabic is kalālat, which is so construed usually. But it was nowhere defined authoritatively in the lifetime of the Messenger. This was one of the three terms about which Ḥadhrat Umar wished that the Messenger had defined them in his lifetime, the other two being the share of grandfather, and ṭub (usury). On the accepted definition, we are concerned with the inheritance of a person who has left no descendant or ascendant (however distant), but only collaterals, with or without a widow or widower. If there is a widow or widower surviving, she or he takes her or his share, as already specified. The shares of collaterals generally are calculated on a complicated system which cannot be described in a brief note. For these, and the rules about Residuaries (‘Aṣaba) reference should be made to special legal treatises.

521. A “brother or sister” is here interpreted to mean a uterine brother or sister, i.e., a brother or sister by the same mother but not by the same father, as the case of full brothers and sisters or brothers and sisters by the same father but different mothers is understood to be dealt with later, in the last verse of this Sūra. The uterine brother or sister, if only one survives, takes a sixth; if more than one survive, they take a third collectively, and divide among themselves; this on the supposition that there are no descendants or ascendants, however remote. There may, however, be a widow or widower surviving: she or he takes the share as already defined, before the collaterals come in.

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The supreme achievement.\textsuperscript{522-A}

14. But those who disobey
Allah and His Messenger
And transgress His limits
Will be admitted
To a Fire, to abide therein:
And they shall have
A humiliating punishment.

SECTION 3.

15. If any of your women
Are guilty of lewdness,\textsuperscript{523}
Take the evidence of four\textsuperscript{524}
( Reliable) witnesses from amongst you
Against them; and if they testify,
Confine them to houses until
Death do claim them,
Or Allah ordain for them
Some (other) way.\textsuperscript{525}

16. If two persons among you
Are guilty of lewdness,
Punish them both.
If they repent and amend,
Leave them alone; for Allah
Is Oft-returning, Most Merciful.

17. Allah accepts the repentance
Of those who do evil
In ignorance and repent

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\textsuperscript{522-A} Cf. xliv. 57, n. 4733.

\textsuperscript{523} Most commentators understand this to refer to adultery or fornication; in that case they consider that the punishment was altered by the later verse, xxiv. 2.

\textsuperscript{524} To protect the honour of women, stricter evidence is required, i.e., the evidence of four instead of the usual two witnesses. It is the same for adultery (see xxiv. 4.).

\textsuperscript{525} Keep them in prison until some definite order is received. Those who take the crime to be adultery or fornication construe this definite order ("some other way") to mean some definite pronouncement by the Prophet under inspiration; this was the punishment of flogging under xxiv. 2, for fornication, and stoning to death under the Prophet's directives for adultery.
Soon afterwards; to them
Will Allah turn in mercy:
For Allah is full of knowledge
And wisdom.

18. Of no effect is the repentance
Of those who continue\(^{526}\)
To do evil, until death
Faces one of them, and he says,
"Now have I repented indeed;"
Nor of those who die
Rejecting Faith: for them
Have we prepared
A chastisement most grievous.

19. O ye who believe!
Ye are forbidden to inherit
Women against their will.\(^{527}\)
Nor should ye treat them
With harshness, that ye may
Take away part of the dower\(^{528}\)
Ye have given them,—except
Where they have been guilty
Of open lewdness;
On the contrary live with them
On a footing of kindness and equity
If ye take a dislike to them
It may be that ye dislike
A thing, and Allah brings about
Through it a great deal of good.

\(^{526}\) Note the fine touch. A sin may be fashionable, and people may sin together
without compunction. When one of them is faced with Death, he repents, but that sort
of repentance is no good.

\(^{527}\) Among many nations, including Arabs in the Days of Ignorance, a step-son or
brother took possession of a dead man's widow or widows along with his goods and
chattels. This shameful custom is forbidden. See also iv. 22 below.

\(^{528}\) Another trick, to detract from the freedom of married women was to treat them
badly and force them to sue for a *Khul'a* divorce (see ii. 229, n. 258) or its equivalent
in pre-Islamic custom, when the dower could be claimed back. This is also forbidden.
Or the harshness may be exercised in another way: a divorced woman may be prevented
by those who have control of her, from re-marrying unless she remits her dower. All
kinds of harshness are forbidden.
20. But if ye decide to take
One wife in place of another,
Even if ye had given the latter
A whole treasure\(^{529}\) for dower,
Take not the least bit of it back:
Would ye take it by slander
And a manifest sin?

21. And how could ye take it
When ye have gone in
Unto each other, and they have
Taken from you a solemn covenant?

22. And marry not women
Whom your fathers married,—
Except what is past:
It was shameful and odious,—
An abominable custom indeed.\(^{530}\)

SECTION 4.

23. Prohibited to you
(For marriage) are:—\(^{531}\)
Your mothers, daughters,\(^{532}\)
Sisters; father’s sisters,
Mother’s sisters; brother’s daughters,
Sister’s daughters; foster-mothers\(^{533}\)
(Who gave your suck), foster-sisters;

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529. Treasure: \(Qintār\) = a Talent of gold: see iii. 14, first note.

530. See above: iv. 19, n. 527.

531. This Table of Prohibited Degrees agrees in the main with what is usually accepted among all nations, except in minor details. It begins in the last verse (with father’s widows or divorcees). The scheme is drawn up on the assumption that the person who proposes to marry is a man: if it is a woman, the same scheme will apply, \(mutatis mutandis\): it will read: “your fathers, sons, brothers,” etc.; or you can always read it from the husband’s view of relationship, as there must always be a husband in a marriage.

532. “Mother” includes grandmother (through the father or mother), great grandmother, etc.; “daughter” includes grand-daughter (through son or daughter), great-grand daughter, etc.; “sister,” includes full-sister and half-sister. “Father’s sister” includes grandfather’s sister, etc., and “mother’s sister” includes grandmother’s sister, etc.

533. “Fosterage” or milk-relationships play an important part in Muslim Law, and count like blood-relationships: it would therefore seem that not only foster-mothers and foster-sisters, but foster-mother’s sister, etc., all come within the prohibited degrees.
Your wives, mothers;
Your step-daughters under your\textsuperscript{534} Guardianship, born of your wives
To whom ye have gone in;\textsuperscript{-}
No prohibition if ye have not gone in;\textsuperscript{537}
(Those who have been)
Wives of your sons\textsuperscript{535} proceeding
From your loins;
And two sisters in wedlock
At one and the same time,\textsuperscript{536}
Except for what is past;
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful;\textsuperscript{-}

24. Also (prohibited are)
Women already married,
Except those
Whom your right hands possess:\textsuperscript{537}
Thus hath Allah ordained
(Prohibitions) against you:
Except for these, all others
Are lawful, provided
Ye seek (them in marriage)
With gifts from your property,\textsuperscript{-}
Desiring chastity, not fornication.\textsuperscript{538}
Give them their dowery
For the enjoyment you have

\textsuperscript{534}. It is generally held that “under your guardianship” is a description, not a condition.

\textsuperscript{535}. “Sons” includes grandsons.

\textsuperscript{536}. The bar against two sisters in marriage together applies to aunt and niece together, but not to deceased wife’s sister.

\textsuperscript{537}. Whom your right hands possess: i.e., captives.

\textsuperscript{538}. After defining the prohibited degrees, the verse proceeds to say that women other than those specified may be sought in marriage, but even so, not from motives of lust, but in order to promote chastity between the sexes. Marriage in the original Arabic is here described by a word which suggests a fortress (\textit{hiṣn}): marriage is, therefore, the fortress of chastity.
Of them as a duty; but if, 539 after a dower is prescribed, ye agree mutually (to vary it), there is no blame on you, and Allah is All-knowing All-wise.

25. If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess. 540 and Allah hath full knowledge about your faith. ye are one from another: wed them with the leave of their owners, and give them their dowers, according to what is reasonable: they should be chaste, not fornicators, nor taking adulterous: when they are taken in wedlock, if they commit indecency their punishment is half that for free women. this (permission) is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practise self-restraint, and Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

539. As the woman in marriage surrenders her person, so the man also must surrender, at least some of his property according to his means. and this gives rise to the law of Dower. a minimum dower is prescribed, but it is not necessary to stick to the minimum, and in the new relationship created, the parties are recommended to act towards each other with the greatest confidence and liberality.

540. That is, captives taken in a Jihad: if you seek such a person in marriage, do it from no base motives. Safeguard your faith, and see that she too does believe. In that case, after all, she is of the human brotherhood, and her condition is accidental and redeemable. if the slave bore a child to her master, she would become free.
SECTION 5.

26. Allah doth wish
   To make clear to you
   And to guide you into
   The ways of those
   Before you; and (He
   Doth wish to) turn to you
   (In Mercy): and Allah
   Is All-knowing, All-wise.

27. Allah doth wish
   To turn to you,
   But the wish of those
   Who follow their lusts
   Is that ye should turn
   Away (from Him),--
   Far, far away.

28. Allah doth wish
   To lighten your (burdens):
   For man was created
   Weak (in resolution).

29. O ye who believe!
   Eat not up your property
   Among yourselves in vanities:
   But let there be amongst you
   Traffic and trade
   By mutual good-will:
   Nor kill (or destroy)

541. Let me paraphrase this verse, for there is profound meaning in it. (1) All your property you hold in trust, whether it is in your name, or belongs to the community, or to people over whom you have control. To waste is wrong. (2) In ii. 188 the same phrase occurred, to caution us against greed. Here it occurs, to encourage us to increase property by economic use (traffic and trade), recalling Christ's parable of the Talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30), where the servants who had increased their master's wealth were promoted and the servant who had hoarded was cast into darkness. (3) We are warned that our waste may mean our own destruction ("nor kill or destroy yourselves.") But there is a more general meaning also: we must be careful of our own and other people's lives. We must commit no violence. This is the opposite of "trade and traffic by mutual good-will." (4) Our violence to our own brethren is particularly preposterous, seeing that Allah has loved and showered His mercies on us and all His creatures.
Yourselves: for verily
Allah hath been to you
Most Merciful!

30. If any do that
In rancour and injustice,-
Soon shall We cast him
Into the Fire: and easy
It is for Allah.

31. If ye (but) eschew
The most heinous
Of the things
Which ye are forbidden to do,
We shall remit
Your evil deeds,
and admit you to a Gate
Of great honour.

32. And in no wise covet
Those things in which Allah
Hath bestowed His gifts
More freely on some of you
Than on others: to men
Is allotted what they earn,
And to women what they earn:
But ask Allah of His bounty.
For Allah hath full knowledge
Of all things.

33. To (benefit) every one,
We have appointed

542. Men and women have gifts from Allah—some greater than others. They seem unequal, but we are assured that Allah has allotted them by a scheme by which people receive what they earn. If this does not appear clear in our sight, let us remember that we have no full knowledge but Allah has. We must not be jealous if other people have more than we have—in wealth or position or strength or honour or talent or happiness. Probably things are equalized in the aggregate or in the long run, or equated to needs and merits on a scale which we cannot appraise. If we want more, instead of being jealous or covetous, we should pray to Allah and place before Him our needs. Though He knows all, and has no need of our prayer, our prayer may reveal to ourselves our shortcomings and enable us to deserve more of Allah’s bounty or make ourselves fit for it.
Sharers and heirs\textsuperscript{543}
To property left
By parents and relatives.
To those, also, to whom
Your right hand was pledged,\textsuperscript{544}
Give their due portion.
For truly Allah is witness
To all things.

SECTION 6.

34. Men are the protectors\textsuperscript{545}
And maintainers of women,
Because Allah has given
The one more (strength)
Than the other, and because
They support them
From their means.
Therefore the righteous women
Are devoutly obedient, and guard
In (the husband's) absence
What Allah would have them guard.\textsuperscript{546}

\textsuperscript{543} Mawâlî, plural of Maulâ; from the root wâlâ, to be near in place or relationship, to follow. Maulâ may therefore mean: (1) nearly related, (2) heir, (3) sharer or partner; these three meanings are implied here; (4) neighbour, or friend, or protector, or client (xliv. 44); (5) lord or master (xvi. 76).

\textsuperscript{544} When the emigration took place from Makkah to Madinah, bonds and links of brotherhood were established between the Emigrants and the Helpers, and they shared in each other’s inheritance. Later, when the Community was solidly established, and relations with those left behind in Makkah were resumed, the rights of blood-relations in Makkah, and the Helper-brethren in Madinah were both safeguarded. This is the particular meaning. The more general meaning is similar; respect your ties of blood, of neighbourhood, and of friendly compacts and understandings. Be just to all.

\textsuperscript{545} Qawwâm: one who stands firm in another’s business, protects his interests, and looks after his affairs: or it may be, standing firm in his own business, managing affairs, with a steady purpose. Cf. iv. 135.

\textsuperscript{546} Or the sentence may be rendered: “and protect (the husband’s interests) in his absence, as Allah has protected them. “If we take the rendering as in the text, the meaning is: the good wife is obedient and harmonious in her husband’s presence, and in his absence guards his reputation and property and her own virtue, as ordained by Allah. If we take the rendering as in the note, we reach the same result in a different way: the good wife, in her husband’s absence, remembering how Allah has given her a sheltered position, does everything to justify that position by guarding her own virtue and his reputation and property.
As to those women
On whose part ye fear
Disloyalty and ill-conduct,
Admonish them (first), 547
(Next), refuse to share their beds,
(And last) beat them (lightly);
But if they return to obedience,
Seek not against them 548
Means (of annoyance):
For Allah is Most High.
Great (above you all).

35. If ye fear a breach
Between them twain,
Appoint (two) arbiters,
One from his family,
And the other from hers; 549
If they seek to set things aright,
Allah will cause
Their reconciliation:
For Allah hath full knowledge,
And is acquainted
With all things.

547. In case of family jars four steps are mentioned, to be taken in that order: (1) perhaps verbal advice or admonition may be sufficient; (2) if not, sex relations may be suspended; (3) if this is not sufficient, some slight physical correction may be administered: but Imám Shari’i considers this inadvisable, though permissible, and all authorities are unanimous in deprecating any sort of cruelty, even of the nagging kind, as mentioned in the next clause; (4) if all this fails, a family council is recommended in iv. 35 below.

548. Temper, nagging, sarcasm, speaking at each other in other people’s presence, reverting to past faults which should be forgiven and forgotten—all this is forbidden. And the reason given is characteristic of Islam. You must live all your life as in the presence of Allah, Who is high above us, but Who watches over us. How petty and contemptible will our little squabbles appear in His presence!

549. An excellent plan for settling family disputes, without too much publicity or mud-throwing, or resort to the chicaneries of the law. The Latin countries recognise this plan in their legal systems. It is a pity that Muslims do not resort to it universally, as they should. The arbiters from each family would know the idiosyncrasies of both parties, and would be able, with Allah’s help to effect a real reconciliation.
36. Serve Allah, and join not Any partners with Him; And do good— To parents, kinsfolk, Orphans, those in need, Neighbours who are of kin Neighbours who are strangers, The Companion by your side, The way-farer (ye meet), And what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not The arrogant, the vainglorious.—

37. (Nor) those who are niggardly. Enjoin niggardliness on others, Hide the bounties Which Allah hath bestowed On them; for We have prepared, For those who resist Faith,

550. The essence of Islam is to serve Allah and do good to your fellow-creatures. This is wider and more comprehensive than “Love God and love your neighbour”. For it includes duties to animals as our fellow-creatures, and emphasises practical service rather than sentiment.

551. Neighbours who are near: that is, in local situation as well as intimate relationships, just as neighbours who are strangers includes those whom we do not know or who live away from us.

552. The Companion by your side may be your intimate friends and associates, just as the way-farer you meet may be a casual acquaintance on your travels. This last is much wider than the “stranger within your gate.”

553. What your right hands possess: For the meaning of the phrase see n. 537 above.

554. Real deeds of service and kindness proceed, not from showing off or from a superior sort of condescension (cf. “White Man’s Burden”), but from a frank recognition of our own humility and the real claims, before Allah, of all our fellow-creatures. For in our mutual needs we are equal before Allah, or perhaps the best of us (as the world sees us) may be worse than the worst of us (from the same point of view).

555. Arrogance is one reason why our deeds of love and kindness do not thrive. Another is niggardliness or selfishness. Allah does not love either the one or the other, for they both proceed from want of love of Allah, or faith in Allah. Niggardly is the worldly wise man who not only refuses to spend himself in service, but by example and precept prevents others from doing so, as otherwise he would be made odious by comparison, before his fellow-creatures. So he either makes a virtue of his caution, or hides the gifts which have been given him—wealth, position, talent, etc.
1. A Punishment that steeps\textsuperscript{556} Them in contempt;—

38. Nor those who spend
Of their substance, to be seen\textsuperscript{557}
Of men, and have no faith
In Allah and the Last Day:
If any take the Satan
For their intimate,
What a dreadful intimate he is!

39. And what burden
Were it on them if they
Had faith in Allah
And in the Last Day,
And they spent
Out of what Allah hath
Given them for sustenance?\textsuperscript{558}
For Allah hath full
Knowledge of them.

40. Allah is never unjust
In the least degree:
If there is any good (done),
He doubleth it,
And giveth from His Own self
A great reward.\textsuperscript{559}

41. How then if We brought
From each People a witness,
And We brought thee

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\textsuperscript{556} Note how the punishment fits the crime. The niggard holds other people in contempt, and in doing so, becomes himself contemptible.

\textsuperscript{557} A fault opposed to niggardliness, and equally opposed to true Charity, is to spend lavishly to be seen of men. It is mere hypocrisy: there is no love in it, either for Allah or for man.

\textsuperscript{558} "Sustenance": physical, intellectual, spiritual—everything pertaining to life and growth. Our being is from Allah, and we must therefore spend ourselves freely for Allah. How can it be a burden? It is merely a response to the demand of our own healthy nature.

\textsuperscript{559} Any little good of our own comes from the purity of our heart. Its results in the world are doubled and multiplied by Allah's grace and mercy; but an even greater reward comes from Him: His good pleasure, which brings us nearer to Him.
42. On that day
Those who reject Faith
And disobey the Messenger
Will wish that the earth
Were made one with them:
But never will they hide
A single fact from Allah!

SECTION 7.

43. O ye who believe!
Approach not prayers
In a state of intoxication,
Until ye can understand
All that ye say,—
Nor in a state
Of ceremonial impurity
Except when you are
Passing by (through the mosque),
Until after washing
Your whole body.
If ye are ill,
Or on a journey,
Or one of you cometh
From the privy,
Or ye have been
In contact with women.

560. Each Prophet and Leader is a witness for his People and his contemporaries—for those who accept Allah, and against those who reject Him.

561. Those who reject Allah’s message will wish, when their eyes are opened, that they were reduced to dust, for existence itself will be agony to them. They might like to hide in the dust, but nothing is hidden from Allah. All their past will stand out clear before Him.

562. The reference is either to a state of intoxication or to a dazed state of mind on account of drowsiness or some other cause. Or perhaps both are implied. Before the prohibition of intoxicants altogether was promulgated, it was at least unbecoming that people should come to prayers in such a state. For prayers it is only right that we should collect our whole minds and approach Allah in a spirit of reverence.
And ye find no water,

Then take for yourselves
Clean sand (or earth),
And rub therewith
Your faces and hands.
For Allah doth blot out sins
And forgive again and again.

44. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those
Who were given a portion
Of the Book? They traffic
In error, and wish that ye
Should lose the right path.

45. But Allah hath full knowledge
Of your enemies:
Allah is enough for a Protector.
And Allah is enough for a Helper.

46. Of the Jews there are those
Who displace words
From their (right) places.
And say: “We hear
And we disobey”.

563. The strictest cleanliness and purity of mind and body are required, especially at the time of prayer. But there are circumstances when water for ablutions is not easily obtainable, especially in the dry conditions of Arabia, and then washing with dry sand or clean earth is recommended. Four such circumstances are mentioned: the two last when washing is specially required; the two first when washing may be necessary, but it may not be easy to get water. For a man, when he is ill, cannot walk out far to get water, and a man on a journey has no full control over his supplies. In all four cases, where water cannot be got, cleaning with dry sand or dry earth is recommended. This is called Tayammum.

564. Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366.

565. See ii. 93, n. 98. A trick of the Jews was to twist words and expressions, so as to ridicule the most solemn teachings of Faith. Where they should have said, “We hear and we obey,” they said aloud, “We hear,” and whispered. “We disobey.” Where they should have said respectfully. “We hear,” they added in a whisper, “May you not hear,” by way of ridicule. Where they claimed the attention of the Prophet, they used an ambiguous word apparently harmless, but in their intention disrespectful.
And "Here, may you not Hear;" and "Rā'īnā"\textsuperscript{566}
With a twist of their tongues
And a slander to Faith.
If only they had said:
"We hear and we obey";
And "Do hear";
And "Do look at us":
It would have been better
For them, and more proper;
But Allah hath cursed them
For their Unbelief; and but few
Of them will believe.

47. O ye People of the Book!
Believe in what We
Have (now) revealed, confirming
What was (already) with you,
Before We change the face and
fame\textsuperscript{567}
Of some (of you) beyond all recognition,
And turn them hindwards,
Or curse them as We cursed
The Sabbath-breakers,\textsuperscript{568}
For the decision of Allah
Must be carried out.

\textsuperscript{566} See ii. 104, n. 106. "Rā'īnā" if used respectfully in the Arabic way, would have meant "Please attend to us." With a twist of their tongue, they suggested an insulting meaning, such as "O thou that takest us to pasture!" or in Hebrew. "Our bad one!"

\textsuperscript{567} Literally, "before We obliterate some features (or faces) and turn them front to back (or back to front)"; an Arabic idiom, which must be translated freely to yield its proper meaning in English. The face is the chief expression of a man's own real essence; it is also the index of his fame and estimation. The People of the Book had been specially favoured by Allah with revelations. If they proved themselves unworthy, they lost their "face". Their eminence would, owing to their own conduct, be turned into degradation. Others would take their place. The first shall be last and the last shall be first: Matt. xix. 30.

\textsuperscript{568} Cf. ii. 65 and n. 79.
48. Allah forgiveth not
That partners should be set up
With Him; but He forgiveth
Anything else, to whom
He pleaseth; to set up
Partners with Allah
Is to devise a sin\(^{569}\)
Most heinous indeed.

49. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those
Who claim purity
For themselves?\(^{570}\)
Nay—but Allah
Doth purify
Whom He pleaseth.
And they will not be
Wronged a whit\(^{571}\)

50. Behold! how they invent
A lie against Allah!
But that by itself
Is a manifest sin!

SECTION 8

51. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those
Who were given a portion\(^{572}\)
Of the Book? They believe

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569. Just as in an earthly kingdom the worst crime is that of treason, as it cuts at the very existence of the State, so in the Divine Kingdom, the unforgivable sin is that of contumacious treason against Allah by putting up Allah's creatures in rivalry against Him. This is rebellion against the Creator. It is what Plato would call the "lie in the soul." But even here, if the rebellion is through ignorance, and is followed by sincere repentance and amendment, Allah's Mercy is always open (iv. 17).

570. The sanctimonious or self-sanctified people are the farthest from sanctity or purity, which can only proceed from Allah. They cannot play with Allah's Truth and yet go on claiming to be guided and purified or justified by Allah. Their falsehood in itself condemns them: no further proof is needed of their selfishness and evil.

571. Literally, the small skin in the groove of a date stone, a thing of no value: *fatīl*.

572. Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366. The phrase also occurs in iv. 44.
In Sorcery and Tagut\textsuperscript{573}
And say to the Unbelievers
That they are better guided
In the (right) way
Than the Believers!

52. They are (men) whom
Allah hath cursed:
And those whom Allah
Hath cursed, thou wilt find,
Have no one to help:\textsuperscript{574}

53. Have they a share
In dominion or power?
Behold, they give not a farthing\textsuperscript{575}
To their fellow-men?

54. Or do they envy mankind
For what Allah hath given them
Of His bounty? But We
Had already given the people
Of Abraham the Book
And Wisdom, and conferred
Upon them a great kingdom.\textsuperscript{576}

55. Some of them believed.
And some of them averted
Their faces from him: and enough

\textsuperscript{573} The word I have translated Sorcery is \textit{jibt}, which may mean divination, sorcery, magic, or any false object of belief or worship, such as an idol. The word I have translated Evil (here and in ii. 256) is \textit{Tagūt}, which means the evil one, the one who exceeds all bounds, Satan: or it may refer to some idol worshipped by the Pagan Arabs, with whom the Jews of Madinah were intriguing against the Holy Prophet. The Jews had taken much to sorcery, magic, divination, and such superstitions.

\textsuperscript{574} The Jews were then seeking the aid of the Makkah Pagans against Mu\textasciitilde{m}ammad, but far from getting any help from them, they and the Pagans were both overthrown. That was the immediate occasion, but the words have a perfectly general—a universal—meaning.

\textsuperscript{575} The word I have translated farthing is \textit{naqīr}, the groove in a date stone, a thing of no value whatever. Close-fistedness and envy are among the worst forms of selfishness, and appear specially incongruous in people of power, authority, or influence, from whom is expected generosity in giving and generosity in seeing other people's prosperity or happiness.

\textsuperscript{576} Such as the kingdoms of David and Solomon, for they had international fame.
Those who reject Our Signs. We shall soon Cast into the Fire: As often as their skins Are roasted through. We shall change them For fresh skins, That they may taste The Chastisement: for Allah Is Exalted in Power, Wise.

But those who believe And do deeds of righteousness, We shall soon admit to Gardens, With rivers flowing beneath,— Their eternal home: Therein shall they have Spouses purified\(^\text{578}\) We shall admit them To shades, cool and ever deepening.\(^\text{579}\)

Allah doth command you To render back your Trusts To those to whom they are due; And when ye judge Between people That ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent Is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth And seeth all things.

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger.

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\(^{577}\) Cf. iv. 97, viii. 37, ix. 95, ixx. 68.

\(^{578}\) Cf. ii. 25 and n. 44.

\(^{579}\) The Garden is contrasted with the Fire: the shade is contrasted with the roasting, Evil grows with what it feeds on. So goodness and felicity grow with their practice.
And those charged
With authority among you.\textsuperscript{580}
If ye differ in anything
Among yourselves, refer it
To Allah and His Messenger,
If ye do believe in Allah
And the Last Day:
That is best, and most suitable
For final determination.

\textbf{SECTION 9}

60. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those\textsuperscript{581}
Who declare that they believe
In the revelations
That have come to thee
And to those before thee?
Their (real) wish is
To resort together for judgment
(In their disputes)
To the Evil (Tagut)
Though they were ordered
To reject him.
But Satan's wish
Is to lead them astray
Far away (from the Right).

61. When it is said to them:
"Come to what Allah hath revealed.
And to the Messenger":

\textsuperscript{580} \textit{Ulā-l-amr}=those charged with authority or responsibility or decision, or the settlement of affairs. All ultimate authority rests in Allah. Prophets of Allah derive their authority from Him. As Islam makes no sharp division between sacred and secular affairs, it expects governments to be imbued with righteousness. Likewise Islam expects Muslims to respect the authority of such government for otherwise there can be no order or discipline.

\textsuperscript{581} The immediate reference was to the Hypocrites (\textit{Munāfiqīn}) of Madinah but the words are general, and the evil of hypocrisy has to be dealt with in all ages. The type of these men is what is called Mr. Facing-both-ways in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Such men declare that they are always with the Right, but calmly intrigue with Evil and Injustice, and even make Injustice their judge if their personal interests are served in that way.
Thou seest the Hypocrites avert
Their faces from thee in disgust.

62. How then, when they are
Seized by misfortune.
Because of the deeds
Which their hands have sent forth?
Then they come to thee,
Swearing by Allah:
“We meant no more
Than good-will and conciliation!”

63. Those men,—Allah knows
What is in their heart;
So keep clear of them
But admonish them,
And speak to them a word
To reach their very souls.

64. We sent not a Messenger,
But to be obeyed, in accordance
With the leave of Allah.
If they had only,
When they were unjust
To themselves,
Come unto thee
And asked Allah’s forgiveness.
And the Messenger had asked
Forgiveness for them,
They would have found
Allah indeed Oft-returning,
Most Merciful.

65. But no by thy Lord,
They can have
No (real) Faith.
Until they make thee judge

582. How should hypocrites be treated? To take them into your confidence would of course be foolish. To wage unrelenting war against them may destroy the hope of reforming them and purging them of their hypocrisy. The Prophet of Allah keeps clear of their wiles, but at the same time, does not hesitate to show them the error of their ways, nor to put in a word in season, to penetrate their hearts and win them back to Allah.
In all disputes between them.
And find in their souls
No resistance against
Thy decisions, but accept
Them with the fullest conviction.\\(^{583}\)

66. If we had ordered them
To sacrifice their lives
Or to leave their homes,
Very few of them
Would have done it:\\(^{584}\)
But if they had done
What they were (actually) told,
It would have been best
For them, and would have gone
Farthest to strengthen their (faith);

67. And We should then have
Given them from Ourselves
A great reward;

68. And We should have
Shown them the Straight Way.\\(^{585}\)

69. All who obey Allah
And the Messenger
Are in the Company
Of those on whom

583. The test of true Faith is not mere lip profession, but bringing all our doubts and disputes to the one in whom we profess faith. Further, when a decision is given we are not only to accept it, but find in our inmost souls no difficulty and no resistance, but on the contrary a joyful acceptance springing from the conviction of our own faith.

584. The highest in faith willingly sacrifice their lives, their homes: and all that they hold dearest, in the cause of Allah. Those whose faith is not so strong are expected at least to do what a loyal member of any society does, submit his doubts and disputes to the head of the society and cheerfully accept his decision and submit to it. The contrast is between the Hypocrites who will not even do this, and the really devoted men and women who would voluntarily sacrifice their lives.

585. Four advantages of obedience to Allah are mentioned, in the order in which they will appeal to the beginner in faith: (1) his own benefit ("best for them"); (2) strengthening of his faith, as he becomes more and more at home in the world of faith: (3) reward from Allah’s own Presence, such intense conviction that no further arguments are needed: (4) the Straight Way, in which there is no doubt or difficulty whatever in our practical conduct.
586. A passage of the deepest devotional meaning. Even the humblest man who accepts Faith and does good becomes an accepted member of a great and beautiful company in the Hereafter. It is a company which lives perpetually in the sunshine of God's Grace. (This passage partly illustrates Q. i. 5). It is a glorious hierarchy, of which four grades are specified: (1) The highest is that of the Prophets or Apostles, who get plenary inspiration from God, and who teach mankind by example and precept. That rank in Islam is held by Muhammad Al-Mu'ta.' (2) The next are those whose badge is sincerity and truth: they love and support the truth with their person, their means, their influence, and all that is theirs. That rank was held by the special Companions of Muhammad, among whom the type was that of Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr As-Siddiq. (3) The next are the noble army of Witnesses, who testify to the truth. The testimony may be by martyrdom, Or it may be by the tongue of the true Preacher or the pen of the devoted scholar, or the life of the man devoted to service. (4) Lastly, there is the large company of Righteous people, the ordinary folk who do their ordinary business, but always in a righteous Way.

587. If a generous General gives the private soldier the privilege of sitting with his comrades and officers, high and low, in one common Brotherhood, people may perhaps wonder: how may this be? If we are admitted to that Company, we want to know no more. It is enough to us that Allah knows our humility and our unworthiness, and with His full knowledge admits us to that glorious Company!

588. No fight should be undertaken without due preparations and precautions. When these are taken, we must go boldly forward. “Go forth” is therefore repeated for emphasis. But we must go forth in a collective spirit, and not in a selfish spirit—either in small parties or all together, as our Leader determines. We must not tarry like the doubter in the next two verses.
72. There are certainly among you
Men who would tarry behind:589
If a misfortune befalls you,
They say: “Allah did favour us
In that we were not
Present among them.”

73. But if good fortune comes to you
From Allah, they would be sure
To say—as if there had never been
Ties of affection between you
and them—
“Oh! I wish I had been with them:
A fine thing should I then
Have made of it!”590

74. Let those fight
In the cause of Allah
Who sell the life of this world
For the Hereafter,591
To him who fights
In the cause of Allah,—
Whether he is slain
Or gets victory—
Soon shall We give him
A reward of great (value).

589. The doubter detaches himself in thought and action from the community. If the general body has a reverse, he blesses Allah that he was not among them, instead of being ashamed of himself for desertion. If the general body wins a success, he does not rejoice for the common cause, but only regrets for himself that he was not there to share in the glory and the gains!

590. Just a selfish man’s thought. Such men are far from being a source of strength to their community. They are no use in a fight, and the next verse by implication discards them.

591. It is not every one,—least of all, poltroons and faint-hearted persons—who is fit to fight in the cause of Allah. To do so is a privilege, and those who understand the privilege are prepared to sacrifice all their interests in this life, and this life itself; for they know that it is the sacrifice of something fleeting and of little value, for the sake of something everlasting, and of immense value. Whether (in appearance) they win or lose, in reality they win the prize for which they are fighting,—viz., honour and glory in the sight of Allah. Note that the only alternatives here are Death or Victory! The true fighter knows no defeat.
75. And why should ye not
Fight in the cause of Allah
And of those who, being weak,\textsuperscript{592} Are ill-treated (and oppressed)?—
Men, women, and children,
Whose cry is: "Our Lord!
Rescue us from this town.
Whose people are oppressors;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will protect;
And raise for us from Thee
One who will help!"\textsuperscript{593}

76. Those who believe
Fight in the cause of Allah,
And those who reject Faith
Fight in the cause of Evil (Tagut):
So fight ye against the
Friends,\textsuperscript{594} of Satan: feeble indeed
Is the cunning of Satan.

SECTION II.

77. Hast thou not turned
Thy thought to those

\textsuperscript{592} Mustadh'af = one reckoned weak, and therefore ill-treated and oppressed. \textit{Cf.} iv. 98, and vii. 150.

\textsuperscript{593} Even from the human point of view the cause of Allah is the cause of justice, the cause of the oppressed. In the great persecution, before Makkah was won again, what sorrows, threats, tortures, and oppressions, were suffered by those whose faith was unshaken? Muhammad's life and that of his adherents was threatened: they were mocked, assaulted, insulted and beaten; those within the power of the enemy were put into chains and cast into prison; others were boycotted, and shut out of trade, business, and social intercourse; they could not even buy the food they wanted, or perform their religious duties. The persecution was redoubled for the believing slaves, women, and children after the Hijrat. Their cry for a protector, and helper from Allah was answered when Muhammad the Chosen One brought freedom and peace to Makkah again.

\textsuperscript{594} Auliyāa plural of wali, friend, supporter, protector, patron; from the same root as maulā, for which see iv. 33, n. 543.
Who were told to hold back
Their hands (from fight)
But establish regular prayers
And spend in regular Zakat?
When (at length) the order
For fighting was issued to them,
Behold! a section of them
Feared men as—
Or even more than—
They should have feared Allah:
They said: “Our Lord!
Why hast Thou ordered us
To fight? Wouldst Thou not
Grant us respite
To our (natural) term,
Near (enough)? Say: “Short
Is the enjoyment of this world:
The Hereafter is the best
For those who do right:
Never will ye be
Dealt with unjustly
In the very least!

78. “Wherever ye are,
Death will find you out,
Even if ye are in towers

595. Before the command for fighting was issued there were some who were impatient, and could scarcely be held back. They wanted fighting from human motives,—pugnacity, hatred against their enemies, the gaining of personal ends. Fighting from such motives is wrong at all times. When the testing time came, and they had to fight, not for their own hand, but for a Sacred Cause, in which there was much suffering and little personal gain, the Hypocrites held back and were afraid.

596. “Our natural term of life,” they would say, “is short enough; why should we jeopardize it by fighting in which there is no personal gain?” The answer is begun in this verse and continued in the next.

Briefly, the answer is: (1) in any case the pleasures of this world are short; this life is fleeting; the first thing for a righteous man to do is to emancipate himself from its obsessions; (2) to do your duty is to do right; therefore turn your attention mainly to duty: (3) when duty calls for self-sacrifice, be sure that Allah’s call is never unjust, and never such as to exceed your capacity; and (4) if you fear death, you will not by fear escape death; it will find you out wherever you are; why not face it boldly when duty calls?
Built up strong and high!"

If some good befalls them
They say, “This is from Allah”;
But if evil, they say,
“This is from thee” (O Prophet).

Say: “All things are from Allah.”
But what hath come
To these people.
That they fail
To understand
A single fact?

79. Whatever good, (O man!)
Happens to thee, is from Allah;
But whatever evil happens
To thee, is from thyself
And We have sent thee
As a Messenger
To (instruct) mankind.
And enough is Allah
For a witness.

80. He who obeys
The Messenger, obeys Allah:
But if any turn away,

597. The Hypocrites were inconsistent, and in this reflect unregenerate mankind. If a disaster happens, due to their own folly, they blame somebody else; but if they are fortunate, they claim reflected credit by pretending that Heaven has favoured them because of their own superior merits. The modern critic discards even this pretence, eliminates Heaven altogether, and claims all credit direct to himself, unless he brings in blind Chance, but that he does mostly to “explain” misfortune. If we look to the ultimate Cause of all things, all things come from Allah. But if we look to the proximate cause of things, our own merit is so small, that we can hardly claim credit for good ourselves with any fairness. In Allah’s hand is all good: iii. 26. On the other hand, the proximate cause of our evil is due to some wrong in our own inner selves; for never are we dealt with unjustly in the very least: iv. 77.

598. To blame a man of God for our misfortunes is doubly unjust. For he comes to save us from misfortune, and it is because we flout him or pay no heed to him, that our own rebellion, brings its own punishment. If we realise this truth we shall be saved from two sins: (1) the sin of injustice to Allah’s Messengers, who come for our good, and not for our harm; (2) the sin of not realising our own shortcomings or rebellion, and thus living in spiritual darkness. If the Message is from Allah, that carries its own authority: “enough is Allah for a witness.”
We have not sent thee
To watch over them

81. They have "Obedience"
On their lips; but
When they leave thee,
A section of them
Meditate all night
On things very different
From what thou tellest them.
But Allah records
Their nightly (plots):
So keep clear of them,
And put thy trust in Allah,
And enough is Allah
As a disposer of affairs.

82. Do they not ponder on
The Qur-an?
Had it been from other
Than Allah, they would surely
Have found therein
Much discrepancy.

599. The Messenger was sent to preach, guide, instruct, and show the Way—not to drive people to good. That is not Allah’s Plan, which trains the human Will. The Messenger’s duty is therefore to convey the Message of Allah, in all the ways of persuasion that are open to him. If men perversely disobey that Message, they are not disobeying him but they are disobeying Allah. In the same way those who obey the Message are obeying Allah. They are not obliging the Messenger: they are merely doing their duty.

600. If we trust people who are not true, they are more likely to hinder than to help. But Allah is All-good as well as All-powerful, and all our affairs are best entrusted to His care. He is the best Guardian of all interests.

Therefore we should not trust the lip professions of Hypocrites, but trust in Allah. Nor should our confidence in Allah be shaken by any secret plots that enemies hatch against us. We should take all human precautions against them, but having done so, we should put our trust in Allah, Who knows the inner working of events better than any human mind can conceive.

601. The unity of the Qur-an is admittedly greater than that of any other sacred book. And yet how can we account for it except through the unity of Allah’s purpose and design? From a mere human point of view, we should have expected much discrepancy, because (1) the Messenger who promulgated it was not a learned man or philosopher, (2) it was promulgated at various times and in various circumstances, and
83. When there comes to them
Some matter touching
(Public) safety or fear,
They divulge it.
If they had only referred it
To the Messenger or to those
Charged with authority
Among them, the proper
Investigators would have
Known it from them (direct).
Were it not for the Grace
And Mercy of Allah unto you,
All but a few of you
Would have followed Satan. 602

84. Then fight in Allah’s cause—
Thou art held responsible
Only for thyself—
And rouse the Believers.
It may be that Allah
Will restrain the fury
Of the Unbelievers;
For Allah is the strongest
In might and in punishment. 603

= (3) it is addressed to all grades of mankind. Yet, when properly understood, its various
pieces fit together well even when arranged without any regard to chronological order.
There was just the One Inspirer and the One Inspired.

602. In times of war or public panic, thoughtless repetition of gossip is rightly
restrained by all effective States. If false, such news may cause needless alarm: if true,
it may frighten the, timid and cause some misgiving even to the bravest, because the
counterpart of it—the preparations made to meet the danger—is not known. Thoughtless
news, true or false, may also encourage the enemy. The proper course is quietly to hand
all news direct to those who are in a position to investigate it. They can then sift it and
take suitable measures to checkmate the enemy. Not to do so, but to deal with news
either thoughtlessly or maliciously is to fall directly into the snares of evil.

603. The courage of Muḥammad was as notable as his wisdom, his gentleness, and
his trust in Allah. Facing fearful odds, he often stood alone, and took the whole
responsibility on himself. But his example and visible trust in Allah inspired and roused
the Muslims, and also—speaking purely from a human point of view—restrained the fury
of his enemies. When we consider that he was Allah’s inspired Messenger to carry out
His Plan, we can see that nothing can resist that Plan. If the enemy happens to have
strength, power, or resources, Allah’s strength, power, and resources are infinitely greater. =
85. Whoever intercedes in
A good cause
Becomes a partner therein:
And whoever recommends
And helps an evil cause.
Shares in its burden:
And Allah hath power over all things.

86. When a (courteous) greeting
Is offered you, meet it
With a greeting still more courteous, or (at least)
Of equal courtesy.
Allah takes careful account of all things.

87. Allah! There is no god
But He: of a surety
He will gather you together
On the Day of Judgment,
About which there is no doubt.
And whose word can be
Truer than Allah’s?

SECTION 12

88. Why should ye be
Divided into two parties

= If the enemy is meditating punishment on the righteous for their righteousness. Allah’s punishment for such wickedness will be infinitely greater and more effective.

604. In this fleeting world’s chances Allah’s providence and justice may not always appear plain to our eyes. But we are asked to believe that if we help and support a good cause, we share in all its credit and in its eventual victory. And conversely, we cannot support a bad cause without sharing in all its evil consequences. If appearances seem against this faith, let us not be deceived by appearances. For Allah has power over all things.

605. The necessary correlative to the command to fight in a good cause is the command to cultivate sweetness and cordiality in our manners at all times. For fighting is an exceptional necessity while the sweetness of daily human intercourse is a normal need. Further, we give kindness and courtesy without asking, and return it if possible in even better terms than we received, or at least in equally courteous terms. For we are all creatures of One God, and shall be brought together before Him.
On the other hand if he by false pretences comes into the inner counsels merely to betray them. he may rightly be treated as a traitor or deserter and be punished for his treason or desertion; or if he escapes. he can be treated as an enemy and is entitled to no mercy. He is worse than an enemy: he has claimed to be of you in order to spy on you. and been all the time helping the enemy.

89. They but wish that ye Should reject Faith, As they do, and thus be On the same footing (as they): So take not friends From their ranks Until they flee\(^607\) In the way of Allah (From what is forbidden). But it they turn renegades,

606. When the desertion of the Hypocrites at Uhud nearly caused a disaster to the Muslim cause there was great feeling among the Muslims of Madinah against them. One party wanted to put them to the sword: another to leave them alone. The actual policy pursued avoided both extremes, and was determined by these verses. It was clear that they were a danger to the Muslim community if they were admitted into its counsels, and in any case they were a source of demoralisation. But while every caution was used, no extreme measures were taken against them. On the contrary, they were given a chance of making good. If they made a sacrifice for the cause (“flee from what is forbidden,” see next verse), their conduct purged their previous cowardice, and their sincerity entitled them to be taken back. But if they deserted the Muslim community again, they were treated as enemies, with the additional penalty of desertion which is enforced by all nations actually at war. Even so, a humane exception was made in the two cases specified in iv. 90.

607. Flee: the verbal form which the noun hijrat is derived. Bukhāri interprets this rightly as fleeing from all that is forbidden. This would include hijrat in the technical sense of leaving a place in which the practice of religion is not allowed. But it is more general. In time of war, if a man is willing to submit to discipline and refrain from infringing orders issued, he has proved his fidelity and may be treated as a member of the community at war.

On the other hand if he by false pretences comes into the inner counsels merely to betray them, he may rightly be treated as a traitor or deserter and be punished for his treason or desertion; or if he escapes, he can be treated as an enemy and is entitled to no mercy. He is worse than an enemy: he has claimed to be of you in order to spy on you, and been all the time helping the enemy.
609. Approach or come: refers not to the physical act of coming, but to the mental attitude: the heart is mentioned for sincerity. When they sincerely promise not to fight against you, do not pursue them. Remember that if they had fought against you, your difficulties would have been increased. Their neutrality itself may be a great advantage to you. So long as you are satisfied that they are sincere and their acts support their declarations of peace with you, you should not consider yourself justified in pursuing them and warring against them.

608. Except: the exception refers to "seize them and slay them", the death penalty for repeated desertion. Even after such desertion, exemption is granted in two cases. One is where the deserter took asylum with a tribe with whom there was a treaty of peace and amity. Presumably such a tribe (even though outside the pale of Islam) might be trusted to keep the man from fighting against the forces of Islam—in the modern phrase, to disarm him and render him harmless. The second case for exemption is where the man from his own heart desires never to take up arms against Islam, though he does not wish to join the forces of Islam to fight against a hostile tribe (perhaps his own) fighting against Islam. But he must make a real approach, giving guarantees of his sincerity. In the modern phrase he would be "on parole". But this provision is much milder than that in modern military codes, which grant the privilege only to enemy prisoners, not to those who have deserted from the army granting them parole. The Hypocrites were in that position, but humanity as well as policy treated them with great leniency.
610. As opposed to the two classes of deserters to whom clemency may be shown, there is a class which is treacherous and dangerous and cannot be left alone. They try to win your confidence, and are all the time in the confidence of the enemy. Every time they get a chance, they succumb to the temptation of double-dealing. The best way of dealing with them is to treat them as open enemies. Keep them not in your midst. If they give you guarantees of peace and do not actually fight against you, well and good. If not, they are deserters actively fighting in the ranks of the enemy. They have openly given you proof, and you can fairly seize and slay them in war as deserters and enemies.

611. Life is absolutely sacred in the Islamic Brotherhood. But mistakes will sometimes happen, as did happen in the mêlée at Uhud, when some Muslims were killed (being mistaken for the enemy) by Muslims. There was no guilty intention: therefore there was no murder. But all the same, the family of the deceased was entitled to compensation unless they freely remitted it, and in addition it was provided that the unfortunate man who made the mistake should free a believing slave. Thus a deplorable mistake was made the occasion for winning the liberty of a slave who was a Believer, for Islam discourteous slavery. The compensation could only be paid if the deceased belonged =

SECTION 13.

91. Others you will find
That wish to be secure
From you as well
As that of their people:
Every time they are sent back to
To temptation, they succumb
Thereto: if they withdraw not
From you nor give you (guarantees)
Of peace besides
Restraining their hands,
Seize them and slay them
Wherever ye get them:
In their case
We have provided you
With a clear argument
Against them.

92. Never should a Believer
Kill a Believer;
Except by mistake,
And whoever kills a Believer
By mistake
It is ordained that he
Should free a believing slave.

610. As opposed to the two classes of deserters to whom clemency may be shown, there is a class which is treacherous and dangerous and cannot be left alone. They try to win your confidence, and are all the time in the confidence of the enemy. Every time they get a chance, they succumb to the temptation of double-dealing. The best way of dealing with them is to treat them as open enemies. Keep them not in your midst. If they give you guarantees of peace and do not actually fight against you, well and good. If not, they are deserters actively fighting in the ranks of the enemy. They have openly given you proof, and you can fairly seize and slay them in war as deserters and enemies.

611. Life is absolutely sacred in the Islamic Brotherhood. But mistakes will sometimes happen, as did happen in the mêlée at Uhud, when some Muslims were killed (being mistaken for the enemy) by Muslims. There was no guilty intention: therefore there was no murder. But all the same, the family of the deceased was entitled to compensation unless they freely remitted it, and in addition it was provided that the unfortunate man who made the mistake should free a believing slave. Thus a deplorable mistake was made the occasion for winning the liberty of a slave who was a Believer, for Islam discourteous slavery. The compensation could only be paid if the deceased belonged =
And pay blood-money
To the deceased’s family,
Unless they remit it freely.
If the deceased belonged
To a people at war with you,
And he was a Believer,
The freeing of a believing slave
(Is enough). If he belonged
To a people with whom
Ye have a treaty of mutual
Alliance, blood-money should
Be paid to his family,
And a believing slave be freed.
For those who find this
Beyond their means, (is prescribed)
A fast for two months
Running: by way of repentance
To Allah: for Allah hath
All knowledge and all wisdom.

93. If a man kills a Believer
Intentionally, his recompense
Is Hell, to abide therein
(For ever): and the wrath

= to a Muslim society or to some people at peace with the Muslim society. Obviously it
could not be paid if, though the deceased was a Believer, his people were at war with
the Muslim society: even if his people could be reached, it is not fair to increase the
resources of the enemy. If the deceased was himself an enemy at war, obviously the laws
of war justify his being killed in warfare unless he surrendered. If the man who took life
unintentionally has no means from which to free a believing slave or to give
compensation, he must still by an act of strict self-denial (fasting for two whole months
running) show that he is cognizant of the grave nature of the deed he has done and
sincerely repentant. I take this to apply to all three cases mentioned: that is, where a
Believer killed a Believer unintentionally and the deceased (1) belonged to the same
community as you, or (2) belonged to a community at war with you, or (3) belonged
to a community in alliance with you.

612. What is mentioned here is the punishment in the Hereafter. The legal
consequences, enforceable by human society, are mentioned in ii. 178, under the rules
of Qisāṣ. That is, a life should be taken for a life destroyed, but this should be on a
scale of equality: a single murder should not commit a whole tribe to a perpetual blood-
feud, as in the days of ignorance. But if the heirs of the man slain accept reasonable
compensation, this should be accepted, and the taking of a life for a life should be put
a stop to. This course leads to the saving of life, and is commanded to men of
understanding.
And the curse of Allah
Are upon him, and
A dreadful chastisement
Is prepared for him.

94. O ye who believe!
When ye go out\(^6\)
In the cause of Allah,
Investigate carefully,
And say not to any one
Who offers you a salutation:
"Thou art none of a Believer!"
Coveting the perishable goods
Of this life: with Allah
Are profits and spoils abundant.
Even thus were ye yourselves
Before, till Allah conferred
On you His favours: therefore
Carefully investigate.
For Allah is well aware
Of all that ye do.

95. Not equal are those
Believers who sit (at home),
Except those who are disabled.
And those who strive
And fight in the cause
Of Allah with their goods
And their persons.
Allah hath granted
A grade higher to those
Who strive and fight

613. Go abroad: dharaiba = to travel, to go for jihād, or for honest trade or other service, which if done with pure motives, counts as service in the cause of Allah. The immediate occasion was in connection with jihād, but the words are general, and can be applied to similar circumstances. In war (or in peace) we are apt to catch some worldly advantage by pluming ourselves on our superiority in Faith. In war perhaps we want to gain glory or booty by killing a supposed enemy. This is wrong. The righteous man, if he is really out in Allah’s service, has more abundant and richer gifts to think of in the Hereafter.
With their goods and persons
Than to those who sit (at home).
Unto all (in Faith)\(^{614}\)
Hath Allah promised good:
But those who strive and fight
Hath He distinguished
Above those who sit (at home)
By a great reward.—

96. Ranks specially bestowed
By Him and Forgiveness
And Mercy. For Allah is
Oft-forgiving. Most Merciful.

SECTION 14.

97. When angels take
The souls of those
Who die in sin
Against their souls.\(^{615}\)

614. Allah's goodness is promised to all people of Faith. But there are degrees among men and women of Faith. There are people with natural inertia: they do the minimum that is required of them, but no more. There are people who are weak in will: they are easily frightened. There are people who are so strong in will and so firm in faith that they are determined to conquer every obstacle, whether in their own physical or other infirmities or in the external world around them. In a time of jihad, when people give their all, and even their lives, for the common cause, they must be accounted more glorious than those who sit at home, even though they have good will to the cause and carry out minor duties in aid. The special reward of such self-sacrifice is special forgiveness and mercy, as proceeding from the direct approbation and love of Allah.

615. The immediate occasion for this passage was the question of migration (hijrat) from places where Islam was being persecuted and suppressed. Obviously the duty of Muslims was to leave such places, even if it involved forsaking their homes, and join and strengthen the Muslim community among whom they could live in peace and with whom they could help in fighting the evils around them. But the meaning is wider. Islam does not say: “Resist not evil.” On the contrary it requires a constant, unceasing struggle against evil. For such struggle it may be necessary to forsake home and unite and organise and join our brethren in assaulting and overthrowing the fortress of evil. For the Muslim’s duty is not only to enjoin good but to prohibit evil. To make our assault we must be prepared to put ourselves in a position from which such assault would be possible, and Allah’s earth is spacious enough for the purpose. “Position” includes not only local position, but moral and material position. For example, we must shun evil company where we cannot put it down, but organise a position from which we can put it down.
616. If through physical, mental, or moral incapacity, we are unable to fight the good fight, we must nevertheless guard ourselves from it. Allah’s gracious Mercy will recognise and forgive our weakness if it is real weakness, and not merely an excuse.
SECTION 15.

101 When ye travel
Through the earth,
There is no blame on you
If ye shorten your prayers,617
For fear the Unbelievers
May attack you:
For the Unbelievers are
Unto you open enemies.

102 When thou (O Messenger)
Art with them, and standest
To lead them in prayer,
Let one party of them
Stand up (in prayer) with thee.
Taking their arms with them:
When they finish
Their prostrations, let them
Take their position in the rear.
And let the other party come up
Which hath not yet prayed—
And let them pray with thee,
Taking all precautions,
And bearing arms:
The Unbelievers wish,
If ye were negligent
Of your arms and your baggage.

617. Verse 101 gives permission to shorten four Rak'at prayers when people are on a journey: verses 102-104 deal with cases when they are in danger at war, in face of the enemy. The shortening of prayers in both cases is further governed as to details by the practice of the Messenger and his Companions. As to journeys, two questions arise: (1) what constitutes a journey for this purpose? (2) is the fear of an attack an essential condition for the shortening of the prayers? As to (1), it is best to leave the matter to discretion, having regard to all the circumstances of the journey, as in the case of the journeys which excuse a fast: see ii. 184, n. 190. The text leaves it to discretion. As to (2), the practice of the Prophet shows that danger is not an essential condition; it is merely mentioned as a possible incident. The Messenger usually shortened the prayers from four Rak'ats to two Rak'ats in Zuhr (midday prayer), 'Asr (afternoon prayer) and Isha (night prayer): the other two are in any case short, Fajr (morning prayer) having two Rak'ats and Magrib (evening prayer) having three.
To assault you in a single rush.\textsuperscript{618}
But there is no blame on you
If ye put away your arms
Because of the inconvenience
Of rain or because ye are ill;
But take (every) precaution
For yourselves. For the Unbelievers
Allah hath prepared
A humiliating punishment.

103. When ye have performed\textsuperscript{619}
The prayers,
Remember Allah,
Standing, sitting down,
Or lying down on your sides;
But when ye are free
From danger, set up
Regular Prayers:
For such prayers
Are enjoined on Believers
At stated times.

104. And slacken not
In following up the enemy:
If ye are suffering hardships,
They are suffering similar
Hardships: but you

\textsuperscript{618} The congregational prayer in danger in face of the enemy rests on the principle that the congregation should be divided into two parties; one party prays while the other watches the enemy, and then the second party comes up to prayers while the first falls back to face the enemy; either party does only one or two Rak'ats, or about half the congregational prayer; every precaution is taken to prevent a rush by the enemy; even while at prayers armour and arms need not be put off except when rain is likely to cause inconvenience to the wearer and damage to the arms, or when illness or fatigue causes the wearer's strength to fail. Details can be varied according to circumstances, as was actually done by the Prophet at different times.

\textsuperscript{619} It means: "when ye have finished congregational prayers." It allows you to remember Allah individually in any posture possible during the danger. But when the danger is past, the full prayers should be offered at the stated times.
Hope from Allah, what they have not. And Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

SECTION 16.

105. We have sent down
To thee the Book in truth,
That thou mightest judge between people by that which Allah has shown thee; so be not an advocate for those who betray their trust; 621

106. But seek the forgiveness of Allah; for Allah is oft-forgiving, most Merciful.

107. Contend not on behalf of such as betray their own souls; 622

620. Religion should be a source of strength and not of weakness in all our affairs. If we have to struggle hard and suffer hardships, those without faith have to do the same, with this difference, that the man of faith is full of hope in Allah, whereas the man without faith has nothing to sustain him.

621. The Commentators explain this passage with reference to the case of Ta’ima ibn Ubairaq, who was nominally a Muslim but really a Hypocrite, and given to all sorts of wicked deeds. He was suspected of having stolen a set of armour, and when the trial was hot, he planted the stolen property into the house of a Jew, where it was found. The Jew denied the charge and accused Ta’ima, but the sympathies of the Muslim community were with Ta’ima on account of his nominal profession of Islam. The case was brought to the Prophet, who acquitted the Jew according to the strict principle of justice, as “guided by Allah.” Attempts were made to prejudice him and deceive him into using his authority to favour Ta’ima. When Ta’ima realized that his punishment was imminent he fled and turned apostate.

The general lesson is that the righteous man is faced with all sorts of subtle wiles; the wicked will try to appeal to his highest sympathies and most honourable motives to deceive him and use him as an instrument for defeating justice. He should be careful and cautious, and seek the help of Allah for protection against deception and for firmness in dealing the strictest justice without fear or favour. To do otherwise is to betray a sacred trust; the trustee must defeat all attempts made to mislead him.

622. Our souls are a sort of trust with us. We have to guard them against all temptation. Those who surrender to crime or evil, betray that trust. We are warned against being deceived into taking their part, induced either by plausible appearances, or by such incentives to partiality as that they belong to our own people or that some link...
For Allah loveth not
One given to perfidy
And sin.——

108. They seek to hide themselves
From the people
But they cannot hide
From Allah, while
He is with them
When they plot by night.
In words that He cannot
Approve: and Allah
Doth compass round\(^{623}\)
All that they do.

109. Ah! these are the sort
Of men on whose behalf
Ye may contend in this world;
But who will contend with Allah
On their behalf on the Day
Of Judgment, or who
Will carry their affairs through?

110. If any one does evil
Or wrongs his own soul
But afterwards seeks
Allah’s forgiveness, he will find
Allah Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

\(^{623}\) The plots of sinners are known fully to Allah, and He can fully circumvent them if necessary, according to the fulness of His wisdom. The word used is: Compass them round: Muḥit: not only does Allah know all about it, but He is all round it: if in His wisdom He allows it, it is not because He has not complete control over it, but because, having it as it were enclosed in a complete circle. He can use it to further His own Plan. Even out of evil He can bring good.
111. And if any one earns \( ^{624} \) Sin, he earns it against His own soul: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

112. But if any one earns A fault or a sin And throws it on to one That is innocent, He carries (on himself) (Both) a false charge And a flagrant sin.

SECTION 17.

113. But for the Grace of Allah To thee and His Mercy, A party of them would Certainly have plotted To lead thee astray. But (in fact) they will only Lead their own souls astray, And to thee they can do No harm in the least. For Allah hath sent down To thee the Book and Wisdom And taught thee what thou Knewest not (before): And great is the Grace Of Allah unto thee.

\(^{624} \) Kasaba = to earn, to gain, to work for something valuable, to lay up a provision for the future life. We do a day's labour to earn our livelihood: so in a spiritual sense, whatever good or evil we do in this life, earns us good or evil in the life to come. In verses 110-112 three cases are considered: (1) if we do ill and repent, Allah will forgive; (2) if we do ill and do not repent: thinking that we can hide it, we are wrong; nothing is hidden from Allah, and we shall suffer the full consequences in the life to come, for we can never evade our personal responsibility; (3) if we do ill, great or small, and impute it to another, our original responsibility for the ill remains, but we add to it something else; for we tie round our necks the guilt of falsehood, which converts even our minor fault into a great sin, and in any case brands us even in this life with shame and ignominy.
114. In most of their secret talks
There is no good: but if
One exhorts to a deed
Of charity or goodness
Or conciliation between people
(Secrecy is permissible):
To him who does this,
Seeking the good pleasure
Of Allah, We shall soon give
A reward of the highest (value).

115. If anyone contends with
The Messenger even after
Guidance has been plainly
Conveyed to him, and follows
A path other than that
Becoming to men to Faith,
We shall leave him
In the path he has chosen,
And land him in Hell.—
What an evil refuge!

SECTION 18.

116. Allah forgiveth not
(The sin of) joining other gods

625. Usually secrecy is for evil ends, or from questionable motives, or because the person seeking secrecy is ashamed of himself and knows that if his acts or motives became known, he would make himself odious. Islam therefore disapproves of secrecy and loves and enjoins openness in all consultations and doings. But there are three things in which secrecy is permissible, and indeed laudable, provided the motive be purely unselfish, to earn “the good pleasure of Allah”: (1) if you are doing a deed of charity or beneficence, whether in giving material things or in helping in moral, intellectual, or spiritual matters; here publicity may not be agreeable to the recipient of your beneficence, and you have to think of his feelings; (2) where an unpleasant act of justice or correction has to be done; this should be done, but there is no virtue in publishing it abroad and causing humiliation to some parties or adding to their humiliation by publicity; (3) where there is a delicate question of conciliating parties to a quarrel; they may be very touchy about publicity but quite amenable to the influence of a man acting in private.

626. Cf. iv. 48 and n. 569. Blasphemy in the spiritual kingdom is like treason in the political kingdom.
With Him; but He forgiveth Whom He pleaseth other sins Than this: one who joins Other gods with Allah, Hath strayed far, far away (From the Right).

117. (The Pagans), leaving Him, Call but upon female deities: They call but upon Satan The persistent rebel!

118. Allah did curse him, But he said: “I will take Of Thy servants a portion Marked off:

119. “I will mislead them, And I will create In them false desires; I will Order them to slit the ears Of cattle, and to deface

627. The unity, power, and goodness of Allah are so manifest in nature and in the human mind when it is in accord with the universal spirit, that only the most abject perversion can account for the sin of religious treason. That sin arises from perverted ideas of sex or perverted ideas of self. The perversion of sex is to suppose that sex rules in religious matters. From it arise such horrible creations of the imagination as Kālī, the blood-thirsty goddess of India, or Hecate, the goddess of revenge and hate in Greek mythology. Even in beautiful forms like Saraswati (the goddess of learning) or Minerva (the virgin goddess of sport and arts), to say nothing of Venus (the goddess of carnal pleasures), the emphasis laid on sex destroys a right view of religious nature. Perverted ideas of self are typified in the story of Satan, who was so puffed up with arrogance that he disobeyed Allah, and Allah cursed him. Both these perversions, if allowed lodgment, completely ruin our religious nature and deface Allah’s handiwork. Hence it is not merely an outer sin but one that corrupts us through and through.

628. Satan obtained Allah’s permission to tempt man, and this was implied in such free-will as was granted to man by Allah. Satan’s boast is that the portion of mankind seduced by him will be so corrupted in their nature that they will bear a sort of brand that will mark them off as his own; or that they will be like a portion assigned to himself.

629. Satan’s deceptions are with false desires, false superstitions, and false fears.

630. Slitting the ears of cattle is just one instance of the superstitions to which men become slaves when they run after false gods. Astrology, magic, and vain beliefs in things that do not exist lead men away from Allah, the one true God.
To deface the (fair) nature created by Allah; there is both a physical and a spiritual meaning. We see many kinds of defacements practised on men and animals, against their true nature as created by Allah, partly on account of superstition, partly on account of selfishness. Spiritually the case is even worse. How many natures are dwarfed or starved and turned from their original instincts by cruel superstitions or customs? Allah created man pure: Satan defaces the image.

Personal responsibility is again and again insisted on as the key-note of Islam. In this arc implied faith and right conduct. Faith is not an external thing: it begins with an act of will, but if true and sincere, it affects the whole being, and leads to right conduct. In this it is distinguished from the kind of faith which promises salvation because some one else in whom you are asked to believe has borne away the sins of men, or the kind of faith which says that because you are born of a certain race ("Children of Abraham") or a certain caste, you are privileged, and your conduct will be judged by...
(Can prevail): whoever Works evil, will be Requited accordingly. Nor will he find, besides Allah, Any protector or helper.

124. If any do deeds Of righteousness,— Be they male or female— And have faith, They will enter Heaven, And not the least injustice Will be done to them.

125. Who can be better In religion than one Who submits his whole self To Allah, does good, And follows the way Of Abraham the true in faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend.\(^{634}\)

126. But to Allah belong all things In the heavens and on earth: And He it is that Encompasseth all things.\(^{635}\)

SECTION 19.

127. They ask thy instruction Concerning the Women.

= a different standard from that of other men. Whatever you are, if you do evil, you must suffer the consequences, unless Allah’s Mercy comes to your help.

633. *Naqir* = the groove in a date-stone, a thing of no value whatever. Cf. n. 575 to iv. 53.

634. Abraham is distinguished in Muslim theology with the title of “Freind of Allah”. This does not of course mean that he was anything more than a mortal. But his faith was pure and true, and his conduct was firm and righteous in all circumstances. He was the fountainhead of the present monotheistic tradition, the Patriarch of the prophetic line, and is revered alike by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Say: Allah doth
Instruct you about them:
And (remember) what hath
Been rehearsed unto you\textsuperscript{636}
In the Book, concerning
The orphaned women to whom
Ye give not the portions
Prescribed, and yet whom ye
Desire to marry, as also
Concerning the children
Who are weak and oppressed\textsuperscript{637}
That ye stand firm
For justice to orphans.
There is not a good deed
Which ye do, but Allah
Is well-acquainted therewith.

128. If a wife fears
Cruelty or desertion
On her husband's part,
There is no blame on them
If they arrange
An amicable settlement
Between themselves;

636. Again and again is it impressed on the community of Islam to be just in their dealings with women, orphans, children, and all whose weakness requires special consideration. The law about widows and orphans, inheritance, dower, and marriage had already been declared in iv. 2-35 and further instructions are now given on a further reference. It was not right that anyone should take advantage of their helpless position to deprive them of dower or of their portion in inheritance.

637. Cf. iv. 75. n. 592.

Both widows and orphans are to be helped because they are ordinarily weak, ill-treated, and oppressed. In communities which base their civil rights on brute strength, the weaker go to the wall, and public opinion expects nothing else. In Nietzsche's philosophy of the Superman that doctrine is stressed strongly, and some of the militarist nations in our own time seem inclined to support this reversion to our primitive instincts. Even in modern democracies of the saner sort, we are often told that it is the fate of minorities to suffer; strength of numbers here becomes the passport to power and privilege. Islam, while upholding sane manly views in general, enjoins the most solicitous care for the weak and oppressed in every way—in rights of property, in social rights, and in the right to opportunities of development. Spiritual strength or weakness does not necessarily go with physical or numerical strength.
And such settlement is best;  
Even though men's souls  
Are swayed by greed.  
But if ye do good  
And practise self-restraint,  
Allah is well-acquainted  
With all that ye do.

129. Ye are never able  
To do justice  
Between wives  
Even if it is  
Your ardent desire:  
But turn not away  
(From a woman) altogether,  
So as to leave her (as it were)  
Hanging (in the air).  
If ye come to a friendly  
Understanding, and practise  
Self-restraint, Allah is  
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

130. But if they separate  
Allah will provide abundance  
For each of them from His  
All-reaching bounty:  
For Allah is He  
That careth for all  
And is Wise.

638. To protect the woman's economic interests, various rules are prescribed for dower in marriage. But the sanctity of marriage itself is greater than any economic interests. Divorce is, of all things permitted, most hateful to Allah. Therefore if a breach between husband and wife can be prevented by some economic consideration, it is better to make that concession than to imperil the future of the wife, the children, and probably the husband also. Such concessions are permissible, in view of the love of wealth ingrained in unregenerate man, but a recommendation is made that we should practise self-restraint, and do what we can to come to an amicable settlement without any economic sacrifice on the part of the woman.

639. In this material world there are two principle causes of division between man and wife, money and "the other woman" or "the other man". Money was dealt with in the last verse. Here is the case of "the other woman". Legally more than one wife (up to four) are permissible on the condition that the man can be fair and just to all.
131. To Allah belong all things
In the heavens and on earth.\(^{640}\)
Verily We have directed
The People of the Book
Before you, and you (O Muslims)
To fear Allah. But if ye
Deny Him, lo! unto Allah
Belong all things
In the heavens and on earth.
And Allah is free
Of all wants, worthy\(^{641}\)
Of all praise.

132. Yea, unto Allah belong
All things in the heavens
And on earth, and enough
Is Allah to carry through\(^{642}\)
All affairs.

\(^{640}\) Notice the refrain: "To Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth": repeated three times, each time with a new application. In the first instance it follows the statement of Allah's universal providence and love. If two persons, in spite of every sincere desire to love and comfort each other, fail to achieve that end, and have to separate, Allah's all-reaching bounty never fails, for He is the Lord of all things. In the second instance it is connected with Allah's Self-existence, Self-excellence, and independence of all creatures: all His commands are for our good, and they are given to all His creatures, according to their capacities. In the third instance, it is connected with His universal power; for He could destroy any individual or nation and create a new one without any loss to Himself; but He gives a chance to all again and again, and even rewards them beyond their own ambitions.

\(^{641}\) Allah's existence is absolute existence. It does not depend on any other person or any other thing. And it is worthy of all praise, for it is all-good and comprises every possible excellence. It is necessary to stress this point in order to show that the moral law for man is not a mere matter of transcendental commands, but really rests on the essential needs of mankind itself. If therefore such schools of thought as Behaviourism proved their theories up to the hilt, they do not affect the position of Islam in the least. The highest ethical standards are enjoined by Islam, not as dogmatic imperatives, but because they can be shown to follow from the needs of man's nature and the results of man's experience.

\(^{642}\) This refers to the next verse. He does not need us, but we need Him. Our hopes, our happiness, our success centre in Him; but He is Self-sufficient. He has the power to supersede us, but His goodness is ever seeking to give us every chance in this world as well as in the Hereafter.
Section 20.

133. If it were His Will, He could destroy you, O mankind, and create Another race; for He Hath power this to do.

134. If any one desires A reward in this life, In Allah’s (gift) is the reward (Both) of this life And of the Hereafter:643 For Allah is He that heareth And seeth (all things).

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly For justice, as witnesses644 To Allah, even as against Yourselves, or your parents, Or your kin, and whether It be (against) rich or poor.645 For Allah can best protect both.

643. Man in this life can only see up to the horizon of this life. The highest rewards which his wishes or ambitions can conceive of are conceived in the terms of this life. But Allah can give him not only these but something infinitely higher,—the rewards of the Hereafter,—which it did not even enter his heart to ask for or his imagination to conceive.

644. Justice is Allah’s attribute, and to stand firm for justice is to be a witness to Allah, even if it is detrimental to our own interests (as we conceive them) or the interests of those who are near and dear to us.

Islamic justice is something higher than the formal justice of Roman Law or any other human Law. It is even more penetrative than the subtler justice in the speculations of the Greek philosophers. It searches out the innermost motives, because we are to act as in the presence of Allah, to whom all things, acts, and motives are known.

645. Some people may be inclined to favour the rich, because they expect something from them. Some people may be inclined to favour the poor because they are generally helpless. Partiality in either case is wrong. Be just, without fear or favour. Both the rich and the poor are under Allah’s protection as far as their legitimate interests are concerned, but they cannot expect to be favoured at the expense of others. And He can protect their interests far better than any man.
Follow not the lusts
(Of your hearts), lest ye
Swerve, and if ye
Distort (justice) or decline
To do justice, verily
Allah is well-acquainted
With all that ye do.

136. O ye who believe!
Believe in Allah
And His Messenger,
And the scripture which He
Hath sent to His Messenger
And the scripture which He sent
To those before (him).

Any who denieth Allah,
His angels, His Books,
His Messengers, and the Day
Of Judgment, hath gone
Far, far astray.

137. Those who believe,
Then reject Faith,
Then believe (again)
And (again) reject Faith,
And go on increasing
In Unbelief,--Allah
Will not forgive them
Nor guide them on the Way.

646. If your belief is by habit or birth or the example of those you love or respect or admire, make that belief more specific and personal to yourself. We must not only have faith, but realise that faith in our inmost being. The chief objects of our Faith are Allah, His Messenger, and His Revelations. To all these we must give a home in our hearts. The angels we do not see and realise as we realise Allah, who is nearer to us than the vehicle of our life-blood, and the Day of Judgment is for our future experience, but we must not deny them, or we cut off a part of our religious view.

647. Those who go on changing sides again and again can have no real Faith at any time. Their motives are mere worldly double-dealing. How can they expect Allah's grace or forgiveness?

Here is a clear warning against those who make their religion a mere matter of worldly convenience. True religion goes far deeper. It transforms the very nature of man. After that transformation it is as impossible for him to change as it is for light to become darkness.
138. To the Hypocrites give
The good tidings that
There is for them
A grievous Chastisement

139. Those who take
For friends Unbelievers
Rather than Believers:
Is it honour they seek
Among them? Nay,—
All honour is with Allah.$648$

140. Already has He sent you$649$
In the Book, that when
Ye hear the Message of Allah
Held in defiance and ridicule,
Ye are not to sit with them
Unless they turn to a different
Theme: if ye did, ye would be
Like them. For Allah will
Collect the Hypocrites and those
Who defy Faith—all in Hell;—

141. (These are) the ones who
Wait and watch about you:
If ye do gain
A victory from Allah,
They say: “Were we not
With you?”—but if
The Unbelievers gain
A success, they say
(To them): “Did we not
Gain an advantage over you.

648. If the motive is some advantage, some honour,—the fountain of all good is Allah. How can it really be expected from those who deny Faith? And if there is some show of worldly honour, what is it worth against the contempt they earn in the next world?

649. Cf. vi. 68, an earlier and Makkan verse.
Where we see or hear Truth held in light esteem, we ought to make our protest and withdraw from such company, not out of arrogance, as if we thought ourselves superior to other people, but out of real humility, lest our own nature be corrupted in such society. But it is possible that our protest or our sincere remonstrance may change the theme of discourse. In that case we have done good to those who were inclined to hold Truth in light esteem, for we have saved them for ridiculing Truth.
And did we not guard
You from the Believers’"
But Allah will judge
Betwixt you on the Day
Of Judgment. And never
Will Allah grant
To the Unbelievers
A way (to triumph)
Over the Believers. 650

SECTION 21.

142. The Hypocrites—
They seek to deceive Allah
But it is Allah who deceive them.
When they stand up to prayer,
They stand without earnestness,
To be seen of men,
But little do they hold
Allah in remembrance;

143. (They are) wavering between this
And that
Belonging neither to these
Nor those
Whom Allah leaves straying,—
Never wilt thou find
For him the Way. 651

650. The methods and motives of Hypocrisy are thoroughly unmasked here. It has no principles, but watches for an opportunity to turn any event to its own advantage. If battle is joined between two inconsistent principles, it has no belief in either, but watches the result. There is unceasing fight between Good and Evil in this world. If the Good seems to win, the hypocrites range themselves on its side with unctuous words, taking a great part of the credit to themselves. Perhaps the balance tips the other way later, and they have to make their peace with Evil. “Oh!” they say airily, “we were in the ranks of your enemy, before, on purpose to protect you when they were too strong for you!” This may suit the ways of the world. But the day of their account will come eventually. For the Good must ultimately triumph.

651. If we choose evil deliberately and double our guilt by fraud and deception, we do not deceive Allah, but we deceive ourselves. We deprive ourselves of the Grace of Allah, and are left straying away from the Path. In that condition who can guide us or show us the Way? Our true and right instincts become blunted: our fraud makes us unstable in character; when our fellow-men find out our fraud, any advantages we may have gained by the fraud are lost; and we become truly distracted in mind.
144. O ye who believe!
Take not for friends
Unbelievers rather than
Believers: do ye wish
To offer Allah an open
Proof against yourselves?

145. The Hypocrites will be
In the lowest depths
Of the Fire: no helper
Wilt thou find for them;—

146. Except for those who repent,
Mend (their life), hold fast
To Allah, and make their religious devotion
Sincere to Allah: if so
They will be (numbered)\textsuperscript{652}
With the Believers.
And soon will Allah
Grant to the Believers
A reward of immense value.

147. What can Allah gain
By your punishment.
If ye are grateful
And ye believe?
Nay, it is Allah
That recogniseth\textsuperscript{653}
(All good), and knoweth
All things.

\textsuperscript{652} Even Hypocrites can obtain forgiveness, on four conditions: (1) sincere repentance, which purifies their mind; (2) amendment of their conduct, which purifies their outer life; (3) steadfastness and devotion to Allah, which strengthens their faith and protects them from the assaults of evil, and (4) sincerity in their religion, or their whole inner being, which brings them as full members into the goodly Fellowship of Faith.

\textsuperscript{653} There is no pleasure nor advantage to Allah in punishing His own creatures, over whom He watches with loving care. On the contrary He recognises any good—however little—which He finds in us, and delights to give us a reward beyond all measure. His recognition of us compared by a bold metaphor to our gratitude to Him for His favours. The epithet \textit{shakir} is applied to Allah, as here, in ii, 158, and other passages. In xvi. 121 it is applied to Abraham: “he showed his gratitude for the favours of Allah, who chose him and guided him to a Straight Way.”
148. Allah loveth not the Shouting of evil words. In public speech, except By one who has been Wronged, for Allah Is He who heareth And knoweth all things.

149. Whether you do openly A good deed or conceal it Or cover evil with pardon, Surely Allah is ever pardoning Powerful.

150. Those who deny Allah And His Messengers, and Wish to separate between Allah and His Messengers, Saying: “We believe in some But reject others”:

654. We can make a public scandal of evil in many ways. (1) It may be idle sensation-mongering: it often leads to more evil by imitation, as where criminal deeds are glorified in a cinema, or talked about shamelessly in a novel or drama. (2) It may be malicious gossip of a foolish, personal kind: it does no good, but it hurts people’s feelings. (3) It may be malevolent slander or libel: it is intended deliberately to cause harm to people’s reputation or injure them in other ways, and is rightly punishable under all laws. (4) It may be a public rebuke or correction or remonstrance, without malice. (1), (2) and (3) are absolutely forbidden. (4) may be by a person in authority; in which case the exception applies, for all wrong or injustice must be corrected openly, to prevent its recurrence. Or (4) may be a person not vested with authority, but acting either from motives of public spirit, or in order to help some one who has been wronged; here again the exception will apply. But if the motive is different, the exception does not apply. (4) would also include a public complaint by a person who has suffered a wrong; he has every right to seek public redress.

655. Qadtr: The root qadara not only implies power, ability, strength, but two other ideas which it is difficult to convey in a single word, viz., the act and power of estimating the true value of a thing or persons, as in vi. 91; and the act and power of regulating something so as to bring it into correspondence with something. “Judgment of values” I think sums up these finer shades of meaning. Allah forgives what is wrong and is able fully to appreciate and judge of the value of our good deeds whether we publish them or conceal them.
And wish
To take a course midway.\textsuperscript{656}

151. They are in truth
Unbelievers;
And We have prepared
For Unbelievers a humiliating
Punishment.

152. To those who believe
In Allah and His messengers
And make no distinction
Between any of the messengers,
We shall soon give
Their (due) rewards:
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

\textbf{SECTION 22.}

153. The People of the Book
Ask thee to cause
A book to descend to them
From heaven: indeed
They asked Moses
For an even greater
(Miracle), for they said:
"Show us Allah in public,"\textsuperscript{657}

\textsuperscript{656} Unbelief takes various forms. Three are mentioned here: (1) denial of Allah and His revelation to mankind through inspired men; (2) a sort of nominal belief in Allah and His Prophets, but one which is partial, and mixed up with racial pride, which does not allow of the recognition of any Messengers beyond those of a particular race; and (3) a nominal belief in universal revelation, but so hedged round with peculiar doctrines of exclusive salvation, that it practically approaches to a denial of Allah's universal love for all mankind and all Creation. All three amount to Unbelief, for they really deny Allah's universal love and care.

\textsuperscript{657} Cf. ii. 55, for the thunder and lightning which affected those who were presumptuous enough to ask that they should see Allah face to face, and ii. 51, and n. 66, for the worship of the golden calf.

The lesson is that it is presumptuous on the part of man to judge of spiritual things in terms of material things, or to ask to see Allah with their material eyes when Allah is above material forms and is independent of time and space.
But they were seized
For their presumption.
By thunder and lightning.
Yet they worshipped the calf
Even after Clear Signs
Had come to them;
Even so We forgave them;
And gave Moses manifest
Proofs of authority.

154. And for their Covenant
We raised over them
The Mount (Sinai),
And (on another occasion)
We said: “Enter the gate
With humility”; and (once again)
We commanded them:
“Transgress not in the matter
Of the Sabbath.”
And We took from them
A solemn Covenant.

155. (They have incurred divine
Displeasure): in that they
Broke their Covenant;
That they rejected the Signs
Of Allah; that they slew
The Messengers in defiance
Of right; that they said.

658. In this verse there is a recapitulation of three salient incidents of Jewish refractoriness already referred to in the second Sûra: viz., (1) the Covenant under the towering height of Sinai, ii. 63: (2) their arrogance where they were commanded humility in entering a town, ii. 58: and (3) their transgression of the Sabbath, ii. 65.

659. In verses 155, 156, 157, 160 (latter half), and 161 with parenthetical clauses including those in verses 158-159, and 160 (first half), there is a catalogue of the iniquities of which the Jews were guilty, and for these iniquities we must understand some such words as: “They are under divine displeasure.” Each clause of the indictment I have indicated by prefixing the word “that.”

660. Cf. iii. 21, and nn. 363 and 364.
"Our hearts are the Wrappings"; 661-
Nay, Allah hath set the seal on their hearts
For their blasphemy,
And little is it they believe;—

156. That they rejected Faith;
That they uttered against Mary
A grave false charge; 662

157. That they said (in boast),
"We killed Christ Jesus
The son of Mary,
The Messenger of Allah";—
But they killed him not,
Nor crucified him. 663
Only a likeness of that
Was shown to them.

661. Cf. ii. 88, and n. 92, where the full meaning is explained.

Note the crescendo (heightening effect) in the argument, Their iniquities were: (1) that they broke their Covenant: (2) that they rejected Allah’s guidance as conveyed in His signs; (3) that they killed Allah’s Messengers and incurred a double guilt, viz., that of murder and that of a deliberate defiance of Allah’s law; and (4) that they imagined themselves arrogantly self-sufficient, which means a blasphemous closing of their hearts for ever against the admission of Allah’s grace. Then begins another series of iniquities from a different point of view: (1) that they rejected Faith: (2) that they made false charges against a saintly woman like Mary, who was chosen by Allah to be the mother of Jesus; (3) that they boasted of having killed Jesus when they were victims of their own self-hallucination: (4) that they hindered people from Allah’s way: and (5) that by means of usury and fraud they oppressed their fellow-men.

662. The false charge against Mary was that she was unchaste. Cf. xix. 27-28. Such a charge is bad enough to make against any woman, but to make it against Mary, the mother of Jesus, was to bring into ridicule Allah’s power itself. Islam is specially strong in guarding the reputation of women. Slanderers of women are bound to bring four witnesses in support of their accusations, and if they fail to produce four witnesses, they are to be flogged with eighty stripes and debarred from being competent witnesses: xxiv. 4.

663. The end of the life of Jesus on earth is as much involved in mystery as his birth, and indeed the greater part of his private life, except the three main years of his ministry. It is not profitable to discuss the many doubts and conjectures among the early Christian sects and among Muslim theologians. The Orthodox Christian Churches make it a cardinal point of their doctrine that his life was taken on the Cross, that he died and was buried, that on the third day he rose in the body with his wounds intact, and walked about and conversed, and ate with his disciples, and was afterwards taken up bodily to heaven. This
And those who differ
Therein are full of doubts,
With no (certain) knowledge.
But only conjecture to follow.
For of a surety
They killed him not:—

158. Nay, Allah raised him up
Unto Himself; and Allah
Is Exalted in Power. Wise:—

159. And there is none
Of the People of the Book
But must believe in Him
Before his death; 665
And on the Day of Judgment
He will be a witness
Against them:—

664. There is difference of opinion as to the exact interpretation of this verse. The words are: The Jews did not kill Jesus, but Allah raised him up (ra'alu) to Himself. One school holds that Jesus did not die the usual human death, but still lives in the body in heaven, which is the generally accepted Muslim view.

665. Before his death: Interpreters are not agreed as to the exact meaning. Those who hold that Jesus did not die refer the pronoun “his” to Jesus. They say that Jesus is still living in the body and that he will appear just before the Final Day, after the coming of the Mahdi, when the world will be purified of sin and unbelief. There will be a final death before the final Resurrection, but all will have believed before that final death. Others think that “his” is better referred to “none of the People of the Book”, and that the emphatic form “must believe” (la-yu' minanna) denotes more a question of duty than of fact.

666. Cf. iv. 41
160. For the iniquity of the Jews
We made unlawful for them\(^{667}\)
Certain (foods) good and wholesome
Which had been lawful for them;—
And that they hindered many
From Allah's Way;—

161. That they took usury,
Though they were forbidden;
And that they devoured
Men's wealth wrongfully;—
We have prepared for those
Among them who reject Faith
A grievous chastisement.

162. But those among them
Who are well-grounded
In knowledge,
And the Believers,
Believe in what hath been
Revealed to thee and what was
Revealed before thee:
And (especially) those
Who establish regular prayer
And pay Zakat
And believe in Allah
And in the Last Day:
To them shall We soon
Give a great reward.

SECTION 23.

163. We have sent thee
Inspiration, as We sent it
To Noah and the Messengers\(^ {668}\)

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\(^{667}\) Cf. vi. 146. The ceremonial law of the Jews forbade the eating of the flesh of the camel, rabbit and hare (Leviticus xi. 4-6), and the fat of oxen, sheep, and goats (Leviticus vii. 23), and was in other respects very strict.

\(^{668}\) First we have a general statement: that inspiration was sent to many Messengers, and the inspiration was of the same kind as that sent to the Prophet Muhammad, for Allah's Message is one. Note that what is spoken of here is Inspiration, not necessarily a Book. Every nation or group of people had a messenger: x. 47. Some of these messengers have been mentioned by name in the Qur'an, and some not: iv. 164.
After him: We sent Inspiration to Abraham. Ismā’il, Isaac, Jacob And the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, And to David We gave The Psalms.

164. Of some messengers We have Already told thee the story; Of others we have not;—And to Moses Allah spoke direct;—

165. Messengers who gave good news As well as warning, That mankind, after (the coming) Of the messengers, should have No plea against Allah: For Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

166. But Allah beareth witness That what He hath sent Unto thee He hath sent With His (own) knowledge, And the angels bear witness: But enough is Allah for a witness.

669. Cf. ii. 136 and iii. 84. The list here given is in three groups. (1) The first group, Abraham’s family, is the same as in ii. 136, (where see the note) and in iii. 84. (2) Then we have the prophets Jesus, Job and Jonah, who symbolise patience and perseverance. (3) Then we have Aaron the priest and Solomon the King, both great, figures, but each subordinate to another primary figure, viz., Moses (mentioned in the next verse) and David (mentioned at the end of this verse). David’s distinction was the Psalms, some of which are still extant. Though their present form is different from the original and they do undoubtedly include Psalms not written by David, the collection contains much devotional poetry of a high order.

670. Allah spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. Hence the title of Moses in Muslim theology: Kalim-ullīh: the one to whom Allah spoke.

671. Every prophet proclaims Allah’s goodness to the righteous and forgiveness to those who repent, (good news), and the Wrath to come for those who reject Faith and live in iniquity (warning). Their mission of warning is a prelude and complement to their mission of good news. No one can then say that he or she did not know.

672. Inspiration, though it is clothed in human language, and shaped to the personality of the inspired one, proceeds from the knowledge of Allah.
167. Those who reject Faith
And keep off (men)
From the Way of Allah,
Have verily strayed far,
Far away from the Path.

168. Those who reject Faith
And do wrong,—Allah
Will not forgive them
Nor guide them
To any way—

169. Except the way of Hell,
To dwell therein for ever.
And this to Allah is easy. 673

170. O mankind! the Messenger
Hath come to you in truth
From Allah: believe in him:
It is best for you. But if
Ye reject Faith, to Allah
Belong all things in the heavens
And on earth: and Allah
Is All-knowing, All-wise.

171. O People of the Book!
Commit no excesses 675

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673. Easy—not in the sense that Allah takes any pleasure in any of His creatures going astray. The contrary is the case: for Allah’s Grace recognises all good in us to such an extent that it is compared to gratitude in iv. 147: see n. 653. We must understand easy in the sense that Allah is Supreme in knowledge and power; if any forces of rebellion foolishly think that they can evade punishment, they are mistaken. Punishment comes as a matter of course. It is not a matter of difficulty or exertion on the part of Allah.

674. Allah’s solicitude for us is for our own good, not because He gets any advantage from it. For He is independent of all things, and everything declares His glory and praise.

675. Just as a foolish servant may go wrong by excess of zeal for his master, so in religion people’s excesses may lead them to blasphemy or a spirit the very opposite of religion. The Jewish excesses in the direction of formalism, racialism, exclusiveness, and rejection of Christ Jesus have been denounced in many places. Here the Christian attitude is condemned, which raises Jesus to an equality with Allah: in some cases venerates Mary almost to idolatry: attributes a physical son to Allah: and invents the doctrine of the Trinity, opposed to all reason, which according to the Athanasian Creed, unless a man believes, he is doomed to hell for ever. Let our Muslims also beware lest they fall into excesses either in doctrine or in formalism.
SECTION 24.

172. Christ disdaineth not
To serve and worship Allah,677
Nor do the angels, those
Nearest (to Allah):
Those who disdain
His worship and are arrogant,
He will gather them all

676. Christ’s attributes are mentioned: (1) that he was the son of a woman, Mary and therefore a man; (2) but a messenger, a man with a mission from Allah, and therefore entitled to honour; (3) a Word bestowed on Mary, for he was created by Allah’s word “Be” (kun), and he was: iii. 59; (4) a spirit proceeding from Allah, but not Allah: his life and his mission were more limited than in the case of some other Messengers, though we must pay equal honour to him as a Prophet of Allah. The doctrines of Trinity, equality with Allah, and sonship, are repudiated as blasphemies. Allah is independent of all needs and has no need of a son to manage His affairs. The Gospel of John (whoever wrote it) has put in a great deal of Alexandrian and Gnostic mysticism round the doctrine of the Word (Greek, Logos), but it is simply explained here.

677. Christ often watched and prayed, as a humble worshipper of Allah; and his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was full of human dignity, suffering, and self-humiliation (see Matt. xxvi. 36-45).
173. But to those who believe
And do deeds of righteousness,
He will give their (due) Rewards,—and more,
Out of His bounty:
But those who are
Disdainful and arrogant,
He will punish
With a grievous chastisement:
Nor will they find,
Besides Allah, any
To protect or help them.

174. O mankind! Verily
There hath come to you
A convincing proof
From your Lord
For We have sent unto you
A light (that is) manifest.

175. Then those who believe
In Allah, and hold fast
To Him,—soon will He
Admit them to Mercy
And Grace from Himself,
And guide them to Himself
By a straight Way.

176. They ask thee
For a legal decision,
Say: Allah directs (thus)
About those who leave

678. The disdainful and the arrogant are the crew of Satan, who will be gathered together before the Supreme Throne for punishment.

679. The Proof and the Light are the Qur'an and the Personality, Life, and Teaching of Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā.

680. The Mercy and Grace are expressed here as specially bestowed by Him.
No descendants or ascendants
As heirs. If it is a man.\textsuperscript{681}
That dies, leaving a sister
But no child, she shall
Have half the inheritance:
If (such a deceased was)
A woman, who left no child,
Her brother takes her inheritance:
If there are two sisters,
They shall have two-thirds
Of the inheritance
(Between them): if there are
Brothers and sisters, (they share),
The male having twice
The share of the female,
Thus doth Allah make clear
To you (His law), lest
Ye err. And Allah
Hath knowledge of all things.

\textsuperscript{681} This verse supplements the rule of inheritance of the estate of a deceased person who has left as heir neither a descendant nor an ascendant. We shall call such a person \(A\), who may be either a male or a female. In iv. 12 (second half), \(A\)'s case was considered where he had left uterine brothers or sisters. Here \(A\)'s case is considered where he has left brothers and or sisters by the father’s side, whether the mother was the same or not. “Brothers” and “sisters” in this verse must be construed to be such brothers and sisters.

For the sake of clearness, I have expanded the terse language of the original in the translation. Let me explain it more concretely in this note. \(A\), and “brother” and “sister” being strictly defined as above, we proceed to consider how \(A\)'s inheritance would be divided. If \(A\) left a widow or widower, the widow’s or widower’s share would first be calculated as in the first half of iv. 12; if \(A\) left no spouse, this calculation would not be necessary. Then if \(A\) left a single “sister,” she would have a half share, the remaining half (in so far as it, or a part of it, does not fall to a spouse, if any) going to remoter heirs: if a single “brother,” he would have the whole (subject to the spouse’s right if there is a spouse); if more than one “brother,” they divide the whole (subject to etc.). If \(A\) left two or more “sisters,” they get between them two-thirds, subject to the spouse’s right, if any. If \(A\) left a “brother” and “sister,” or “brothers” and “sisters,” they divide on the basis that each “brother’s” share is twice that of the “sister” (subject to, etc.). In all cases debts, funeral expenses, and legacies (to the amount allowed) have priority as in n. 522.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Māida, 5

This sūra deals, by way of recapitulation, with the backsliding of the Jews and Christians from their pure religions, to which the coping stone was placed by Islam. It refers particularly to the Christians, and to their solemn Sacrament of the Last Supper, to whose true meaning they are declared to have been false.

As a logical corollary to the corruption of the earlier religions of Allah, the practical precepts of Islam, about food, cleanliness, justice, and fidelity are recapitulated.

The fourth verse contains the memorable declaration: “This day have I perfected your religion for you”: which was promulgated in 10 H., during the Prophet’s last Pilgrimage to Makkah. Chronologically it was the last verse to be revealed.

Summary.—Beginning with an appeal to fulfil, as sacred, all obligations, human and divine, it points to certain regulations about food, as conducive to a sober and social life, without superstition and without-bias or hatred (v. 1-5).

Cleanliness of body, and justice and uprightness of dealing are nearest to Piety (v. 6-11).

If the Jews and the Christians turned back from the Truth and violated their Covenants, they have had their warning (v. 12-26).

The murder of Abel by Cain is the type of the treatment which the just man suffers from the envious. There is punishment from Allah. The just man must not grieve (v. 27-43).

Muslims must do impartial justice, but must protect their own Brotherhood and their Faith from insult and scorn: they must appreciate piety, humility, and other good points among the Christians (v. 44-86).

They must enjoy with gratitude all that is good and lawful, but guard themselves against excess. Swearing, intoxication, gambling, violation of the Sanctuary, superstitions of all kinds, and false evidence are condemned (v. 87-108).

The miracles of Jesus, and how they were misused by those who bore his name (v. 109-120).
Al-Ma‘ida, or The Table Spread.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations. 682

Lawful unto you (for food) Are all beasts of cattle With the exceptions named: 683

But animals of the chase Are forbidden while ye Are in the Sacred Precincts Or in the state of pilgrimage. 684

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682. This line has been justly admired for its terseness and comprehensiveness. Obligations: *'uqūd*: the Arabic word implies so many things that a whole chapter of Commentary can be written on it. First, there are the divine obligations that arise from our spiritual nature and our relation to Allah. He created us and implanted in us the faculty of knowledge and foresight: besides the intuition and reason which He gave us. He made Nature responsive to our needs, and His Signs in Nature are so many lessons to us in our own inner life; He further sent Messengers and Teachers, for the guidance of our conduct in individual, social, and public life. All these gifts create corresponding obligations which we must fulfil. But in our own human and material life we undertake mutual obligations express and implied. We make a promise: we enter into a commercial or social contract: we enter into a contract of marriage: we must faithfully fulfil all obligations in all these relationships. Our group or our State enters into a treaty: every individual in that group or State is bound to see that as far as lies in his power, such obligations are faithfully discharged. There are tacit obligations: living in civil society, we must respect its tacit conventions unless they are morally wrong, and in that case we must get out of such society. There are tacit obligations in the characters of host and guest, wayfarer of companion, employer or employed, etc., etc., which every man of Faith must discharge conscientiously. The man who deserts those who need him and goes to pray in a desert is a coward who disregards his obligations. All these obligations are interconnected. Truth and fidelity are parts of religion in all relations of life.

This verse is numbered separately from the succeeding verses.

683. That is, the exceptions named not only in the Qur-ān but in the Sunnah as well. See v. 3 below.

684. Cf. v. 94-96. Hunting and the use of game are forbidden "while ye are *hurūmūn,*" i.e., while ye are (1) in the Sacred Precincts, or (2) in the special pilgrim garb (ihrām), as to which see n. 212, ii. 196. In most cases the two amount to the same thing. The Sacred Precincts are sanctuary both for man and beast.
685. Allah's commands are not arbitrary. His Will is the perfect Archetypal Plan of the world. Everything He wills has regard to His Plan, in which are reflected His perfect wisdom and goodness.

686. Cf. ii. 158, where Safâ and Marwa are called “Symbols (sha‘a’ir) of Allah”. Here the Symbols are everything connected with the Pilgrimage, viz., (1) the places (like Safâ and Marwa, or the Ka‘ba or ‘Arafât, etc.); (2) the rites and ceremonies prescribed; (3) prohibitions (such as that of hunting, etc.); (4) the times and seasons prescribed. There is spiritual and moral dimension in all these. See notes on ii. 158, ii. 194-200.

687. The month of pilgrimage, or else, collectively, the four sacred months (ix. 36), viz., Rajab (7th), Zul-qa‘dah (11th), Zul-hijjah (12th, the month of Pilgrimage), and Muḥarram (the first of the year). In all these months War was prohibited. Excepting Rajab the other three months are consecutive.

688. The immunity from attack or interference extended to the animals brought as offerings for sacrifice and the garlands or fillets or distinguishing marks which gave them immunity. They were treated as sacred symbols. And of course every protection or immunity was enjoyed by the Pilgrims.

689. This is the state opposite to that described in n. 684, i.e., when ye have left the Sacred Precincts, and have donned the special pilgrim garb, showing your return to ordinary life.
Lead you to transgression  
(And hostility on your part). 690
Help ye one another  
In righteousness and piety,  
But help ye not one another  
In sin and rancour:  
Fear Allah: for Allah  
Is strict in punishment.

3. Forbidden to you (for food)  
Are: dead meat, blood,  
The flesh of swine, and that  
On which hath been invoked  
The name of other than Allah; 691  
That which hath been  
Killed by strangling,  
Or by a violent blow,  
Or by a headlong fall,  
Or by being gored to death;  
That which hath been (partly)  
Eaten by a wild animal;  
Unless ye are able  
To slaughter it (in due form); 692  
That which is sacrificed 693

690. See n. 205 to ii. 191. In the sixth year of the Hijra the Pagans, by way of hatred and persecution of the Muslims, had prevented them from access to the Sacred Mosque. When the Muslims were re-established in Makkah, some of them wanted to retaliate. Passing from the immediate event to the general principle, we must not retaliate or return evil for evil. The hatred of the wicked does not justify hostility on our part. We have to help each other in righteousness and piety, not in perpetuating feuds of hatred and enmity. We may have to fight and put down evil, but never in a spirit of malice or hatred, but always in a spirit of justice and righteousness.

691. Cf. ii. 173 and nn. 173 and 174. The prohibition of dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which other names than that of Allah have been invoked, has been there explained.

692. If an animal dies by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by being rained to death, or by being attacked by a wild animal, the presumption is that it becomes carrion, as the life-blood is congealed before being taken out of the body. But the presumption can be rebutted. If the life-blood still flows and the solemn mode of slaughter (zabih) in the name of Allah is carried out, it becomes lawful as food.

693. This was also an idolatrous rite, different from that in which a sacrifice was devoted to a particular idol or a false god.
694. Gambling of all kinds is forbidden: ii. 291. A sort of lottery or raffle practised by Pagan Arabs has been described in n. 241. Division of meat in this way is here forbidden, as it is a form of gambling.

695. So long as Islam was not organised, with its own community and its own laws, the Unbelievers had hoped to wean the Believers from the new Teaching. (Now that hope was gone, with the complete organisation of Islam).

696. The last verse revealed chronologically, marking the approaching end of Al-Mustafa's ministry in his earthly life.

697. The previous verse was negative; it defined what was not lawful for food, viz., things gross, or disgusting, or dedicated to superstition. This verse is positive: it defines what is lawful, viz., all things that are good and pure.

On stone (altars);
(Forbidden) also is the division
(Of meat) by raffling
With arrows: that is impiety.

This day have those who
Reject Faith given up
All hope of your religion:
Yet fear them not
But fear Me.
This day have I
Perfected your religion
For you, completed
My favour upon you,
And have chosen for you
Islam as your religion.

But if any is forced
By hunger, with no inclination
To transgression, Allah is
Indeed Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

4. They ask thee what
Lawful to them (as food). Say: Lawful unto you
Are (all) things good and pure:
And what ye have taught
The beasts and birds of prey,
Training them to hunt in the manner
Directed to you by Allah:
700. Islam is not exclusive. Social intercourse, including inter-marriage, is permitted with the People of the Book. A Muslim man may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry a Muslim woman, i.e., he must give her an economic and moral status, and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man, because her Muslim status would be compromised.

698. In the matter of the killing for meat, the general rule is that the name of Allah, the true God should be pronounced as a rite in order to call our attention to the fact that we do not take life thoughtlessly but solemnly for food, with the permission of Allah, to whom we render the life back. The question of hunting is then raised. How can this solemn rite be performed when we send forth trained hawks, trained hounds, or trained cheetahs or other animals trained for the chase? They must necessarily kill at some distance from their masters. Their game is legalised on these conditions: (1) that they are trained to kill, not merely for their own appetite, or out of mere wantonness, but for their master's food; the training implies that something of the solemnity which Allah has taught us in this matter goes into their action; and (2) we are to pronounce the name of Allah over the quarry; this is interpreted to mean that the Takbir should be pronounced when the hawk or dog, etc., is released to the quarry.

699. The question is for food generally, such as is ordinarily "good and pure": in the matter of meat it should be killed with some sort of solemnity analogous to that of the Takbir. The rules of Islam in this respect being analogous to those of the People of the Book, there is no objection to mutual recognition, as opposed to meat killed by Pagans with superstitious rites. In this respect the Christian rule is the same: "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." (Acts, xv. 29). Notice the bracketing of fornication with things unlawful to eat.

700. Islam is not exclusive. Social intercourse, including inter-marriage, is permitted with the People of the Book. A Muslim man may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry a Muslim woman, i.e., he must give her an economic and moral status, and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man, because her Muslim status would...
When ye give them
Their due dowers, and desire
Chastity, not lewdness.
Taking them as lovers.
If any one rejects faith, Fruitless is his work,
And in the Hereafter
He will be in the ranks
Of those who have lost (All spiritual good).

SECTION 2.

6. O ye who believe!
When ye prepare
For prayer, wash Your faces, and your hands
(And arms) to the elbows;
Rub your heads (with water);
And (wash) your feet To the ankles.
If ye are in a state Of ceremonial impurity, Bathe your whole body.
But if ye are ill, Or on a journey, Or one of you cometh

be affected; the wife ordinarily takes the nationality and status given by her husband’s law. Any man or woman, of any race or faith, may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim woman or man, provided it be from motives of purity and chastity and not of lewdness.

701. As always, food, cleanliness, social intercourse, marriage and other interests in life, are linked with our duty to Allah and faith in Him. Duty and faith are for our own benefit, here and in the Hereafter.

702. These are the essentials of Wudhū, or ablutions preparatory to prayers, viz., (1) to bathe the whole face in water, and (2) both hands and arms to the elbows, with (3) a little rubbing of the head with water (as the head is usually protected and comparatively clean), and (4) the bathing of the feet to the ankles. In addition, following the practice of the Prophet, it is usual first to wash the mouth, and the nose before proceeding with the face, etc.

703. Cf. iv. 43 and n. 563. Ritual impurity arises from sex pollution.
From the privy
Or ye have been
In contact with women,
And ye find no water,
Then take for yourselves
Clean sand or earth, 704
And rub therewith
Your faces and hands.
Allah doth not wish
To place you in a difficulty,
But to make you clean,
And to complete
His favour to you,
That ye may be grateful.

7. And call in remembrance
The favour of Allah
Unto you, and His Covenant, 705
Which He ratified
With you, when ye said:
“We hear and we obey”:
And fear Allah, for Allah
Knoweth well
The secrets of your hearts.

8. O ye who believe!
Stand out firmly
For Allah, as witnesses 706

704. This is Tayammum, or wiping with clean sand or earth where water is not available. I take it that this substitute is permissible both for Wudhū and for a full bath, in the circumstances mentioned.

705. There is a particular and a general meaning. The particular meaning refers to the solemn Pledge and Covenant taken by two groups of people at ‘Aqaba, a valley near Mina, the first about fourteen months before the Hijra, and the second a little later. These were Pledges of fealty to the Messenger of Allah, comparable to the Covenant under Mount Sinai taken in the time of Moses (See Q. ii. 63 and n. 78). The general meaning has been explained in n. 682 to v. 1: man is under a spiritual obligation under an implied Covenant with Allah: Allah has given man reason, judgment, the higher faculties of the soul, and even the position of vicegerent on earth (ii. 30), and man is bound to serve Allah faithfully and obey His Will. That obedience begins with cleanliness in bodily functions, food, etc. It goes on to cleanliness of mind and thought, and culminates in purity of motives in the inmost recesses of his heart and soul.

To fair dealing, and let not The hatred of others To you make you swerve\(^{707}\) To wrong and depart from Justice. Be just: that is Next to Piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted With all that ye do.

9. To those who believe And do deeds of righteousness Hath Allah promised forgiveness And a great reward.

10. Those who reject faith And deny Our Signs Will be Companions Of Hell-fire.

11. O ye who believe! Call in remembrance The favour of Allah Unto you when Certain men formed the design To stretch out Their hands against you, But (Allah) held back Their hands from you:\(^{708}\) So fear Allah. And on Allah Let Believers put (All) their trust.

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707. To do justice and act rightously in a favourable or neutral atmosphere is meritorious enough, but the real test comes when you have to do justice to people who hate you or to whom you have an aversion. But no less is required of you by the higher moral law.

708. In the life-time of the Prophet it happened again and again that the enemies of Islam stretched out their hands against him, his people, and his teaching. The odds were, from a worldly point of view, in their favour, but their hands were rendered inert and powerless because they were fighting against the truth of Allah. So does it happen always, now as it did then. True faith must take heart, and at the same time humbly recognise Allah's favour and mercy, and be grateful.
SECTION 3.

12. Allah did aforetime
Take a Covenant from
The Children of Israel,709
And We appointed twelve
Chieftains among them.
And Allah said: "I am
With you: if ye (but)
Establish regular Prayers,
Pay Zakat
Believe in My Messengers,
Honour and assist them,
And loan to Allah
A beautiful loan,710
Verily I will wipe out
From you your evils,
And admit you to Gardens
With rivers flowing beneath;
But if any of you, after this,
Resisteth faith, he hath truly
Wandered from the path
Of rectitude."711

13. But because of their breach
Of their Covenant, We
Cursed them,712 and made

709. Cf. ii. 63 and n. 78. "Moses... called for the elders of the people... and all the people answered together and said. 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' " (Exod. xix, 7-8). This was under the towering height of Mount Sinai.

The chieftains or elders or leaders of the people were selected, one from each of the twelve tribes (see ii. 60 and n. 73). For census purposes the names of the elders of the tribes are given in Num. i. 4-16: they are called "every one the head of the house of his fathers". Later, twelve other "heads of the Children of Israel" were selected to spy out the land of Canaan: their names are mentioned in Num. xiii. 1-16. See also, below, v. 20-26 and notes.

710. Cf. ii. 245, n. 276. The phrase means "spending in the cause of Allah". Allah in His infinite grace looks upon this as a loan, for which He gives a recompense manifold.

711. The path of rectitude: or the even way: see ii. 108. n. 109.

712. Cursed them: that means that because of the breach of their Covenant, Allah withdrew His overflowing Grace from them. The withdrawal of Grace made their hearts grow hard in two ways: (1) they were no longer protected from the assaults of evil, and (2) they became impervious even to the message of forgiveness and mercy which is open to all Allah’s creatures.
Their hearts grow hard:
They change the words
From their (right) places
And forget a good part
Of the Message that was
Sent them, nor wilt thou
Cease to find them—
Barring a few—ever
Bent on (new) deceits:713
But forgive them, and overlook714
(Their misdeeds): for Allah
Loveth those who are kind.

14. From those, too, who call
Themselves Christians,
We did take a Covenant,715
But they forgot a good part
Of the Message that was
Sent them: so We stirred up
Enmity and hatred
Between the one and the other,
To the Day of Judgment.
And soon will Allah715-A show
Them what it is
They have done.

713. Israel, when it lost Allah’s grace as above, began to sin against truth and religion in three ways: (1) they began to misuse Scripture itself, by either taking words out of their right meaning, or applying them to things for which they were never meant; (2) in doing so, they conveniently forgot a part of the Message and purpose of Allah: and (3) they invented new deceits to support the old ones.

714. Cf. ii. 109 and n. 110, where I have explained the different shades of meaning in the words for “forgiveness.”

715. The Christian Covenant may be taken to be the charge which Jesus gave to his disciples, and which the disciples accepted, to welcome Ahmad (Q. lxi. 6). Glimpses of this are to be found in the Gospel of St. John even as it exists now (John xv. 26. xvi. 7). It is those who call themselves “Christians” who reject this. True Christians have accepted it. The enmity between those who call themselves Christians and the Jews will continue till the Last Day.

715-A. The change from the First Person in the beginning of the verse to the Third Person here illustrates the change from the personal relationship of the Covenant, to the impersonal operation of Justice at Judgment. Cf. xxxv. 9.
15. **O people of the Book!**
There hath come to you
Our Messenger, revealing
To you much that ye
Used to hide in the Book,
And passing over much
(That is now unnecessary):
There hath come to you
From Allah a (new) light
And a perspicuous Book. 

16. **Wherewith Allah guideth all**
Who seek His good pleasure
To ways of peace and safety,
And leadeth them out
Of darkness, by His Will,
Unto the light,—guideth them
To a Path that is Straight.

17. **They disbelieved indeed**
Those that say
That Allah is Christ
The son of Mary
Say: "Who then
Hath the least power
Against Allah, if His Will
Were to destroy Christ
The son of Mary, his mother,
And all—every one
That is on the earth?
For to Allah belongeth
The dominion of the heavens

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716. **Mubin**: I wish I could translate by a simpler word than "perspicuous". But "plain" may mean unadorned, the opposite of beautiful, and this Book is among the most beautiful that it is the privilege of mankind to read. "Clear" would be right as far as it means "unambiguous, self-evident, not involved in mysteries of origin, history, or meaning, one which every one can understand as to the essentials necessary for him, without the intervention of priests or privileged persons". **Mubin** has all these meanings, but it suggests, besides, some quality of a shining light, by which we are able to make things clear, to distinguish the true from the false. This I think is suggested better by "perspicuous" than by the word "clear". Besides it is hardly good idiom to speak of "a clear Book."
And the earth, and all
That is between. He createth\textsuperscript{717} What He pleaseth. For Allah
Hath power over all things."

18. (Both) the Jews and the Christians
Say: "We are sons
Of Allah, and His beloved."\textsuperscript{718}
Say: "Why then doth He
Punish you for your sins?
Nay, ye are but men,-
Of the men He hath created:
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth.
And He punisheth whom He
Pleaseth:
And to Allah belongeth\textsuperscript{719}
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth, and all
That is between:
And unto Him
Is the final goal (of all)."

19. O People of the Book!
Now hath come unto you,
Making (things) clear unto you,
\textsuperscript{717} The most honoured of the prophets of Allah are but men. All power belongs to Allah, and not to any man. Allah’s creation may take many forms, but because in any particular form it is different from what we see daily around us, it does not cease to be Creation, or to be subject to the power of Allah. No creature can be God.

\textsuperscript{718} Sons of God: Cf. Job, xxxviii. 7: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." In the 29th Psalm, 1st verse, the authorised Translation "O ye mighty" should apparently be "O ye sons of Elim". El being a name of God, Cf. also Genesis, vi. 2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men."

Beloved: Cf. Psalms, cxvii, 2: "He giveth his beloved sleep."

If used figuratively, these and like words refer to the love of Allah. Unfortunately, "son" used in a physical sense, or "beloved" in an exclusive sense as if Allah loved only the Jews, make a mockery of religion.

\textsuperscript{719} This refrain in the last verse negatives the idea of sonship, and in this verse negatives the idea of an exclusive "Beloved". In both cases it means that Allah is independent of physical relationship or exclusive partiality.
Our Messenger, after the break

In (the series of) our messengers,
Lest ye should say:
"There came unto us
No bringer of glad tidings
And no warner":
But now hath come
Unto you a bringer
Of glad tidings
And a warner.
And Allah hath power
Over all things.

SECTION 4.

20. Remember Moses said
To his people: “O my People!
Call in remembrance the favour
Of Allah unto you, when He
Produced prophets among you,
Made you kings, and gave
You what He had not given
To any other among the peoples.”

21. “O my people! enter
The holy land which

720. The six hundred years (in round figures) between Christ and Muhammad were truly the dark ages of the world. Religion was corrupted: the standard of morals fell low: many false systems and heresies arose; and there was a break in the succession of prophets until the advent of Muhammad.

721. There was a long line of patriarchs and prophets before Moses, e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Ismā‘il, Jacob, etc.

722. From the slavery of Egypt the Children of Israel were made free and independent, and thus each man became as it were a king, if only he had obeyed Allah and followed the lead of Moses.

723. Cf. Exod. xix. 5: “Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.” Israel was chosen to be the vehicle of Allah’s message, the highest honour which any nation can receive.

724. We now come to the events detailed in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament. Read these as a Commentary, and examine a good map of the Sinai Peninsula, showing its connections with Egypt on the west. North-West
The people were not willing to follow the lead of Moses and were not willing to fight for their "inheritance." In effect they said: "Turn out the enemy first and then we shall enter into possession." In Allah's Law we must work and strive for what we wish to enjoy.

Among those who returned after spying out the land were two men who had faith and courage. They were Joshua and Caleb. Joshua afterwards succeeded Moses in the leadership after 40 years. These two men pleaded for an immediate entry through the proper Gate, which I understand to mean, "after taking all due precautions and making all due preparations". Cf. ii.189 and n. 203. But of course, they said, they must put their trust in Allah for victory.
24. They said: “O Moses!
We shall never enter it
As long as they are
In it.
Go thou, and thy Lord,
And fight ye two,
While we sit here.”

25. He said: “O my Lord!
I have power only
Over myself and my brother.”
So separate us from this
Rebellious people!”

26. Allah said: “Therefore
Will the land be out
Of their reach for forty years:
In distraction will they
Wander through the land:
But sorrow thou not
Over these rebellious people.

727. The advice of Joshua and Caleb, and the proposals of Moses under divine instructions were unpalatable to the crowd, whose prejudices were further inflamed by the other ten men who had gone with Joshua and Caleb. They made an “evil report,” and were frightened by the great stature of the Canaanites. The crowd was in open rebellion, was prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and return to Egypt. Their reply to Moses was full of irony, insolence, blasphemy, and cowardice. In effect they said: “You talk of your God and all that: go with your God and fight there if you like: we shall sit here and watch.”

728. “Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation. “(Num. xiv. 5). According to the words in the Old Testament story, Allah said: “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.” (Num. xiv. 12). Moses prayed and interceded. But as we are told here, (a spiritual touch not found in the Jewish story). Moses was careful to separate himself and his brother from the rebellion.

729. The punishment of the rebellion of these stiff-necked people, rebellion that was repeated “these ten times” (Num. xiv. 22) and more, was that they were left to wander distractedly hither and thither through the wilderness for forty years. That generation was not to see the Holy Land. All those that were twenty years old and upwards were to die in the wilderness: “your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.” (Num. xiv. 29). Only those who were then children would reach the promised land. And so it happened. From the desert of Paran they wandered south, north, and east for forty years. From the head of what is now the Gulf of ‘Aqaba, they travelled north, keeping to the east side of the depression of which the Dead Sea and the river Jordan are portions. Forty years afterwards they crossed the Jordan opposite what is now Jericho, but by that time Moses, Aaron, and the whole of the elder generation had died.
SECTION 5.

27. Recite to them the truth\textsuperscript{730} Of the story of the two sons\textsuperscript{731} Of Adam. Behold! they each Presented a sacrifice (to Allah): It was accepted from one, But not from the other. Said the latter: "Be sure I will slay thee." "Surely," Said the former, "Allah Doth accept of the sacrifice Of those who are righteous.

28. "If thou dost stretch thy hand Against me, to slay me, It is not for me to stretch My hand against thee To slay thee: for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds.

29. "For me, I intend to let Thee draw on thyself My sin as well as thine.\textsuperscript{732}

\textsuperscript{730} Literally; "recite to them in truth the story", etc. The point is that the story in Gen. iv. 1-15 is a bare narrative, not including the lessons now to be enforced. The Prophet is told now to supply the truth of the matter, the details that will enforce the lessons.

\textsuperscript{731} The two sons of Adam were Hābil (in the English Bible, Abel) and Qābil (in English, Cain). Cain was the elder, and Abel the younger, the righteous and innocent one. Presuming on the right of the elder, Cain was puffed up with arrogance and jealousy, which led him to commit the crime of murder. Among the Christians, Cain was the type of the jew as against Abel the Christian. The Jew tried to kill Jesus and exterminate the Christian. In the same way, as against Muhammad, the younger brother of the Semitic family. Cain was the type of the Old Testament and New Testament people, who tried to resist and kill Muhammad and put down his people.

\textsuperscript{732} My sin as well as thine. "My sin" has been interpreted as "the sin against me, in that thou slayest me": in that case thy "sin" may mean either "thy crime in committing a murder." or "thy sin against thyself, for the crime causes real loss to thyself in the Hereafter." See the last clause of the next verse.
For thou wilt be among The Companions of the Fire, And that is the reward Of those who do wrong.\textsuperscript{733}

30. The (selfish) soul of the other Led him to the murder Of his brother: he murdered Him, and became (himself) One of the lost ones.\textsuperscript{734}

31. Then Allah sent a raven, Who scratched the ground, To show him how to hide The naked body of his brother.\textsuperscript{735} “Woe is me!” said he; “Was I not even able To be as this raven, And to hide the naked body Of my brother?” Then he became Full of regrets.\textsuperscript{736}

32. On that account: We ordained For the Children of Israel

\textsuperscript{733} Abel's speech is full of meaning. He is innocent and God-fearing. To the threat of death held out by the other, he returns a calm reply, aimed at reforming the other. “Surely,” he pleads, “if your sacrifice was not accepted, there was something wrong in you, for Allah is just and accepts the sacrifice of the righteous. If this does not deter you, I am not going to retaliate, though there is as much power in me against you as you have against me. I fear my Maker, for I know He cherishes all His Creation. Let me warn you that you are doing wrong. I do not intend even to resist, but do you know what the consequences will be to you? You will be in torment.”

\textsuperscript{734} The innocent unselfish pleading of the younger brother had no effect, for the soul of the other was full of pride, selfishness and jealousy. He committed the murder, but in doing so, ruined his own self.

\textsuperscript{735} Sau'-at may mean “corpse”, with a suggestion of nakedness and shame in two senses: (1) the sense of being exposed without burial, and (2) the sense of being insulted by being violently deprived by the unwarranted murder, of the soul which inhabited it,—the soul, too, of a brother.

\textsuperscript{736} The thought at last came home to the murderer. It was dreadful indeed to slay any one—the more so as he was a brother, and an innocent righteous brother! But worse still, the murderer had not even the decency to bury the corpse, and of this simple duty he was reminded by a raven—a black bird usually held in contempt! His regret was on that account. That was no true repentance.
That if any one slew
A person—unless it be
For murder or for spoiling
Mischief in the land—
It would be as if
He slew the whole people:737
And if any one saved a life.
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people.
Then although there came
to them Our Messengers
With Clear Signs, yet,
Even after that, many
Of them continued to commit
Excesses in the land.

33. The punishment of those
Who wage war against Allah
And His Messenger, and strive
With might and main
For mischief through the land738
Is: execution, or crucifixion,
Or the cutting off of hands,
And feet from opposite sides,739
Or exile from the land:

737. The story of Cain is referred to in a few graphic details in order to tell the
story of Israel. Israel rebelled against Allah, slew and insulted righteous men who did
them no harm but on the contrary came in all humility. When Allah withdrew His favour
from Israel because of its sins and bestowed it on another nation, the jealousy of Israel
plunged it deeper into sin. To kill or seek to kill an individual because he represents an
ideal is to kill all who uphold the ideal. On the other hand, to save an individual life in
the same circumstances is to save a whole community. What could be stronger
condemnation of individual assassination and revenge?

738. For the double crime of treason against the State, combined with treason against
Allah, as shown by overt crimes, four alternative punishments are mentioned, any one
of which is to be applied according to the crime committed, viz., execution (cutting off
of the head), crucifixion, maiming, or exile. These were features of the Criminal Law
then and for centuries afterwards, except that tortures such as "hanging, drawing, and
quartering" in English Law, and piercing of eyes and leaving the unfortunate victim
exposed to a tropical sun, which was practised in Arabia, and all such tortures were
abolished. In any case sincere repentance before it was too late was recognised as a
ground for mercy.

739. Understood to mean the right hand and the left foot.
That is their disgrace
In this world, and
A heavy punishment is theirs
In the Hereafter;

34. Except for those who repent
Before they fall
Into your Power:
In that case, know
That Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

SECTION 6.

35. O ye who believe!
Do your duty to Allah, Seek the means
Of approach unto Him,
And strive (with might
And main) in His cause:
That ye may prosper.

36. As to those who reject
Faith,—if they had
Everything on earth,
And twice repeated,
To give as ransom
For the Chastisement of the Day
Of Judgment, it would
Never be accepted of them.
Theirs would be
A grievous Chastisement

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740. Taqwā here too might be translated "fear of Allah", but the very next clause shows that "fear of Allah" does not mean "fear" in the ordinary sense, which would make you avoid the object of fear. On the contrary the "fear of Allah" is the intense desire to avoid everything that is against His Will and Law. It is in fact duty to Allah, for we are told to seek ardently the means by which we may approach Him, and that can only be done by striving with might and main for His cause.

741. "Prosper" in the real sense, for that is all that matters, as the life of this world is brief and fleeting, and of small account as against Eternity.
37. Their wish will be
To get out of the Fire.
But never will they
Get out therefrom:
Their Chastisement will be
One that endures.

38. As to the thief,\textsuperscript{742}
Male or female,
Cut off his or her hands:
A retribution for their deed
And exemplary punishment
From Allah,
And Allah is Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom.

39. But if the thief repent
After his crime,
And amend his conduct,
Allah turneth to him
In forgiveness; for Allah
Is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

40. Knowest thou not\textsuperscript{743}
That to Allah (alone)
Belongeth the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth?
He punisheth whom He pleaseth,
And He forgiveth whom He pleaseth:

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\textsuperscript{742} Here we touch upon jurisprudence. The Canon Law jurists are not unanimous as to the value of the property stolen, which would involve the penalty of the cutting off of the hand. The majority hold that petty thefts are exempt from this punishment. The general opinion is that only one hand should be cut off for the first theft, on the principle that “if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee” (Matt. xviii. 8). Apparently in the age of Jesus thieves were crucified (Matt. xxvii. 38).

\textsuperscript{743} Punishment really does not belong to mortals, but to Allah alone. Only, in order to keep civil society together, and protect innocent people from crime, certain principles are laid down on which people can build up their criminal law. But we must always remember that Allah not only punishes but forgives, and forgiveness is the attribute which is more prominently placed before us. It is not our wisdom that can really define the bounds of forgiveness or punishment, but His Will or Plan, which is the true standard of righteousness and justice.
And Allah hath power
Over all things.

41. O Messenger! let not
Those grieve thee, who race
Each other into Unbelief: 744
(Whether it be) among those
Who say “We believe”
With their lips but
Whose hearts have no faith;
Or it be among the Jews—
Men who will listen
To any lie,—will listen
Even to others who have
Never so much as come 745
to thee. They change the words
From their (right) places 746
They say,
“If ye are given this,
Take it, but if not,
Beware!” If any one’s trial
Is intended by Allah, thou hast
No authority in the least
For him against Allah.
For such—it is not
Allah’s will to purify
Their hearts. For them

744. Two classes of men are meant, viz., the Hypocrites and the Jews. For both of them Al-Mustafà laboured earnestly and assiduously, and it must have been a cause of great grief and disappointment to him that some among them showed so much insincerity, cunning, and hardness of heart. These are types not yet extinct.

745. There were men among the Jews who were eager to catch up any lie against the Prophet. They had their ears open even to tales from people who had never so much as come near to the Prophet. If we understand “for” instead of “to” before “others” (for the Arabic word would bear both meanings), the sense will be: They are keen listeners or spies for any lies they can catch; and they will act as spies for others (their Rabbis, etc.) who are in the background but to whom they carry false tales.

746. Cf. v. 13. The addition of the words min ba’di here suggests the change of words from their right times as well as places. They did not deal honestly with their Law, and misapplied it, by distorting the meaning. Or it may be that as tale-bearers they distorted the meaning by misrepresenting the context.
42. (They are fond of) listening.
To falsehood, of devouring\(^{747}\) Anything forbidden. If they do come to thee, Either judge between them, Or decline to interfere.\(^{748}\) If thou decline, they cannot Hurt thee in the least. If thou judge, judge In equity between them. For Allah loveth those Who judge in equity.

43. But why do they come\(^{749}\) To thee for decision, When they have (their own) Torah before them?— Therein is the (plain) Command of Allah; yet Even after that, they would Turn away. For they Are not (really) People of Faith.

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747. *Devouring anything forbidden:* both in a literal and in a figurative sense. In the figurative sense, it would be: the taking of usury or bribes, or taking undue advantage of people’s weak position or their own fiduciary powers to add to their own wealth.

748. Where it is merely a trick to catch out the unwary, a just man may honourably decline to interfere in a cause submitted to him, as also in a case where the parties are not honestly desirous of justice, but each hopes that some partiality will be shown to it.

749. This is a searching question as to the motive of the Jews in bringing their cases for decision to the Prophet. They came either (1) to ridicule whatever he said, or (2) to deceive him as to facts and snatch a favourable decision which was against equity. If their own Law did not suit their selfish interests, they sometimes twisted it. But Muhammad was always inflexible in his justice.
SECTION 7.

44. It was We who revealed
The Torah (to Moses): therein
Was guidance and light. 750

By its standard have been judged
The Jews, by the Prophets
Who bowed (as in Islam)
To Allah's Will, by the Rabbis 751
And the Doctors of Law:
For to them was entrusted
The protection of Allah's Book,
And they were witnesses thereto. 752

Therefore fear not men,
But fear Me, and sell not
My Signs for a miserable price. 753

If any do fail to judge
By what Allah
Hath revealed, they are
Unbelievers.

45. We ordained therein for them: 754

"Life for life, eye for eye,

750. Guidance, with reference to conduct. light, with reference to insight into the higher realms of the faith.

751. Rabbanî may. I think, be rightly translated by the Jewish title of Rabbi for their learned men. Jewish learning is identified with Rabbinical literature. Abhâr is the plural of hibr or habr, by which we may understand Jewish Doctors of Law. Later the term was applied to those of other religions.

752. They were living witnesses to the truth of Scripture, and could testify that they had made it known to the people: Cf. ii. 143, and iv. 135.

753. Two charges are made, against the Jews: (1) that even the books which they had, they twisted in meaning, to suit their own purposes, because they feared men rather than Allah: (2) that what they had was but fragments of the original Law given to Moses, mixed up with a lot of semi-historical and legendary matter, and some fine poetry. The Taurât mentioned in the Qur-ân is not the Old Testament as we have it; nor is it even the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, containing the Law embedded in a great deal of semi-historical and legendary narrative). See Appendix II. on the Taurât (printed at the end of this Sûra).

754. The retaliation is prescribed in three places in the Pentateuch, viz., Exod. xxi, 23-25; Leviticus xxiv. 18-21, and Deut. xix. 21. The wording in the three quotations is different, but in none of them is found the additional rider for mercy, as here. Note that in Matt. v. 38. Jesus quotes the Old Law "eye for eye," etc., and modifies it in the =
Nose for nose, ear for ear,  
Tooth for tooth, and wounds  
Equal for equal." But if  
Any one remits the retaliation  
By way of charity, it is  
An act of atonement for himself.  
And if any fail to judge  
By what Allah  
Hath revealed, they are  
Wrong-doers.

46. And in their footsteps  
We sent Jesus the son  
Of Mary, confirming  
The Torah that had come  
Before him: We sent him  
The Gospel: therein  
Was guidance and light.  
And confirmation of the Torah  
That had come before him:  
A guidance and an admonition  
To those who fear Allah.

47. Let the People of the Gospel  
Judge by what Allah hath revealed  
Therein. If any do fail  
To judge by  
What Allah hath revealed,

= direction of forgiveness, but the Quranic injunction is more practical. Even where the injured one forgives, the State or Ruler is competent to take such action as is necessary for the preservation of law and order in Society. For crime has a bearing that goes beyond the interests of the person injured: the Community is affected: see Q. v. 32.

755. This is not part of the Mosaic Law, but the teaching of Jesus and of Muḥammad. Notice how the teaching of Jesus is gradually introduced as leading up to the Qur-ān.

756. The seeming repetitions at the end of verses 47, 48 and 50 are not real repetitions. The significant words in the three cases are: Unbelievers, wrong-doers, and rebellious: and each fits the context. If the Jews tamper with their books they are Unbelievers; if they give false judgments, they are wrong-doers. If the Christians follow not their light, they are rebellious.

757. Guidance and light: see n. 750 above. For the meaning of the Gospel (Injil), see Appendix III, "On the Injil", (printed at the end of this Sūra).
They are
Those who rebel. 758

48. To thee We sent the Scripture
In truth, confirming
The scripture that came
Before it, and guarding it 759
In safety: so judge
Between them by what
Allah hath revealed,
And follow not their vain
Desires, diverging
From the Truth that hath come
To thee. To each among you
Have We prescribed a Law
And an Open Way. 760
If Allah had so willed,
He would have made you 761
A single People, but (His
Plan is) to test you in what
He hath given you: so strive
As in a race in all virtues.

758. See n. 756 above.

759. After the corruption of the older revelations, the Qur-ān comes with a twofold purpose: (1) to confirm the true and original Message, and (2) to guard it, or act as a check to its interpretation. The Arabic word Muhāmin is very comprehensive in meaning. It means one who safeguards, watches over, stands witness, preserves, and upholds. The Qur-ān safeguards “the Book”, for it has preserved within it the teachings of all the former Books. It watches over these Books in the sense that it will not let their true teachings to be lost. It supports and upholds these Books in the sense that it corroborates the Word of Allah which has remained intact in them. It stands a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of Allah contained in these Books and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the people which were mixed with it: what is confirmed by the Qur-ān is the Word of Allah and what is against it is that of the people.


761. By origin mankind were a single people or nation: iv. 1, and ii. 213. That being so Allah could have kept us all alike, with one language, one kind of disposition, and one set of physical conditions (including climate) to live in. But in His wisdom, He gives us diversity in these things, not only at any given time, but in different periods and ages. This tests our capacity for Unity (Wahdāniyat) still more, and accentuates the need of Unity and Islam.
The goal of you all is to Allah;
It is He that will show you
The truth of the matters
In which ye dispute.\textsuperscript{762}

49. And this (He commands):
Judge thou between them
By what Allah hath revealed,
And follow not their vain
Desires, but beware of them
Lest they beguile thee
From any of that (teaching)
Which Allah hath sent down
To thee. And if they turn
Away, be assured that
For some of their crimes
It is Allah's purpose to punish
Them. And truly most men
Are rebellious.

50. Do they then seek after
A judgment of (the Days\textsuperscript{763}
Of) Ignorance? But who,
For a people whose faith
Is assured, can give
Better judgment than Allah?

SECTION 8.

51. O ye who believe!
Take not the Jews
And the Christians

\textsuperscript{762} Men are wont to make conflicting claims regarding Allah, the ultimate destiny of man, and other questions of vital importance. No matter how vehement and eloquent the proponents of false doctrines might be, their efforts will prove fruitless and it will be indisputably clear on the Day of Judgment as to who entertained false notions and who cherished the truth.

\textsuperscript{763} The Days of Ignorance were the days of tribalism, feuds and selfish accentuation of differences in man. Those days are really not yet over. It is the mission of Islam to take us away from that false mental attitude, towards the true attitude of Unity. If our Faith is certain (and not merely a matter of words). Allah will guide us to that Unity.
For your friends and protectors.\textsuperscript{764}
They are but friends and protectors
To each other. And he
Amongst you that turns to them
(For friendship) is of them.
Verily Allah guideth not
A people unjust.

52. Those in whose hearts\textsuperscript{765}
Is a disease-thou seest
How eagerly they run about
Amongst them, saying:
"We do fear lest a change
Of fortune bring us disaster."
Ah! perhaps Allah will give
(Thee) victory, or a decision
From Him
Then will they regret
Of the thoughts which they secretly
Harboured in their hearts.

53. And those who believe
Will say: "Are these
The men who swore
Their strongest oaths by Allah,
That they were with you?\textsuperscript{766}
All that they do
Will be in vain,
And they will fall
Into (nothing but) ruin.

\textsuperscript{764}. That is, look not to them for help and comfort. They are more likely to combine against you than to help you. And this happened more than once in the lifetime of the Prophet, and in after-ages again and again. He who associates with them and shares their counsels must be counted as of them. The trimmer loses whichever way the wheel of fortune turns.

\textsuperscript{765}. Cf. ii. 10.

\textsuperscript{766}. The Hypocrites, while matters were doubtful, pretended to be with Muslims, but were in league with their enemies. When matters came to a decision and Allah granted victory to Islam, their position was awkward. They were not only disowned by the Muslims, but the Muslims could well say in reproach to their enemies: "Are these the men who swore friendship for you? What was their friendship worth to you? Where are they now?". 
54. O ye who believe!
If any from among you
Turn back from his Faith,
Soon will Allah produce
A people whom He will love
As they will love Him,
Lowly with the Believers,
Mighty against the Rejecters,
Fighting in the Way of Allah,
And never afraid
Of the reproaches
Of such as find fault.767
That is the Grace of Allah,
Which He will bestow
On whom He pleaseth.
And Allah encompasseth all,
And He knoweth all things.

55. Your (real) friends are
(No less than) Allah,
His Messenger, and the
Believers,—those who
Establish regular prayers
And pay Zakat
And they bow
Down humbly (in worship).

56. As to those who turn
(For friendship) to Allah.

767. As "most men are rebellious" (v. 49), it is inevitable that there should be apostates even from such a religion of reason and common-sense as Islam. But here is a warning to the Muslim body that they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become so self-satisfied or arrogant as to depart from the spirit of Allah's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own. Allah's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. That spirit is defined in two ways: first in general terms: they will love Allah and Allah will love them; and secondly, by specific signs: amongst the Brethren, their attitude will be that of humility, but to wrong-doers they will offer no meal-y-mouthed compromises; they will always strive and fight for truth and right; they will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form, which says: "What will people say if we act thus? They are too great in mind to be haunted by any such thought. For, as the next verse says, their friends are Allah. His Prophet, and His people, the people who judge rightly, without fear or favour.
His Messenger, and the
Believers,—it is
The party of Allah
That must certainly triumph.

SECTION 9

57. O ye who believe!
Take not for friends
And protectors those
Who take your religion
For a mockery or sport,—
Whether among those
Who received the Scripture
Before you, or among those
Who reject Faith:
But fear ye Allah,
If ye have Faith (indeed).

58. When ye proclaim
Your call to prayer,
They take it (but)
As mockery and sport;
That is because they are
A people without understanding.

Do ye disapprove of us
For no other reason than
That we believe in Allah,
And the revelation
That hath come to us
And that which came
Before (us), and (perhaps)

768. It is not right that we should be in intimate association with those to whom religion is either a subject of mockery or at best is nothing but a plaything. They may be amused, or they may have other motives for encouraging you. But your association with them will sap the earnestness of your Faith, and make you cynical and insincere.
That most of you
Are rebellious and disobedient?\(^{769}\)

60. Say: "Shall I point out
To you something much worse
Than this, (as judged)
By the treatment it received
From Allah? Those who
Incur(t)ed the curse of Allah
And His wrath, those of whom some
He transformed into apes and
swine,\(^{770}\)
Those who worshipped Evil (Tagut)—
These are (many times) worse
In rank, and far more astray
From the even Path!"

61. When they come to thee,
They say: "We believe":
But in fact they enter
With a disbelief,
And they go out
With the same.
But Allah knoweth fully
All that they hide.

62. Many of them dost thou
See, racing each other
In sin and transgression

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\(^{769}\) There is the most biting irony in this and the next verse. You People of the Book! Do you hate us because we believe in Allah and not only our scripture, but yours also? Perhaps you hate us because we obey and you are in rebellion against Allah! Why hate us? There are worse things than our obedience and our Faith. Shall I tell you some of them? Our test will be: what treatment Allah meted out to the things I mention. Who were the people who incurred the curse of Allah? (See Deut. xi. 28, and xxviii. 15-68; and numerous passages like Hosea viii. 14, and ix. 1). Who provoked Allah's wrath? (See numerous passages like Deut. i. 34; Matt. iii. 7). Who forsook Allah, and worshipped evil? (See Jeremiah, xvi. 11-13). That is your record. Is that why you hate us?"

\(^{770}\) For apes see Q. ii. 65. For men possessed by devils, and the devils being sent into swine, see Matt. viii. 28-32.
And their eating of things\textsuperscript{771} Forbidden. Evil indeed Are the things that they do.

63. Why do not the Rabbis And the doctors of law forbid Them from their (habit Of) uttering sinful words And eating things forbidden? Evil indeed are their works.

64. The Jews say: “Allah’s hand\textsuperscript{772} Is tied up,” Be their hands Tied up and be they accursed For the (blasphemy) they utter. Nay, both His hands Are widely outstretched: He giveth and spendeth (Of His bounty) as He pleaseth. But the revelation that Cometh to thee from Allah Increaseth in most of them Their obstinate rebellion\textsuperscript{773} And blasphemy. Amongst them We have placed enmity\textsuperscript{774} And hatred till the Day

\textsuperscript{771} Eating of things forbidden: may be construed in a literal or a figurative sense. From its juxtaposition with sin and hatred, it is better to construe it in a figurative sense, as referring to their fraudulent misappropriations of other people’s property or trust property. “Eating” is used in v. 66 below in the general sense of enjoyment and happiness.

\textsuperscript{772} Cf. v. 12. and ii. 245, for a “beautiful loan to Allah”, and iii, 181, for the blasphemous taunt, “Then Allah is poor!” It is another form of the taunt to say, “Then Allah’s hands are tied up. He is close-fisted. He does not give!” This blasphemy is repudiated. On the contrary, boundless is Allah’s bounty, and He gives, as it were, with both hands outstretched,—a figure of speech for unbounded liberality.

\textsuperscript{773} Their jealousy—because Al-Muṣṭafā is chosen for Allah’s Message—is so great that it only confirms and strengthens their rebellion and blasphemy.

\textsuperscript{774} Cf. v. 14. where the eternal warring of the Christian sects, among themselves and against the Jews, is referred to. The reference is to the whole of the People of the Book, Jews and Christians,—their internal squabbles and their external disputes, quarrels, and wars.
Of Judgment. Every time
They kindle the fire of war,
Allah doth extinguish it;
But they (ever) strive
To do mischief on earth.
And Allah loveth not
Those who do mischief. 775

65. If only the People of the Book
Had believed and been righteous.
We should indeed have
Blotted out their iniquities
And admitted them
To Gardens of Bliss.

66. If only they had stood fast
By the Torah, the Gospel,
And all the revelation that was sent
To them from their Lord,
They would have eaten
Both from above them
And from below their feet. 776
There is from among them
A party of the right course:
But many of them
Follow a course that is evil.

775. The argument of the whole verse may be thus stated. The Jews blaspheme and mock, and because of their jealousy, the more they are taught, the more obstinate they become in their rebellion. But what good will it do to them? Their selfishness and spite sow quarrels among themselves, which will not be healed till the Day of Judgment. When they stir up wars, especially against the innocent. Allah’s Mercy is poured down like a flood of water to extinguish them. But their wickedness continues to devise ever new mischief. And Allah loves not mischief or those who do mischief.

776. To eat (akala) is a very comprehensive word, and denotes enjoyment generally, physical, social, mental and moral, and spiritual. “To eat what is forbidden” in verses 62 and 63 referred to taking unlawful profit, from usury or trust funds or in other ways. Here “eating” would seem to mean receiving satisfaction or happiness in this life as well as in the life to come. “From above them” may refer to heavenly or spiritual satisfaction, and “from below their feet” to earthly satisfaction. But it is better to take the words as a general idiom, and understand “satisfaction or happiness from every side.”
SECTION 10

67. O Messenger! proclaim
The (Message) which hath been
Sent to thee from thy Lord.\[777\]
If thou didst not, thou
Wouldst not have fulfilled
And proclaimed His Mission.
And Allah will defend thee
From men (who mean mischief).
For Allah guideth not
Those who reject Faith.

68. Say: “O People of the Book!
Ye have no ground
To stand upon unless
Ye stand fast by the Torah.
The Gospel, and all the revelation
That has come to you from
Your Lord.” It is the revelation
That cometh to thee from
Thy Lord, that increaseth in most
Of them their obstinate
Rebellion and blasphemy.
But sorrow thou not
Over (these) people without Faith.\[778\]

69. Those who believe (in the Qur-\(\text{\`a}n\)).
Those who follow the Jewish
(scriptures).

777. Muhammad had many difficulties to contend with, many enemies and dangers to avoid. His mission must be fulfilled. And he must—as he did—go forward and proclaim that Message and fulfil his mission, trusting to Allah for protection, and unconcerned if people who had lost all sense of right rejected it or threatened him.

778. In v. 26, Moses was told not to sorrow over a rebellious people. Here Muhammad is told not to sorrow over people without Faith. The second situation is even more trying than the first. Rebellion may be a passing phase. Want of faith is an attitude of mind that is well-nigh hopeless. Yet the Prophet patiently reasoned with them and bore their taunts and insults. If, the argument runs, you do not believe in anything, even in the things that you may be expected to believe in, how can you receive in Faith Allah’s Message that has come in another form? In fact your jealousy adds to your obstinacy and unbelief.
And the Sabians and the Christians,—
Any who believe in Allah
And the Last Day,
And work righteousness,—
On them shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

70. We took the Covenant
Of the Children of Israel
And sent them Messengers.
Every time there came
To them a Messenger
With what they themselves
Desired not—some
(Of these) they called
Impostors, and some they
slay.

71. They thought there would be
No trial (or punishment);
So they became blind and deaf;
Yet Allah (in mercy) turned

779. Here, as in Sura Al-Baqarah (ii: 62), the Qur'an underscores the importance of true and genuine faith, which is to be judged by a sincere belief in Allah and man's accountability to Him backed by a righteous conduct rather than by mere forms or labels. At both the places it repudiates the false claims of the People of the Book that they had a special relationship with Allah for they were the children of Abraham; that they were a chosen people with special privileges, and no matter what they did, their high status would remain unaffected. Here this false notion is refuted and the People of the Book are being reminded that it is through sincere belief and righteous conduct rather than pretentious claims that man can win his Lord's pleasure and achieve ultimate success. The verse does not purport to lay down an exhaustive list of the articles of faith. Nor does it seek to spell out the essentials of a genuine belief in Allah, which has no meaning unless it is accompanied by belief in His Prophets for it is through their agency alone that we know Allah's Will and can abide by it in our practical lives. This is especially true of His final Prophet, Muhammad (peace be on him) whose message is universal, and not confined to any particular group or section of humanity. Belief in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) is thus an integral part and a logical corollary of belief in Allah. Moreover, it is also an essential test of genuineness of such belief. This becomes clear when the verse is read in conjunction with other relevant verses of the Qur'an. See, for instance, iv. 170, v. 15, 19, vii. 157, 158, xxi. 107, xxv. 1, xxxiii. 40, lxi. 6. See also ii. 40, iii. 31-32, iv. 150-151.

780. Cf. ii. 87, and n. 91.

781. That is, they turned away their eyes from Allah's Signs and they turned a deaf ear to Allah's Message.
To them; yet again many
Of them became blind and deaf.
But Allah sees well
All that they do.

72. Certainly they disbelieve who say:
“Allah is Christ the son
Of Mary.” But said Christ: 782
“O Children of Israel!
Worship Allah, my Lord
And your Lord.” Whoever
Joins other gods with Allah.­
Allah will forbid him
The Garden, and the Fire
Will be his abode. There will
For the wrong-doers
Be no one to help.

73. They disbelieve who say:
Allah is one of three
(In a Trinity:) for there is
No god except One God.
If they desist not
From their word (of blasphemy),
Verily a grievous chastisement
Will befall the disbelievers.
Among them.

74. Why turn they not to Allah
And seek His forgiveness?
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

75. Christ the son of Mary
Was no more than

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782. Cf. Matt. iv. 10, where Christ rebukes Satan for desiring the worship of other than Allah: John xx. 17, where Christ says to Mary Magdalene. “Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God.” Cf. also Luke xviii. 19, where Christ rebukes a certain ruler for calling him Good Master: “Why callest thou me good? None is good, save One, that is, Allah.” In Mark xii. 25 Jesus says: “The first of all the commandments is. Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord.”
A Messenger; many were
The Messengers that passed away
Before him. His mother
Was a woman of truth. 783
They had both to eat
Their (daily) food.
See how Allah doth make
His Signs clear to them; 784
Yet see in what ways
They are deluded
Away from the truth!

76. Say: "Will ye worship,
Besides Allah, something
Which hath no power either
To harm or benefit you?
But Allah,—He it is
That heareth and knoweth
All things."

77. Say: "O People of the Book!
Exceed not in your religion 785
The bounds (of what is proper),
Trespassing beyond the truth,
Nor follow the vain desires
Of people who went wrong
In times gone by,—who misled
Many, and strayed (themselves)
From the even Way.

783. She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious virtuous woman.

784. Note how logically the argument has led up from Jewish back-slidings and want of faith, to blasphemies associated with the names of Jesus and Mary, and in the following verses to the worship of senseless stocks and stones. Allah is One; His Message is one; yet how people’s perversity transforms truth into falsehood, religion into superstition!

785. Excess, as opposed to moderation and reason, is the simplest test by which a hypocrite or a selfish man who “trades” on religion, is known from a sincere, pious, and truly religious man. Excess means that truth is sometimes concealed or trampled upon, that the fashions of ancestors or contemporaries are copied or overdone, and Allah’s name is dishonoured by blasphemies or the setting up of false gods or fetishes, or that good (or even bad) men are deified and worshipped. The true path is the even path, the path of rectitude. (Cf. ii. 108, and v. 12).
SECTION 11.

78. Curses were pronounced
On those among the Children
Of Israel who rejected Faith,
By the tongue of David
And of Jesus the son of Mary:
Because they disobeyed
And persisted in Excesses.

79. Nor did they
Forbid one another
The iniquities which they
Committed: evil indeed
Were the deeds which they did.

80. Thou seest many of them
Turning in friendship
To the Unbelievers.
Evil indeed are (the works) which
Their souls have sent forward
Before them (with the result),
That Allah's wrath
Is on them,
And in torment
Will they abide.

81. If only they had believed
In Allah, in the Prophet,
And in what hath been
Revealed to him, never

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786. The Psalms of David have several passages of imprecations against the wicked. 
Cf. Psalms cix 17-18; lxviii. 21-22 ("Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger aslo came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation"); Psalms lxix. 22-28, and Psalms v. 10.

787. Cf. Matt. xxiii. 33 ("Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?"); also Matt. xii. 34.

788. There are bad men in every community, but if leaders connive at the misdeeds of the commonalty,—and even worse, if leaders themselves share in the misdeeds, as happened with the Pharisees and Scribes against whom Jesus spoke out, then that community is doomed.
Would they have taken
Them for friends and protectors,
But most of them are
Rebellious wrong-doers.

82. Strongest among men in enmity
To the Believers wilt thou
Find the Jews and Pagans;
And nearest among them in love
To the Believers wilt thou
Find those who say,\(^\text{789}\) "We are Christians":
Because amongst these are
Men devoted to learning.\(^\text{790}\)
And men who have renounced
The world, and they
Are not arrogant.

83. And when they listen
To the revelation received
By the Messenger, thou wilt
See their eyes overflowing
With tears, for they
Recognise the truth:
They pray: "Our Lord!
We believe, write
us Down among the witnesses.

84. "What cause can we have
Not to believe in Allah
And the truth which has
Come to us, seeing that
We long for our Lord

\(^{789}\) The meaning is not that they merely call themselves Christians, but that they were such sincere Christians that they appreciated Muslim virtues, as did the Abyssinians to whom Muslim refugees went during the persecution in Makkah.

\(^{790}\) Qissis: I have translated as "devoted to learning," following the Commentators. It seems to be a foreign word, possibly Abyssinian rather than Syriac, as the reference seems to be to the Abyssinian Christians. Their real devotion to learning and the renunciation of the world by the Monastic Orders are contrasted with the hypocrisy and arrogance of the Pharisees and Scribes.
To admit us to the company
Of the righteous?"

85. And for this their prayer
Hath Allah rewarded them
With Gardens, with rivers
Flowing underneath,—their eternal
Home. Such is the recompense
Of those who do good.

86. But those who reject Faith
And belie Our Signs,—
They shall be Companions
Of Hell-fire.

SECTION 12.

87. O ye who believe!
Make not unlawful
The good things which Allah
Hath made lawful for you,
But commit no excess.⁷⁹¹
For Allah loveth not
Those given to excess.

88. Eat to the things which
Allah hath provided for you,
Lawful and good; but fear
Allah, in Whom ye believe.

89. Allah will not call you
To account for what is
Void in your oaths.⁷⁹²

⁷⁹¹ In pleasures that are good and lawful the crime is excess. There is no merit
merely in abstention or asceticism, though the humility or unselfishness that may go with
asceticism may have its value. In v. 82, Christian monks are praised for particular virtues,
though here and elsewhere monasticism is disapproved of. Use Allah's gifts of all kinds
with gratitude, but excess is not approved of by Allah.

⁷⁹² Vows of penance or abstention may sometimes be futile, or even stand in the
way of really good or virtuous act. See ii. 224-226, and notes. The general principles
established are: (1) take no futile oaths; (2) use not Allah's name, literally or in intention,
to fetter yourself against doing a lawful or good act: (3) keep to your solemn oaths to
the utmost of your ability; (4) where you are unable to do so, expiate your failure by
feeding or clothing the poor, or obtaining some one's freedom, or if you have not the
means, by fasting. This is from a spiritual aspect.
But He will call you
To account for your deliberate
Oaths: for expiation, feed
Ten indigent persons,
On a scale of the average
For the food of your families;
Or clothe them; or give
A slave his freedom.
If that is beyond your means,
Fast for three days.
That is the expiation
For the oaths ye have sworn.
But keep to your oaths.
Thus doth Allah make clear
To you His Signs, that ye
May be grateful.

90. O ye who believe!
Intoxicants and gambling,793
Sacrificing to stones,794
And (divination by) arrows,795
Are an abomination,—
Of Satan’s handiwork:
Eschew such (abomination),
That ye may prosper.

91. Satan’s plan is (but)
To excite enmity and hatred
Between you, with intoxicants
And gambling, and hinder you

793. Cf. ii. 219, and notes 240 and 241.

794. Cf. v. 3. The stones there referred to were stone altars or stone columns on
which oil was poured for consecration, or slabs on which meat was sacrificed to idols.
Any idolatrous or superstitious practices are here condemned. The ansāb were objects of
worship, and were common in Arabia before Islam. See Renan, “History of Israel”,
Chapter iv, and Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Part I. p. 154: Illustrations Nos. 123
and 123 bis are Phoenician columns of that kind, found in Malta.

795. Cf. v. 3. The arrows there referred to were used for the division of meat by
a sort of lottery or raffle. But arrows were also used for divination, i.e., for ascertaining
lucky or unlucky moments, or learning the wishes of the heathen gods, as to whether
men should undertake certain actions or not. All superstitions are condemned.
796. We are asked to obey the commands of Allah (which are always reasonable), instead of following superstitions (which are irrational), or seeking undue stimulation in intoxicants or undue advantage in gambling. To some there may be temporary excitement or pleasure in these, but that is not the way either of prosperity or piety.

797. Cf. v. 67. Both the worldly and the spiritual aspects of loss are pointed out. Can Allah's Message do more?

798. There is a subtle symphony in what appears at first sight to be a triple repetition. The relation of such simple regulations as those of food, or game, or the reverence due to a sacred place or sacred institution, has to be explained vis-à-vis man's higher duties. Baidhawi is right in classifying such duties under three heads; those due to Allah, those due from a man to himself (his self-respect), and those due to other creatures of Allah. Or perhaps all duties have this threefold aspect. The first may be called Believing or Faith; the second, Guarding ourselves from evil, or Conscience; and the third, doing good or Righteousness. But the simplest physical rules, e.g., those about eating, cleanliness, etc., if they are good, refer also to the higher aspects. If we eat bad food, we hurt ourselves, we cause offence to our neighbours, and we disobey Allah. If
SECTION 13.

94. O ye who believe!
Allah doth but make a trial of you
In a little matter
Of game well within reach
Of your hands and your lances,
That He may test-found. 979
Who feareth Him unseen:
Any who transgress
Thereafter, will have
A grievous chastisement.

95. O ye who believe!
Kill not game
While in the Sacred
Precincts or in the state of
pilgrimage. 881
If any of you doth so
Intentionally, the compensation
Is an offering, brought
To the Ka'ba, of a domestic animal
Equivalent to the one he killed. 881
As adjudged by two just men
Among you; or by way

94. Ye who believe! Allah doth but make a trial of you in a little matter of game well within reach of your hands and your lances, that He may test you unawares: who feareth Allah unseen.

95. Ye who believe! Kill not game while in the Sacred Precincts or in the state of pilgrimage. If any of you do so intentionally, the compensation is an offering, brought to the Ka'ba of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you; or by way

979. Literally, “know” Cf. iii. 166. and iii. 154. n. 467. Game is forbidden in the Sacred Precincts.

881. See v. 1, and n. 684. The pilgrim garb, Ihram, has been explained in n. 212, ii. 196.

881. Intentional breach will be prevented, if possible, by previous action. If in some case the preventive action is not effective, the penalty is prescribed. The penalty is in three alternatives: an equivalent animal should be brought to the Ka'ba for sacrifice; if so, the meat would be distributed to the poor; or the poor must be fed, with grain or money, according to the value of the animal if one had been sacrificed; or the offender must fast as many days as the number of the poor who would have been fed under the second alternative. Probably the last alternative would only be open if the offender is too poor to afford the first or second, but on this point Commentators are not agreed. The "equivalent animal" in the first alternative would be a domestic animal of similar value
Of atonement, the feeding
Of the indigent; or its
Equivalent in fasts: that he
May taste of the penalty
Of his deed. Allah
Forgives what is past:
For repetition Allah will
Punish him
For Allah is Exalted,
And Lord of Retribution.

96. Lawful to you is the pursuit\(^{802}\)
Of water-game and its use
For food,—for the benefit
Of yourselves and those who
Travel; but forbidden
Is the pursuit of land-game:—
As long as ye are
In the Sacred Precincts
Or in the state of pilgrimage
And fear Allah, to Whom
Ye shall be gathered back.

97. Allah made the Ka'ba,
The Sacred House, a means of
Support for men, as
Also the Sacred Months.\(^{803}\)
The animals for offerings,
And the garlands that mark them:\(^{804}\)
That ye may know

\[^{802}\text{or weight in meat or of similar shape (e.g., goat to antelope), as adjudged by two just men on the spot.}\]

\[^{803}\text{The Sacred or Prohibited Months are explained in n. 209. ii. 194. and n. 687. v. 2.}\]

\[^{804}\text{See v. 2 and n. 688.}\]
That Allah hath knowledge
Of what is in the heavens
And on earth and that Allah
Is well acquainted
With all things. 805

98. Know ye that Allah
Is strict in punishment
And that Allah is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

99. The Messenger’s duty is
But to proclaim (the Message).
But Allah knoweth all
That ye reveal and ye conceal.

100. Say: “Not equal are things
That are bad and things
That are good, even though
The abundance of the bad
May dazzle thee. 806
So fear Allah, O ye
That understand;
That (so) ye may prosper.”

SECTION 14.

101. O ye who believe!
Ask not questions
About things which,
If made plain to you,
May cause you trouble.

805. All sorts of people from all parts of the earth gather during the Pilgrimage. They must not think that they are strangers, that nobody knows them, and that they may behave as they like. It is the House of Allah, and He has supreme knowledge of all things, of all thoughts, and all motives. As the next verse says, while He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. He is also strict in enforcing respect for His ordinances.

806. Cf. ii. 204. People often judge by quantity rather than quality. They are dazzled by numbers: their hearts are captured by what they see everywhere around them. But the man of understanding and discrimination judges by a different standard. He knows that good and bad things are not to be lumped together, and carefully chooses the best, which may be the scarcest, and avoids the bad, though evil may meet him at every step.
But if ye ask about things
When the Qur-ān is being
Revealed, they will be
Made plain to you,807
Allah will forgive those:
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Forbearing.

102. Some people before you
Did ask such questions,808
And on that account
Lost their faith.

103. It was not Allah
Who instituted (superstitions809
Like those of) a slit-ear
She-camel, or a she-camel
Let loose for free pasture,
Or idol sacrifices for
Twin-births in animals,

807. Many secrets are wisely hidden from us. If the future were known to us, we need not necessarily be happy. In many cases we should be miserable. If the inner meaning of some of the things we see before our eyes were disclosed to us, it might cause a lot of mischief. Allah’s Message, in so far as it is necessary for shaping our conduct, is plain and open to us. But there are many things too deep for us to understand, either individually or collectively. It would be foolish to pry into them, as some people tried to do in the time of the Prophet. Where a matter is mentioned in the Qur-ān, we can reverently ask for its meaning. That is not forbidden. But we should never pass the bounds of (1) our own capacity to understand, (2) the time and occasion when we ask questions, and (3) the part of the Universal Plan which it is Allah’s purpose to reveal to us.

808. For example, the merely fractious questions asked of Moses by the Jews: ii. 68-71. They showed that they had no faith. When foolish questions are asked, and there is no answer, it also shakes the faith of the foolish ones.

809. A number of Arab Pagan superstitions are referred to. The Pagan mind, not understanding the hidden secrets of nature, attributed certain phenomena to divine anger and were assailed by superstitious fears which haunted their lives. If a she-camel or other female domestic animal had a large number of young, she (or one of her offspring) had her ear slit and she was dedicated to a god: such an animal was a ḏahlīra. On return in safety from a journey, or on recovery from an illness a she-camel was similarly dedicated and let loose for free pasture: she was called a ʿālība. Where an animal bore twins, certain sacrifices or dedications were made to idols: an animal so dedicated was a ḫām. The particular examples lead to the general truth: that superstition is due to ignorance, and is degrading to men and dishonouring to Allah.
Or stallion-camels
Freed from work:
It is the disbelievers
Who invent a lie
Against Allah; but most
Of them lack wisdom.

104. When it is said to them:
“Come to what Allah
Hath revealed; come
To the Messenger”:
They say: “Enough for us.810
Are the ways we found
Our fathers following.”
What! even though their fathers
Were void of knowledge
And guidance?

105. O ye who believe!
Guard your own souls:
If ye follow (right) guidance.
No hurt can come to you
From those who stray.
The return of you all
Is to Allah: it is He
That will inform you
Of all that ye do.811

106. O ye who believe!
When death approaches
Any of you, (take) witnesses
Among yourselves when making
Bequest,—two just men
Of your own (brotherhood)
Or others from outside
If ye are journeying
Through the earth,

810. Cf. ii. 170. Where a Messenger of Truth comes to teach us the better way, it is foolish to say: “What our ancestors did is good enough for us.”

811. The unity of the one Judge will do perfect justice to each one’s conduct, however different in form it may have appeared in this world.
And the chance of death
Befalls you (thus).
If ye doubt (their truth),
 Detain them both
After prayer, and let them both
Swear by Allah:
“We will not take
For it a price
Even though the (beneficiary)
Be our near relation:
We shall hide not
The evidence we owe to Allah
If we do, then behold!
We shall be sinners.\(^{812}\)

107. But if it gets known
That these two were guilty
Of the sin (of perjury),
Let two others stand forth
In their places,— nearest
In kin from among those
Who claim a lawful right:\(^{813}\)
Let them swear by Allah:
“We affirm that our witness
Is truer than that
Of those two, and that we
Have not trespassed (beyond
The truth): if we did,
Behold! we will be
Wrong-doers.”

\(^{812}\) Ordinarily this oath should be decisive, and the matter must rest here. But if it gets known that the oath was false, other evidence may be taken as in the next verse.

\(^{813}\) \(\text{Istahaqq} = \) Desired having something (good or evil) attributed to one; hence the alternative meanings: (1) committed or was guilty (of a sin): (2) had or claimed a lawful right (to property). The procedure was followed in an actual case in the Prophet’s life-time. A man from Madinah died abroad, having made over his goods, to two friends, to be delivered to his designated heirs in Madinah. They, however, kept back a valuable silver cup. When this was found out, oaths were taken from those who knew, and justice was done.
108. That is most suitable:
That they may give the evidence
In its true nature and shape.
Or else they would fear
That other oaths would be
Taken after their oaths.
But fear Allah, and listen
(To His counsel): for Allah
Guideth not a rebellious people.

SECTION 15.

109. On the day when Allah will
Gather the Messengers together,
And ask: “What was
The response ye received
(From men to your teaching)?”
They will say: “We
Have no knowledge: it is Thou
Who knowest in full
All that is hidden.”814

110. Then will Allah say:
“O Jesus the son of Mary!
Recount My favour
To thee and to thy mother.
Behold! I strengthened thee
With the Holy Spirit.
So that thou didst speak
To the people in childhood

814. A scene of the Day of Reckoning is put before us in graphic words, showing the responsibility and the limitations of the Prophets of Allah, sent to preach His Message to men, with special reference to the Message of Jesus. The Messengers are sent to preach the Truth. What fantastic forms the Message takes in men’s reactions to it was beyond their knowledge, at the time, and beyond their responsibility.

815. In a solemn scene before the Court of Judgment, Jesus is asked to recount all the mercies and favours shown to him, so that his followers should become ashamed of their ingratitude in corrupting that Message, when they could have done so much in profiting by its purity and spiritual truth. This argument continues to the end of the Sūra.

816. Cf. ii. 87, and iii. 62, n. 401.
And in old age
Behold! I taught thee
The Book and Wisdom,
The Torah and the Gospel.
And behold! thou makest
Out of clay, as it were,
The figure of a bird,
By My leave.
And thou breathest into it,
And it becometh a bird
By My leave.
And thou healest those
Born blind, and the lepers,
By My leave.
And behold! thou
Bringest forth the dead
By My leave.
And behold! I did
Restrain the Children of Israel
From (violence to) thee
When thou didst show them
The Clear Signs.
And the unbelievers among them
Said: ‘This is nothing
But evident magic.’

817. Cf. iii. 46, and n. 388.
818. Cf. iii. 48.
819. Cf. iii. 49, and n. 390.
820. Note how the words “by My leave” are repeated with each miracle to emphasize the fact that they arose, not out of the power or will of Jesus, but by the leave and will and power of Allah, who is supreme over Jesus as He is over all other mortals.
821. The Jews were seeking to take the life of Jesus long before their final attempt to crucify him: see Luke iv. 28-29. Their attempt to crucify him was also foiled, according to the teaching we have received: Q. iv. 157.
822. According to Luke (xi. 15), when Christ performed the miracle of casting out devils, the Jews said he did it through the chief of the devils, i.e., they accused him of black magic. No such miracle of casting out devils is mentioned in the Qur-an. But Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were all accused of magic and sorcery, by those who could find no other explanation of Allah’s power.
111. "And behold! I inspired The Disciples to have faith In Me and Mine Messenger: They said, 'We have faith, And do thou bear witness That we bow to Allah As Muslims'.

112. Behold! the Disciples said: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Can thy Lord send down to us A Table set (with viands) From heaven?" Said Jesus: "Fear Allah, if ye have faith".

113. They said: "We only wish To eat thereof and satisfy Our hearts, and to know That thou has indeed Told us the truth; and That we ourselves may be Witnesses to the miracle."

114. Said Jesus the son of Mary: "O Allah our Lord! Send us from heaven

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823. "Thou" refers to Jesus, who is being addressed by his Disciples. Cf. iii. 52.

824. Before or after Muḥammad's life on this earth, all who bowed to Allah's Will were Muslims, and their religion is Islam. Cf. iii. 52, and n. 392.

825. The request of the Disciples savours a little of (1) want of faith, (2) too much attention to physical food, and (3) a childish desire for miracles or Signs. All these three can be proved from the Canonical Gospels. (1) Simon Peter, quite early in the story, asked Jesus to depart from him, as he (Simon) was a sinful man (Luke v. 8). The same Peter afterwards denied his Master three times shamelessly when the Master was in the power of his enemies. And one of the Disciples (Judas) actually betrayed Jesus. (2) Even in the Canonical Gospels, so many of the miracles are concerned with food and drink, e.g., the turning of the water into wine (John, ii. 1-11); the conversion of five loaves and two small fishes into food for 5,000 men (John vi. 5-13), this being the only miracle recorded in all the four Gospels; the miraculous number of fishes caught for food (Luke v. 4-11); the cursing of the fig tree because it had no fruit (Matt. xxi. 18-19); the allegory of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood (John vi. 53-57). (3) Because the Samaritans would not receive Jesus into their village, the Disciples James and John wanted a fire to come down from heaven and consume them (Luke ix. 54).
A Table set (with viands),
That there may be for us—
For the first and the last of us—
A solemn festival
And a Sign from Thee;
And provide for our sustenance,
For Thou art the best
Sustainer (of our needs)."

Allah said: “I will
Send it down unto you:
But if any of you
After that resisteth faith,
I will punish him
With a chastisement such
As I have not inflicted
On any one among
All the peoples.”

SECTION 16.

115. And behold! Allah will say:
“O Jesus the son of Mary!
Didst thou say unto men,
‘Take me and my mother
For two gods beside Allah’?”
He will say: “Glory to Thee!
Never could I say
What I had no right
(To say). Had I said

826. The words of the Prayer seem to suggest the Last Supper. Cf. also the vision of Peter in “The Acts of the Apostles,” x. 9-16.

827. As in Islam, so in Christ’s Prayer, sustenance should be taken for both physical and spiritual strength, especially the latter. “Give us this day our daily bread” seems the rendering of a literalist whose attention was fixed too much on bread.

828. It is a wicked generation that asks for Signs and Miracles. Usually they are not vouchsafed. But where they are, the responsibility of those who ask for them is increased. If, after that, they reject faith, invent lies, and go after false gods or false ideals, their penalty will be worse than that of other people. How this works out practically among those who call themselves Christians is exemplified in such books as the late Mr. W.T. Stead’s “If Christ Came to Chicago?”
Such a thing. Thou wouldst
Indeed have known it.
Thou knowest what is
In my heart, though I
Know not what is
In Thine. For Thou
Knowest in full
All that is hidden. 829

117. "Never said I to them
Aught except what Thou
Didst command me
To say, to wit, 'Worship
Allah, my Lord and your Lord'. 830
And I was a witness
Over them whilst I dwelt
Amongst them; when thou
Didst take me up
Thou wast the Watcher
Over them, and Thou
Art a witness to all things. 831

118. "If Thou dost punish them,
They are Thy servants:
If Thou dost forgive them,
Thou art the Exalted in power.
The Wise." 832

829. Jesus disclaims here any knowledge of the sort of things that are attributed to him by those who take his name. The worship of Mary, though repudiated by the Protestants, was widely spread in the earlier churches, both in the East and the West.

830. Cf. v. 72, and n. 782.

831. Jesus here acknowledges that he was mortal, and that his knowledge was limited like that of a mortal.

832. A Master can justly punish His servants for disobedience: no one can say Him nay, for He is high above all. But if He chooses to forgive, He in His wisdom sees things that we mortals cannot see. This is the limit of intercession that men of God can make on behalf of sinners.
119. Allah will say; “This is A day on which The truthful will profit From their truth: theirs Are Gardens, with rivers Flowing beneath,—their eternal Home: Allah well-pleased With them, and they with Allah: That is the mighty Triumph833 (The fulfilment of all desires).

120. To Allah doth belong the dominion Of the heavens and the earth, And all that is therein, And it is He who hath power Over all things.

833. Fauz = Felicity, happiness, achievement, salvation, the attainment or fulfilment of desires. What a beautiful definition of salvation or the end of life!—that we should win Allah’s good pleasure and that we should reach the stage at which His good pleasure is all-in-all to us.
APPENDIX No. 2.

On the Taurát (see v. 44, n. 753)

The Taurát is frequently referred to in the Qur-án. It is well to have clear ideas as to what it exactly means. Vaguely we may say that it was the Jewish Scripture. It is mentioned with honour as having been, in its purity, a true revelation from Allah.

To translate it by the words “The Old Testament” is obviously wrong. The “Old Testament” is a Christian term, applied to a body of old Jewish records. The Protestants and the Roman Catholics are not agreed precisely as to the number of records to be included in the canon of the “Old Testament.” They use the term in contradistinction to the “New Testament,” whose composition we shall discuss in Appendix III.

Nor is it correct to translate Taurát as the “Pentateuch,” a Greek term meaning the “Five Books.” These are the first five books of the Old Testament, known as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They contain a semi-historical and legendary narrative of the history of the world from the Creation to the time of the arrival of the Jews in the Promised Land. There are in them some beautiful idylls but there are also stories of incest, fraud, cruelty, and treachery, not always disapproved. A great part of the Mosaic Law is embodied in this narrative. The books are traditionally ascribed to Moses, but it is certain that they were not written by Moses or in an age either contemporary with Moses or within an appreciable distance of time from Moses. They were in their present form probably compiled some time after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity. The decree of Cyrus permitting such return was in 536 B.C. Some books now included in the Old Testament, such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were admittedly written after the return from the captivity, Malachi being as late as 420-397 B.C. The compilers of the Pentateuch of course used some ancient material: some of that material is actually named. Egyptian and Chaldaean terms are relics of local colour and contemporary documents.

But there are some ludicrous slips, which show that the compilers did not always understand their material. Modern criticism distinguishes two distinct sources among the documents of different dates used by the editors. For the sake of brevity and convenience they may be called (a) Jehovistic, and (b) Elohistic. Then there are later miscellaneous interpolations. They sometimes overlap and sometimes contradict each other.
Logically speaking, the Book of Joshua, which describes the entry into the Promised Land, should be bracketed with the Pentateuch, and many writers speak of the six books together as the Hexateuch (Greek term for Six Books).

The Apocrypha contain certain Books which are not admitted as Canonical in the English Bible. But the early Christians received them as part of the Jewish Scriptures, and the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545-1563) seems to have recognised the greater part of them as Canonical. The statement in 2 Esdras (about the first century A.D.) that the law was burnt and Ezra (say, about 458-457 B.C.) was inspired to rewrite it, is probably true as to the historical fact that the law was lost, and that what we have now is no earlier than the time of Ezra, and some of it a good deal later.

So far we have spoken of the Christian view of the Old Testament. What is the Jewish view? The Jews divide their Scripture into three parts: (1) the Law (Torah), (2) the Prophets (Nebiim), and (3) the Writings (Kethubim). The corresponding Arabic words would be: (1) Taurät, (2) Nabiyyin, and (3) Kutub. This division was probably current in the time of Jesus. In Luke xxiv, 44 Jesus refers to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. In other places (e.g., Matt. vii. 12) Jesus refers to the Law and the Prophets as summing up the whole Scripture. In the Old Testament Book, II. Chronicles xxxiv. 30, the reference to the Book of the Covenant must be to the Torah or the original Law. This is interesting, as the Qur-ān frequently refers to the Covenant with reference to the Jews. The modern Christian terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" are substitutes for the older terms "Old Covenant" and "New Covenant." The Samaritans, who claim to be the real Children of Israel and disavow the Jews as schismatics from their Law of Moses, only recognise the Pentateuch, of which they have their own version slightly different from that in the Old Testament.

The view of the school of Higher Criticism is radically destructive. According to Renan it is doubtful whether Moses was not a myth. Two versions of Sacred History existed, different in language, style, and spirit, and they were combined together into a narrative in the reign of Hezekiah (B.C. 727-697). This forms the greater part of the Pentateuch as it exists to-day, excluding the greater part of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. In the reign of Josiah about 622 B.C., certain priests and scribes (with Jeremiah the prophet) promulgated a new code, pretending that they had found it in the Temple (II. Kings. xxii. 8). This Law (Torah = Taurät) was the basis of Judaism, the new religion then founded in Palestine. This was further completed by the sacerdotal and Levitical Torah, compiled under the inspiration of Ezekiel, say, about 575 B.C., and contained mainly in the Book of Leviticus, with scattered fragments in Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua. We are entitled to accept the general results of a scientific
examination of documents, probabilities, and dates: even though we reject the premise which we believe to be false, viz., that Allah does not send inspired Books through inspired Prophets. We believe that Moses existed; that he was an inspired man of God; that he gave a message which was afterwards distorted or lost; that attempts were made by Israel at various times to reconstruct that message; and that the Taurât as we have it is (in view of the statement in 2 Esdras) no earlier than the middle of the fifth century B.C.

The primitive Torah must have been in old Hebrew, but there is no Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament which can be dated with certainty earlier than 916 A.D. Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language with the Jews during or after the Captivity, and by the time we come to the period of Jesus, most cultivated Hebrews used the Greek language, and others used Aramaic (including Syriac and Chaldee), Latin, or local dialects. There were also Arabic versions. For historical purposes the most important versions were the Greek version, known as the Septuagint, and the Latin version, known as the Vulgate. The Septuagint was supposed to have been prepared by 70 or 72 Jews (Latin, septime = seventy) working independently and at different times, the earliest portion dating from about 284 B.C. This version was used by the Jews of Alexandria and the Hellenized Jews who were spread over all parts of the Roman Empire. The Vulgate was a Latin translation made by the celebrated Father of the Christian Church, St. Jerome, from Hebrew, early in the fifth century A.D., superseding the older Latin versions. Neither the Septuagint nor the Vulgate have an absolutely fixed or certain text. The present standard text of the Vulgate as accepted by the Roman Catholic Church was issued by Pope Clement VIII (A.D. 1592-1605).

It will be seen therefore that there is no standard text of the Old Testament in its Hebrew form. The versions differ from each other frequently in minor particulars and sometimes in important particulars. The Pentateuch itself is only a small portion of the Old Testament. It is in narrative form, and includes the laws and regulations associated with the name of Moses, but probably compiled and edited from older sources by Ezra (or Esdras Arabic, 'Uzair) in the 5th century B.C. As Renan remarks in the preface to his History of the People of Israel, the "definite constitution of Judaism" may be dated only from the time of Ezra. The very early Christians were divided into two parties. One was a Judaizing party, which wished to remain in adherence to the Jewish laws and customs while recognising the mission of Jesus. The other, led by Paul, broke away from Jewish customs and traditions. Ultimately Pauline Christianity won. But both parties recognised the Old Testament in its present form (in one or another of its varying versions) as Scripture. It was the merit of Islam that it pointed out that as scripture it was of no value, although it recognised Moses as an inspired messenger and his original Law as having validity in his period.
Appendix 2.

until it was superseded. In its criticism of the Jewish position it said in effect: “You have lost your original Law; even what you have now as its substitute, you do not honestly follow; is it not better, now that an inspired Teacher is living among you, that you should follow him rather than quibble over uncertain texts?”

But the Jews in the Prophet’s time (and since) went a great deal by the Talmud, or a body of oral exposition, reduced to writing in different Schools of doctors and learned men. “Talmud” in Hebrew is connected with the Arabic root in Tilmiz, “disciple” or “student.” The Talmudists took the divergent texts of the Old Testament and in interpreting them by a mass of traditional commentary and legendary lore, evolved a standard body of teaching. The Talmudists are of special interest to us, as, in the sixth century A.D., just before the preaching of Islam, they evolved the Massorah, which may be regarded as the body of authoritative Jewish Traditions, to which references are to be found in passages addressed to the Jews in the Qur-ān.

The first part of the Talmud is called the Mishna,—a collection of traditions and decisions prepared by the Rabbi Judah about 150 A.D. He summed up the results of a great mass of previous rabbinical writings. The Mishna is the “Second Law”: Cf. the Arabic Thān-in = second. “It bound heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and laid them on men’s shoulders”: Matt. xxiii. 4.

There were also many Targums or paraphrases of the Law among the Jews. “Targum” is connected in root with the Arabic Tarjama, “he translated.” There were many Targums, mostly in Aramaic, and they constituted the teaching of the Law to the masses of the Jewish people.

The correct translation of the Taurāt is therefore “The Law.” In its original form it was promulgated by Moses, and is recognised in Islam as having been an inspired Book. But it was lost before Islam was preached. What passed as “The Law” with the Jews in the Prophet’s time was the mass of traditional writing which I have tried to review in this Appendix.

APPENDIX No. 3.

On the Injil (see v. 46, n. 757)

Just as the Taurât is not the Old Testament, or the Pentateuch, as now received by the Jews and Christians, so the Injil mentioned in the Qur-ân is certainly not the New Testament, and it is not the four Gospels, as now received by the Christian Church, but an original Gospel which was promulgated by Jesus as the Taurât was promulgated by Moses and the Qur-ân by Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafâ.

The New Testament as now received consists of (a) four Gospels with varying contents (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John); and other miscellaneous matter; viz., (b) the Acts of the Apostles (probably written by Luke and purporting to describe the progress of the Christian Church under St. Peter and St. Paul from the supposed Crucifixion of Jesus to about 61 A.D.): (c) twenty-one Letters or Epistles (the majority written by St. Paul to various churches or individuals, but a few written by other Disciples, and of a general nature); and (d) the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse (ascribed to St. John, and containing mystic visions and prophecies, of which it is difficult to understand the meaning).

As Prof. F.C. Burkitt remarks (Canon of the New Testament), it is an odd miscellany. “The four biographies of Jesus Christ... are not all independent to each other, and neither of them was intended by its writer to form one of a quartette. But they are all put side by side, unharmonised, one of them being actually imperfect at the end, and one being only the first volume of a larger work.” All this body of unmethodical literature was casual in its nature. No wonder, because the early Christians expected the end of the world very soon. The four canonical Gospels were only four out of many, and some others besides the four have survived. Each writer just wrote down some odd sayings of the Master that he recollected. Among the miracles described there is only one which is described in all the four Gospels, and others were described and believed in other Gospels, which are not mentioned in any of the four canonical Gospels. Some of the Epistles contain expositions of doctrine, but this has been interpreted differently by different Churches. There must have been hundreds of such Epistles, and not all the Epistles now received as canonical were always so received or intended to be so received. The Apocalypse also was not the only one in the field. There were others. They were prophecies of “things which must shortly come to pass”: they could not have been meant for long preservation, “for the time is at hand.”
Appendix 3.

When were these four Gospels written? By the end of the second century A.D. they were in existence, but it does not follow that they had been selected by that date to form a canon. They were merely pious productions comparable to Dean Farrar's *Life of Christ*. There were other Gospels besides. And further, the writers of two of them, Mark and Luke, were not among the Twelve Disciples "called" by Jesus. About the Gospel of St. John there is much controversy as to authorship, date, and even as to whether it was all written by one person. Clement of Rome (about 97 A.D.) and Polycarp (about 112 A.D.) quote sayings of Jesus in a form different from those found in the present canonical Gospels. Polycarp (Epistle. vii) inveighs much against men "who pervert the sayings of the Lord to their own lusts." and he wants to turn "to the Word handed down to us from the beginning," thus referring to a Book (or a Tradition) much earlier than the four orthodox Gospels. An Epistle of St. Barnabas and an Apocalypse of St. Peter were recognised by Presbyter Clement of Alexandria (flourished about 180 A.D.). The Apocalypse of St. John, which is a part of the present Canon in the West, forms no part of the Peshitta (Syriac) version of the Eastern Christian, which was produced about 411-433 A.D., and which was used by the Nestorian Christians. It is probable that the Peshitta was the version (or an Arabic form of it) used by the Christians in Arabia in the time of the Prophet. The final form of the New Testament canon for the West was fixed in the fourth century A.D. (say, about 367 A.D.) by Athanasius and the Nicene creed. The beautiful Codex Sinaiticus which was acquired for the British Museum in 1934, and is one of the earliest complete manuscripts of the Bible, may be dated about the fourth century. It is written in the Greek language. Fragments of unknown Gospels have also been discovered, which do not agree with the received canonical Gospels.

The *Injil* (Greek. *Evangel* = Gospel) spoken of by the Qur-ān is not the New Testament. It is not the four Gospels now received as canonical. It is the single Gospel which, Islam teaches, was revealed to Jesus, and which he taught. Fragments of it survive in the received canonical Gospels and in some others, of which traces survive (e.g., the Gospel of Childhood or the Nativity, the Gospel of St. Barnabas, etc.). Muslims are therefore right in respecting the present Bible (New Testament and Old Testament), though they reject the peculiar doctrines taught by orthodox Christianity or Judaism. They claim to be in the true tradition of Abraham, and therefore all that is of value in the older revelations, it is claimed, is incorporated in the teaching of the Last of the Prophets.

Appendix 3.

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-An‘ām, 6

This is a Sūra of the late Makkan period. The greater part of it was revealed entire. Its place in the traditional order of arrangement is justified by logical considerations. We have already had the religious history of mankind, a discussion of the earlier revelations and how they were lost or corrupted, the regulations for the outer life of the new Community, and the points in which the Jews and Christians failed to maintain the central doctrine of Islam—the unity of Allah. The next step now taken is to expound this doctrine in relation to Pagan Arabia.

Summary.— The nature of Allah and the method by which He reveals Himself are first expounded, and the weakness of Paganism is exposed (vi. 1-30).

The emptiness of this world’s life is contrasted with the evidence of Allah’s wonderful handiwork in all Creation. It is He who holds the keys of the Unseen and the secrets of all that we see (vi. 31-60).

Allah’s working in His world and His constant care and guidance should give a clue to His unity as it did to Abraham when he argued with those who worshipped false gods (vi. 61-82).

The succession of prophets after Abraham kept Allah’s truth alive, and led up to the Qur-ān. How can man fail to understand the majesty and goodness of Allah, when he contemplates Allah’s creation and His Messages to mankind? (vi. 83-110).

The obstinate and the rebellious are deceived: they should be avoided. Though they turn for assistance to each other, they will receive due punishment (vi. 111-129).

Allah’s decrees will come to pass, in spite of all the crimes and superstitions of the ungodly (vi. 130-150).

The better course is to follow the straight Way, the Way of Allah, as directed in the Qur-ān, with unity and the full dedication of our lives (vi. 151-165).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Praise be to Allah, Who created the heavens And the earth, And made the Darkness And the Light. Yet those who reject Faith Hold (others) as equal as their Guardian Lord.

2. He it is Who created You from clay, and then Decreed a stated term (For you). And there is With Him another Determined term; yet Ye doubt within yourselves!

3. And He is Allah In the heavens

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834. 'Adala has various meaning: (1) to hold something as equal to something else, as here: to balance nicely; (2) to deal justly, as between one party and another, xlii. 15: (3) to give compensation or reparation, or something as equivalent to something else, vi. 70: (4) to turn the balance the right way, to give a right disposition, to give a just bias or proportion. lxxxii. 7: (5) to turn the balance the wrong way, to swerve, to show bias, iv. 135.

835. The argument is threefold: (1) Allah created everything you see and know: how can you then set up any of His own creatures as equal to Him? (2) He is your own Guardian-Lord; He cherishes and loves you; how can you be so ungrateful as to run after something else? (3) Darkness and Light are to help you to distinguish between the true from the false: how then can you confound the true God with your false ideas and superstitions? There may also be a repudiation of the Duality of old Persian theology; Light and Darkness are not conflicting Powers; they are both creatures of Allah.

836. After the general argument, the argument comes to man personally. Can such a miserable creature, created from clay, put himself in opposition to his Creator? And can man forget or doubt that he is here only for a short term of probation? And then, after a period, comes the Day of Account before Allah.

837. This life is a period of probation. The other term leads up to Judgement.
And in earth.
He knoweth what ye
Hide, and what ye reveal,
And He knoweth
The (recompense) which
Ye earn (by your deeds).\(^{838}\)

4. But never did a single
One of the Signs
Of their Lord reach them,
But they turned
Away therefrom.

5. And now they reject
The truth when it reaches
Them: but soon shall come to them
The news of what
They used to mock at.

6. See they not how many
Of those before them
We did destroy?\(^{839}\)
Generations We had established
On the earth, in strength
Such as We have not given
To you—for whom
We poured out rain
From the skies in abundance,
And gave streams
Flowing beneath their (feet):
Yet for their sins
We destroyed them,
And raised in their wake

838. It is folly to suppose that Allah only reigns in the heavens. He also reigns on earth. He knows all our secret thoughts and motives, and the real worth of all that is behind what we care to show. It is by our deeds that He judges us; for our deeds, whether good or evil, we shall get due recompense in due time.

839. Now comes the argument from history, looking backwards, and forwards. If we are so short-sighted or arrogant as to suppose that we are firmly established on this earth, secure in our privileges, we are reminded of much greater nations in the past, who failed in their duty and were wiped out. In their fate we must read our own fate, if we fail likewise! But those without faith, instead of facing facts squarely “turn away therefrom”.
Fresh generations
(To succeed them).

7. If We had sent
Unto thee a written
(Message) on parchment,
So that they could
Touch it with their hands,
The Unbelievers would
Have been sure to say:
“This is nothing but
Obvious magic!”

8. They say: “Why is not
An angel sent down to him?”
If We did send down
An angel, the matter
Would be settled at once,
And no respite
Would be granted them.

9. If We had made it
An angel, We should
Have sent him as a man.
And We should certainly
Have caused them confusion

839-A. Qirṭās, in the Prophet’s life, could only mean “parchment,” which was
commonly used as writing material in Western Asia from the 2nd century B.C. The word
was derived from the Greek, Charles (Cf. Latin. “Charta”). Paper, as we know it, made
from rags, was first used by the Arabs after the conquest of Smāraqand in 751 A.D. The
Chinese had used it by the 2nd century B.C. The Arabs introduced it into Europe; it
was used in Greece in the 11th or 12th century, and in Spain through Sicily in the 12th
century. The Papyrus, made from an Egyptian reed, was used in Egypt as early as 2500
B.C. It gave place to paper in Egypt in the 10th century.

840. The materialists want to see actual physical material things before them, but if
such a thing came from an unusual source or expressed things they cannot understand,
they give it some name like magic, or superstition, or whatever name is in fashion, and
they are not helped at all in attaining faith, because their “hearts are diseased” (ii. 10).

841. Cf. ii. 210. An angel is a heavenly being, a manifestation of Allah’s glory,
invisible to men who live gross material lives. Such men are given plenty of respite in
which to turn in repentance to Allah and make themselves worthy of His light. But if
their prayer to see an angel were granted, it would do them no good, for they would
be destroyed as darkness is destroyed by light.
In a matter which they have
Already covered with confusion.

10. Mocked were (many)
Messengers before thee;
But their scoffers
Were hemmed in
By the thing that they mocked.

SECTION 2.

11. Say: "Travel through the earth
And see what was the end
Of those who rejected Truth."

12. Say: "To whom belongeth
All that is in the heavens
And on earth?" Say:
"To Allah. He hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule of) Mercy.
That He will gather you
Together for the Day of Judgment.
There is no doubt whatever.
It is they who have lost
Their own souls, that will
Not believe.

842. Supposing an angel should appear to their grosser senses, he could only do it in human form. In that case their present confused notions about spiritual life would be still more confounded. They would say: "We wanted to see an angel, and we have only seen a man!"

843. "The scoffers were mocked by the thing that they mocked" would express epigrammatically part of the sense, but not the whole. "Hemmed in" implies that the logic of events turned the tables, and as a man might be besieged and surrounded by an enemy in war, and would be forced to surrender, so these mockers will find that events would justify Truth, not them. The mockers of Jesus—where were they when Titus destroyed Jerusalem? The mockers who drove out Muhammad from Makkah—what was their plight when Muhammad came back in triumph and they sued for mercy—and he gave it to them! According to the Latin proverb, Great is Truth, and must prevail.

844. History, travel, human experience, all prove the Mercy of Allah and the law that without it those who reject Truth tend to lose their own souls and destroy themselves.
13. To him belongeth all
That dwelleth (or lurketh)\textsuperscript{845}
In the Night and the Day,
For He is the One
Who heareth and knoweth
All things.\textsuperscript{846}

14. Say: “Shall I take
For my protector
Any other than Allah,
The Maker of the heavens
And the earth?
And He it is that
Feedeth but is not fed.”\textsuperscript{847}
Say: “Nay! but I am
Commanded to be the first
Of those who bow
To Allah (in Islam),
And be not thou
Of the company of those
Who join gods with Allah.”

15. Say: “I would, if I
Disobeyed my Lord.
Indeed have fear
Of the Chastisement

\textsuperscript{845} Sakan = (1) to dwell: (2) to rest, to be still, to stop (moving), to lurk; (3) to be quiescent, as a letter which is not moved with a vowel.

If we imagine Night and Day to be places, and each to have (dwelling in them) things that are open and things that are concealed, things that move and things that are still, things that are sounded and things that are quiescent, we get some idea of the imagery implied. The mystery of Time (which seems more abstract than Space) is thus explained and illustrated by the idea of Place or Space, which also is a notion and not a concrete thing. But He Who has control of all these things is the one true God.

\textsuperscript{846} Throughout this section we have a sort of implied dialogue, of which one part is understood from the other part, which is expressed. In verse 11, we might have an imaginary objector saying: “Why go back to the past?” The answer is: “Well travel through the world, and see whether it is not true that virtue and godliness exalt a nation, and the opposite are causes of ruin. Both the past and the present prove this.” In verse 12 the objector may say: “But you speak of Allah’s power?” The man of God replies: “Yes, but Mercy is Allah’s own attribute, and knowledge and wisdom beyond what man can conceive.”

\textsuperscript{847} Feedeth but is not fed: true both literally and figuratively. To Allah we owe the satisfaction of all needs, but He is independent of all needs.
Of a Mighty Day.
16. "On that day, if the Penalty
Is averted from any,
It is due to Allah’s Mercy;
And that would be
A Mighty Triumph."

17. "If Allah touch thee
With affliction, none
Can remove it but He;
If He touch thee with happiness,
He hath power over all things."

18. "He is Irresistibly Supreme
Over His servants.
And He is the Wise,
Acquainted with all things."

19. Say: "What thing is most
Weighty in evidence?"
Say: "Allah is witness
Between me and you;
This Qur'an hath been
Revealed to me by inspiration.
That I may warn you
And all whom it reaches.
Can ye possibly bear witness
That besides Allah there
Are other gods?" Say:
"Nay! I cannot bear witness!"

848. We continue the implied dialogue suggested in n. 846. In verse 14, the objector might say: “But we have other interests in life than religion and Allah.” “No,” says the man of God, “My Creator is the one and only Power whose protection I seek; and I strive to be first in the race.” In verse 15, the objector suggests: “Enjoy the good things of this life; it is short.” The answer is: “The Hereafter is more real to me, and promises the true, fulfilment of all desire; happiness or affliction comes not from the fleeting pettinesses or illusions of this life, but from the power and wisdom of Allah.” In verse 19, the objector makes his final splash: “What evidence is there for all this?” The reply is: “I know it is true for Allah’s voice is within me, and my living Teacher awakens that voice; and there is the Book of Inspiration. Allah is one, and there is none other besides.”

849. The vulgar worship false gods out of fear that they would harm them or hope that they would confer some benefit on them. These false gods can do neither. All power, all goodness is in the hands of Allah. All else is pretence or illusion.
Say: “But in truth He is the One God. And I truly am innocent Of (your blasphemy of) joining Others with Him.”

20. Those to whom We have given the Book Know this as they know850 Their own sons. Those who have lost Their own souls Refuse therefore to believe.

SECTION 3.

21. Who doth more wrong Than he who inventeth A lie against Allah Or rejecteth His Signs? But verily the wrong-doers Never shall prosper.

22. On the day shall We gather Them all together: We Shall say to those Who ascribed partners (to Us): “Where are the partners Whom ye (invented And) talked about!

23. There will then be (left) No excuse for them851 But to say: “By Allah

850. Cf. ii. 146 and n. 151. In both passages the pronoun translated “this” may mean “him” and refer to Muhammmad the Messenger of Allah, as some Commentators think.

851. Fitnat has various meanings, from the root idea of “to try, to test, to tempt:” e.g., (1) a trial or temptation, as in ii. 102; (2) trouble, tumult, oppression, persecution, as in ii. 191, 193, 217; (3) discord as in iii. 7, (4) subterfuge, an answer that amounts to a sedition, and excuse founded on a falsehood, as here. Other shades of meaning will be noticed as they occur.

Those who blasphemed Allah in imagining false gods will now see the vanity of their imaginations for themselves. What answer can they give now? In their perversity they will deny that they ever entertained the notion of false gods.
Our Lord we were not
Those who joined gods
With Allah."

24. Behold! how they lie
Against themselves
But the (lie) which they
Invented will leave them\textsuperscript{852}\textsuperscript{A}
In the lurch.

25. Of them there are some
Who (pretend to) listen to thee;
But We have thrown
Veils on their hearts,
So they understand it not,\textsuperscript{852-A}
And deafness in their ears;
If they saw every one
Of the Signs, they will
Not believe in them;
In so much that
When they come to thee,
They (but) dispute with thee;
The Unbelievers say:
"These are nothing
But tales of the ancients."

26. Others they forbid it
And themselves they keep away;
But they only destroy
Themselves
And they perceive it not.

27. If thou couldst but see
When they shall be made
To stand by the Fire
They will say:

\textsuperscript{852}. The lies which they used to tell have now "wandered" from the channels which they use to occupy, and left the liars in the lurch. In denying the indubitable fact that they took false gods, they admit the falsity of their notions and thus are practically convicted out of their own mouths.

\textsuperscript{852-A}. \textit{It} = The Qur\-\textacuten.
SECTION 4.

31. Lost indeed are they
Who treat it as a falsehood
That they must meet Allah,—

"Would that we were
But sent back!
Then would we not reject
The Signs of our Lord,
But would be amongst those
Who believe!"

28. Yea, in their own (eyes)
Will become manifest
What before they concealed.
But if they were returned,
They would certainly relapse
To the things they were forbidden,
For they are indeed liars.⁸⁵³

29. And they (sometimes) say:
"There is nothing except
Our life on this earth,
And never shall we be
Raised up again."

30. If thou couldst but see
When they shall be made to stand
Before their Lord
He will say:
"Is not this the truth?"
They will say:
"Yea, by our Lord"
He will say:
"Taste ye then the Chastisement
Because ye rejected Faith."

SECTION 4.

31. Lost indeed are they
Who treat it as a falsehood
That they must meet Allah,—

⁸⁵³. Their falsity was not due to want of knowledge, but to perversity and selfishness. In their heart was a disease (ii. 10): therefore neither their understanding, nor their ears, nor their eyes do their proper work. They twist what they see, hear, or are taught, and go deeper and deeper into the mire. The deceptions which they used to practise on other people will, before the Seat of Judgment, become clear in their own eyes.
Until on a sudden
The hour is on them,
And they say: "Ah! woe
Unto us that we neglected;
For they bear their burdens⁸⁵⁴
On their backs,
And evil indeed are
The burdens that they bear?

32. Nothing is the life of this world
But play and amusement⁸⁵⁵
But best is the Home
In the Hereafter, for those
Who are righteous.
Will ye not then understand?

33. We know indeed the grief
Which their words do cause thee:
It is not thee they reject:
It is the Signs of Allah,
Which the wicked deny.

34. Rejected were the Messengers
Before thee: with patience
And constancy they bore
Their rejection and their persecution
Until Our aid did reach
Them: there is none
That can alter the Words
(And Decrees) of Allah
Already hast thou received
Some account of those Messengers.

⁸⁵⁴. Grievous is the burden of sins which the wicked will bear on their backs when they become conscious of them. Some Commentators personify Sins as ugly Demons riding on the backs of men, while the men’s Good Deeds become the strong and patient mounts which all carry the men on their backs. If the Good Deeds are few and the Sins many, the man and his good Deeds will be crushed under the load of the Evil which they carry.

⁸⁵⁵. Play and amusement are for preparing our minds for the serious things of life: in themselves they are not serious. So this life is a preparation for the Eternal Home to which we are going, which is far more important than the ephemeral pleasures which may possibly seduce us in this life.
35. If their spurning is hard
On thee, yet if
Thou wert able to seek
A tunnel in the ground
Or a ladder to the skies
And bring them a Sign,—
(What good?). If it were
Allah’s Will, He could
Gather them together
Unto true guidance:
So be not thou
Amongst those who are swayed
By ignorance (and impatience)!

36. Those who listen (in truth),
Be sure, will accept:
As to the dead, Allah will
Raise them up; then will they
Be returned unto Him.

37. They say: “Why is not
A Sign sent down
To him from his Lord!”
Say: “Allah hath certainly
Power to send down a Sign:

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856. There were many Signs of a divine mission in the Prophet’s life and in the Message which he delivered. If these did not convince the Unbelievers, was it not vain to seek a miraculous Sign from the bowels of the earth or by a visible ascent to the skies? If in the Prophet’s eagerness to get all to accept his Message he was hurt at their callousness, active opposition, and persecution of him, he is told that a full knowledge of the working of Allah’s Plan would convince him that impatience was misplaced. This was in the days of persecution before the Hijrat. The history in Madinah and after shows how Allah’s truth was ultimately and triumphantly vindicated. Who among the sincere devotees of Muhammad can fail to read vi 33-35 without tears in his eyes?

857. There is a double meaning here. (1) If people listen to truth sincerely and earnestly, they must believe: even if the spiritual faculty is dead, Allah will by His grace revive it and they will come to Him, if they really try earnestly to understand. (2) The sincere will believe; but those whose hearts are dead will not listen, yet they cannot escape being brought to the Judgment Seat before Him.
38. There is not an animal
(That lives) on the earth,
Nor a being that flies
On its wings, but (forms
Part of) communities like you. If
They want a particular
Sign to suit their gross ignorance, they
will not be humoured, for they can always pick
holes in anything that descends to their level.

39. Those who reject our Signs
Are deaf and dumb, in the midst of darkness
Profound: whom Allah willeth,
He leaveth to wander:
Whom He willeth. He placeth
On the Way that is Straight.

40. Say: “Think ye to yourselves.
If there come upon you
The Punishment of Allah,
Or the Hour (that ye dread).
Would ye then call upon

858. Signs are all around them, but they do not understand. If they want a particular
Sign to suit their gross ignorance, they will not be humoured, for they can always pick
holes in anything that descends to their level.

859. “Animals living on the earth” include those living in the water—fishes, reptiles,
crustaceans, insects, as well as four-footed beasts. Life on the wing is separately
mentioned. “Tair,” which is ordinarily translated as “bird,” is anything that flies,
including mammals like bats. In our pride we may exclude animals from our purview,
but they all live a life, social and individual, like ourselves, and all life is subject to the
Plan and Will of Allah. In vi. 59 we are told that not a leaf falls but by His Will, and
things dry and green are recorded in His Book. In other words they all obey His
archetypal Plan, the Book which is also mentioned here. They are all answerable in their
several degrees to His Plan (“shall be gathered to their Lord in the end”). This is not
Pantheism: it is ascribing all life, activity, and existence to the Will and Plan of Allah.

860. The limited free-will of man makes a little difference. If he sees the Signs but
shuts his ears to the true Message, and refuses (like a dumb thing) to speak out the
Message which all Nature proclaims, then according to the Plan (of his limited free-will)
he must suffer and wander, just as, in the opposite case, he will receive grace and
salvation.
861. Sorrow and suffering may (if we take them rightly) turn out to be the best gifts of Allah to us. According to the Psalms (xciv. 12). "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord!" Through suffering we learn humility, the antidote to many vices and the fountain of many virtues. But if we take them the wrong way, we grumble and complain; we become faint-hearted: and Satan gets his opportunity to exploit us by putting forward the alluring pleasures of his Vanity Fair.

862. Learning the inner truth of ourselves and the world presupposes a certain advanced stage of sensitiveness and spiritual development. There is a shallower stage, at which prosperity and the good things of life may teach us sympathy and goodness and cheerfulness like that of Mr. Cheeribyles in Dickens. In such cases the Message takes
Until, in the midst
Of their enjoyment
Of Our gifts,
On a sudden, We called
Them to account, when lo!
They were plunged in despair!

45. Of the wrong-doers the last
Remnant was cut off
Praise be to Allah,
The Cherisher of the Worlds. \(^{863}\)

46. Say: "Think ye, if Allah
Took away your hearing
And your sight, and sealed up\(^{864}\)
Your hearts, who—a god
Other than Allah—could
Restore them to you?"
See how We explain
The Signs by various (symbols);
Yet they turn aside.

47. Say: "Think ye, if Allah
The Punishment of Allah
Comes to you,
Whether suddenly or openly,\(^{865}\)
Will any be destroyed
Except those who do wrong?

= root. But there is another type of character which is puffed up in prosperity. For them prosperity is a trial of even a punishment from the higher point of view. They go deeper and deeper into sin, until they are pulled up of a sudden and then instead of being contrite they merely become desperate.

863. Allah’s punishment of wrong-doers is a measure of justice, to protect the true and righteous from their depredations and maintain His righteous decrees. It is an aspect of His character which is emphasised by the epithet “Cherisher of the Worlds.”

864. Cf. ii. 7 and n.

865. Suddenly = without warning. Openly = with many warnings, even to the sinners, though they heed them not. As to those who understand and read the signs of Allah, they could always tell that all wrong-doing must eventually have its punishment. But it will affect the wrong-doers, not the righteous. It is justice, not revenge.

350
48. We send the Messengers
Only to give good news\footnote{866} 
And to warn: so those 
Who believe and mend
(Their lives),--upon them
Shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

49. But those who reject
Our Signs,—thems
Shall punishment touch.
For that they ceased not
From transgressing.

50. Say: “I tell you not
That with me
Are the Treasures of Allah,\footnote{867}
Nor do I know
What is hidden.
Nor do I tell you I am
An angel. I but follow
What is revealed to me.”
Say: “Can the blind
Be held equal to the seeing?”\footnote{868}
Will ye then consider not?

866. The Prophets are not sent to cancel man’s limited free-will. They are sent to preach and teach,—to preach hope to the repentant (“good news”), and to warn the rebellious of the Wrath to come.

867. Literally, it might mean that the Prophets are not like vulgar soothsayers, who pretend to reveal hidden treasures, or peer into future, or claim to be something of a different nature from men. But the meaning is wider: they deal out Allah’s great treasures of truth, but the treasures are not theirs, but Allah’s; they have greater insight into the higher things, but that insight is not due to their own wisdom, but to Allah’s inspiration; they are of the same flesh and blood with us, and the sublimity of their words and teaching arises through Allah’s grace—to them and to those who hear them.

868. Therefore compare not the Prophets with ordinary men. The Prophets, although they be but men, have the higher light with them; therefore do not exact of them petty ephemeral services. Though they are men, they are not as other men, and are entitled to reverence.
SECTION 6.

51. Give this warning to those\footnote{869} In whose (hearts) is the fear That they will be brought (To Judgment) before their Lord: Except for Him They will have no protector Nor intercessor: That they may guard (Against evil).

52. Send not away those Who call on their Lord Morning and evening, Seeking His Face.\footnote{870} In naught art thou accountable For them, and in naught are they Accountable for thee,\footnote{871} That thou shouldst turn Them away, and thus be (One) of the unjust.

53. Thus did We test Some of them by\footnote{872}

\footnote{869}. There are some men—sinners—who yet believe in Judgment; let them be warned of their personal responsibility to guard against evil; let them not rely upon protectors or intercessors before Allah; their sins can only be forgiven by Allah's own Mercy.

\footnote{870}. \textit{Face: wajh:} see ii. 112 and n. 114.

\footnote{871}. Some of the rich and influential Quraish thought it beneath their dignity to listen to Muhammad's teaching in company with the lowly disciples, who were gathered round him. But he refused to send away these lowly disciples, who were sincere seekers after Allah. From a worldly point of view they had nothing to gain from Muhammad as he was himself poor, and he had nothing to gain from them as they had no influence. But that was no reason for turning them away: indeed their true sincerity entitled them to precedence over worldly men in the kingdom of Allah. Whose justice was vindicated in Muhammad's daily life in this as in other things. If their sincerity was in any way doubtful, it involved no responsibility for the Preacher.

\footnote{872}. Pursue the argument of the last note. The influential people who were not given precedence over the poor and humble but sincere disciples, were on their trial as to their spiritual insight. Their temptation was to say (and they said it in scorn): "We are much greater than they: has Allah then selected these lowly people for His teaching?" But that was so. And Allah knew best those who were grateful to Him for His guidance.
Others, that they
Should say: "Is it these
Then that Allah hath
Favoured from amongst us?"
Doth not Allah know best
Those who are grateful?

54. When those come to thee
Who believe in Our Signs,
Say: "Peace be on you;"\(^{873}\)
Your Lord hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule\(^ {874} \))
Of Mercy: verily,
If any of you did evil
In ignorance, and thereafter
Repented, and amended
(His conduct), lo! He is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

55. Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail:
That the way of the sinners
May be shown up.\(^ {875} \)

SECTION 7.

56. Say: \(^ {876} \) "I am forbidden"
To worship those—others

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873. The humble who had sincere faith, were not only not sent away to humour the wealthy: they were honoured and were given a special salutation, which has become the characteristic salutation in Islam: "Peace be on you,"—the word peace, "salām" having special affinity with the word "Islām." In words they are given the salutation; in life they are promised Mercy by the special grace of Allah.

874. Cf. vi. 12.

875. If the way of the sinners (in jealousy and worldly pride) is shown up, and details are given how to honour the truly sincere, it forms the best illustration of the teaching of Allah.

876. There are a number of arguments now put forward against the Makkans who refused to believe in Allah's Message. Each argument is introduced with the word "Say." Here are the first four: (1) I have received Light and will follow it; (2) I prefer my Light to your vain desires: (3) your challenge—"if there is a God, why does He not finish the
than Allah—whom ye call upon,” say: “I will not follow your vain desires: if I did, I would stray from the path, and be not of the company of those who receive guidance.”

Say: “For me, I am on a clear sign from my Lord, but ye reject him. What ye would see hastened, is not in my power. The command rests with none but Allah: He declares the truth, and He is the best of judges.”

Say: “If what ye would see hastened were in my power, the matter would be settled at once between you and me. But Allah knoweth best those who do wrong.”

With Him are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall

= blasphemers at once?”—it is not for me to take up: punishment rests with Allah: (4) if it rested with me, it would be for me to take up your challenge; all I know is that Allah is not unacquainted with the existence of folly and wickedness, and many other things besides, that no mortal can know; you can see little glimpses of His Plan, and you can be sure that He will not be tardy in calling you to account.

877. What ye would see hastened: what ye, deniers of Allah, are so impatient about; the punishment which ye mockingly say does not come to you. Cf. xiii. 6.

878. The Messenger of Allah is not here to settle scores with the wicked. It is not a matter between them and him. It is a matter between them and Allah: he is only a warner against sin, and a declarer of the gospel of salvation.

879. Mafātih: Plural of either miftāḥ = a key, or mafātih = a treasure. Both meanings are implied, and I have accordingly put both in my translation.
But with His knowledge:
There is not a grain
In the darkness (or depths)
Of the earth, nor anything
Fresh or dry (green or withered),
But is (inscribed) in a Record\textsuperscript{880}
Clear (to those who can read).

60. It is He Who doth take
Your souls by night,
And hath knowledge of all
That ye have done by day:
By day doth He raise
You up again; that a term
Appointed be fulfilled;
In the end unto Him
Will be your return;\textsuperscript{881}
Then will He show you
The truth of all
That ye did.

SECTION 8.

61. He is Irresistibly.
Supreme over His servants
And He sets guardians\textsuperscript{882}
Over you. At length,

\textsuperscript{880}. This is the archetypal Plan, the Eternal Law, according to which everything seen and unseen is ordered and regulated. The simplest things in Nature are subject to His Law. The fresh and the withered, the living and the lifeless—nothing is outside the Plan of His Creation.

\textsuperscript{881}. As the rest of His Creation is subject to His Law and Plan, so is man’s life in every particular and at every moment, awake or asleep. The mystery of Sleep—“the twin brother of death”—is called the taking of our soul by Him, with the record of all we have done in our waking moments, and this record sometimes appears to us in confused glimpses in dreams. By day we awaken again to our activities, and so it goes on until we fulfil the term of our life appointed for this earth. Then comes the other Sleep (death), with the longer record of our Day (Life); and then, in the end comes the Resurrection and Judgment, at which we see everything clearly and not as in dreams, for that is the final Reality.

\textsuperscript{882}. Guardians: most Commentators understand this to mean guardian angels. The idea of guardianship is expressed in a general term. Allah watches over us and guards us, and provides all kinds of agencies, material, moral, and spiritual, to help our growth and development, keep us from harm, and bring us nearer to our Destiny.
When death approaches
One of you. Our angels, take his soul, and they
Never fail in their duty.

62. Then are they returned
Unto Allah, their True Protector,
Surely His is the Command, and He is the Swiftest
In taking account.

63. Say: "Who is it
That delivereth you
From the dark recesses Of land and sea,
When ye call upon Him
In humility
And in secret, 'If He only delivers us
From these (dangers),
(We vow) we shall truly
Show our gratitude'?

883. Angles: the word used is *rāsūl*, the Sent Ones, the same word as for haman Messengers sent by Allah to teach mankind. The angels who come to take our souls at death are accurate in the performance of their duty. They come neither before nor after their appointed time, nor do they do it in any manner other than that fixed by the Command of Allah.

884. *Al-ḥaqīq*, the Truth, the only True One. The point is that our illusions of the life of this lower world now vanish, when we are rendered back to God. And now we find that so far from the results of our actions being delayed, they follow more swiftly than we can express in terms of Time. Here is the answer to the taunt of those who were impatient of the working of God's Plans (vi. 57-58).

885. In continuation of the four heads of argument referred to in n. 876, we have three more heads here in vi. 63-65: (5) your calling upon Him in times of danger shows that in the depths of your hearts you feel His need; (6) Allah's Providence saves you, and yet you ungratefully run after false gods; (7) it is not only physical calamities that you have to fear; your mutual discords and vengeances are even more destructive, and only faith in Allah can save you from them.

886. Zulmāt: dark recesses, terrible lurking dangers, as in deserts or mountains, or forests, or seas.

887. There are two readings, but they both ultimately yield the same meaning. (1) *Khufyātān*, silently, secretly, from the depth of your inner heart, suggesting unspeakable terror. (2) *Khifātān*, out of terror or fear or reverence, as in vii. 205.
64. Say: "It is Allah
That delivereth you
From these and all (other)
Distresses: and yet
Ye worship false gods!"

65. Say: "He hath power
To send calamities\textsuperscript{888}
On you, from above
And below, or to cover
You with confusion
In party strife,
Giving you a taste
Of mutual vengeance—
Each from the other".
See how We explain
The Signs in diverse ways;\textsuperscript{889}
That they may understand.

66. But thy people reject
This, though it is
The Truth. Say: "Not mine
Is the responsibility
For arranging your affairs;\textsuperscript{890}

67. For every Prophecy
Is a limit of time,
And soon shall ye
Know it."

\textsuperscript{888} Calamities from above and below: such as storms and blizzards, torrential rain, etc., or earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc.

\textsuperscript{889} Cf. vi. 46, where this refrain commences the argument now drawing to a close.

\textsuperscript{890} At the date of this revelation, the Messenger’s people had as a body not only rejected Allah’s truth, but were persecuting it. The Messenger’s duty was to deliver his Message, which he did. He was not responsible for their conduct. But he told them plainly that all warnings from Allah had their time limit, as they would soon find out. And they did find out within a very few years. For the leaders of the resistance came to an evil end, and their whole system of fraud and selfishness was destroyed, to make room for the purer Faith of Islam. Apart from that particular application, there is the more general application for the present time and for all time.
68. When thou seest men
Engaged in vain discourse
About Our Sings, turn
Away from them unless
They turn to a different theme. If Satan ever
Makes thee forget, then
After recollection, sit not
Thou in the company
Of those who do wrong.

69. On their account
No responsibility
Falls on the righteous, but (their duty)
Is to remind them,
That they may (learn To) fear Allah.

70. Leave alone those
Who take their religion
To be mere play
And amusement, and are deceived
By the life of this world.
But continue to admonish them
With it (Al-Qur-ān)
Lest a soul is caught
In its own ruin
By its own action:

891. Cf. iv. 140. If in any gathering truth is ridiculed, we must not sit in such company. If we find ourselves in it, as soon as we realise it, we must show our disapproval by leaving.

892. Every man is responsible for his own conduct. But the righteous have two duties: (1) to protect themselves from infection, and (2) to proclaim Allah's truth, for even in the most unlikely circumstances, it is possible that it may have some effect.

893. Cf. vi. 32, where we are told that the life of this world is mere play and amusement, and Religion and the Hereafter are the serious things that require our attention. Worldly people reverse this, because they are deceived by the allurements of this life. But their own acts will find them out.

894. We must never forget our own personal responsibility for all we do, or deceive ourselves by the illusion of vicarious atonement.
SECTION 9.

71. Say.⁸⁹⁵ “Shall we call on others besides Allah,—Things that can do us neither good nor harm,—And turn on our heels after receiving guidance from Allah?—like one whom the Satans have made into a fool, wandering bewildered through the earth, his friends calling ‘Come to us’, (vainly) guiding him to the Path.”

Say: “Allah’s guidance is the (only) guidance,”

It will find for itself no protector or intercessor except Allah: if it offered every ransom, (or reparation), none will be accepted: such is (the end of) those who deliver themselves to ruin by their own acts: they will have for drink (only) boiling water, and for punishment one most grievous: for they persisted in rejecting Allah.

⁸⁹⁵. In continuation of the seven heads of argument referred to in nn. 876 and 885, we have here the final two heads: (8) who would, after receiving guidance from the living, eternal God, turn to lifeless idols? To do so would indeed show that we were made into fools, wandering to a precipice; (9) therefore accept the only true guidance, the guidance of Allah, and obey His Law, for we shall have to answer before His judgment-seat.
And we have been directed
To submit ourselves
To the Lord of the worlds;—

72. “To establish regular prayers
And to fear Allah:
For it is to Him
That we shall be
Gathered together.”

73. It is He Who created
The heavens and the earth
With truth: 896
The day He saith, “Be,”
Behold! it is. His Word
Is the Truth. His will be
The dominion the day
The trumpet will be blown.
He knoweth the Unseen
As well as that which is
Open. For He
Is the Wise, well acquainted
(With all things).

74. Lo! Abraham said
To his father Azar:
“Takest thou idols for gods?
For I see thee
And thy people
In manifest error.”

896. The argument mounts up here, leading to the great insight of Abraham the true in faith, who did not stop short at the wonders of nature, but penetrated “from nature up to nature’s God.” Allah not only created the heavens and the earth: with every increase of knowledge we see in what true and perfect proportions all Creation is held together. Creatures are subject to Time, but the Creator is not: His word is the key that opens the door of existence. It is not only the starting point of existence, but the whole measure and standard of Truth and Right. There may possibly be, to our sight in this great world, aberrations of human or other wills, but the moment the trumpet sounds for the last day. His judgment-seat will, with perfect justice, restore the dominion of Right and Reality. For His knowledge and wisdom cover all reality.
75. So also did We show\textsuperscript{897} Abraham the kingdom
Of the heavens
And the earth, that he
Might have certitude.

76. When the night
Covered him over,
He saw a star:
He said: “This is my Lord.”
But when it set,
He said. “I love not
Those that set.”\textsuperscript{898}

77. When he saw the moon
Rising in splendour,
He said: “This is my Lord.”
But when the moon set.
He said: “Unless my Lord
Guide me, I shall surely
Be among those
Who go astray.”\textsuperscript{899}

\textsuperscript{897} Now comes the story of Abraham. He lived among the Chaldeans, who had
great knowledge of the stars and heavenly bodies. But he got beyond that physical world
and saw the real world behind. His ancestral idols meant nothing to him. That was the
first step. But Allah took him many degrees higher. Allah showed him with certitude the
glories behind the magnificent powers and laws of the physical universe.

\textsuperscript{898} This shows the stages of Abraham’s enlightenment. It should not be supposed
that he literally worshipped stars or heavenly bodies. Having seen through the folly of
ancestral idol worship, he began to see the futility of worshipping distant beautiful things
that shine, which the vulgar endue with a power which does not reside in them. A type
of such is a star shining in the darkness of the night. Superstition might read fortunes
in it, but truer knowledge shows that it rises and sets according to laws whose author
is Allah. And its light is extinguished in the broader light of day: Its worship is therefore
futile. It is not a Power, much less the Supreme Power.

According to some commentators the whole thrust of Abraham’s reasoning in verses
76-78 is directed against the superstitious beliefs of his people and demonstrates the folly
of worshipping stars and other heavenly bodies. As such his statements may be seen as
premises of his arguments against Polytheism rather than as stages in his enlightenment.

\textsuperscript{899} The moon, though it looks bigger and brighter than the star, turns out on closer
knowledge, not only to set like the star, but to change its shape from hour to hour, and
even to depend for her light on some other body! How deceptive are appearances! That
is not Allah! At that stage you begin to search for something more reliable than
appearances to the eye in the darkness of the night. You ask for guidance from Allah.
78. When he saw the sun rising (in splendour),
He said: "This is my Lord;
This is the greatest (of all)."
But when the sun set,
He said: "O my people!
I am indeed free
From your (guilt)
Of giving partners to Allah."

79. "For me, I have set
My face, firmly and truly,
Towards Him Who created
The heavens and the earth,
And never shall I give
Partners to Allah."

80. His people disputed
With him. He said:
"(Come) ye to dispute
With me, about Allah,
When He (Himself)
Hath guided me?
I fear not (the beings)
Ye associate with Allah:
Unless my Lord willeth,
(Nothing can happen),
My Lord comprehendeth
In His knowledge all things.

900. The next stage is the sun. You are in the open light of Day. Now you have the right clue. You see the biggest object in the heavens. But is it the biggest? There are thousands of stars in the universe bigger than the sun. And every day the sun appears and disappears from your sight. Such is not God who created you and all these wonderful works of His. What folly to worship creatures, when we might turn to the true God? Let us abjure all these follies and proclaim the one true God.

901. The story of Abraham is highly instructive for all men in quest of truth. If enlightenment go so far as to take a man beyond his ancestral worship, people will come to dispute with him. They will frighten him with the dire consequences of his dissent. What does he care? He has found the truth. He is free from superstitious fears, for has he not found the true God, without Whose Will nothing can happen? On the contrary he knows that it is the godless who have just grounds for fear. And he offers admonition to them, and arguments that should bring them the clearness of truth instead of the vagueness and mystery of superstition,—the security of Faith instead of the haunting fear of those who have no clear guidance.
Will ye not (yourselves)  
Be admonished?

81. "How should I fear  
(The beings) ye associate  
With Allah, when ye  
Fear not to give partners  
To Allah without any warrant  
Having been given to you?  
Which of (us) two parties  
Hath more right to security?  
(Tell me) if ye know.

82. "It is those who believe  
And mix not their beliefs  
With wrong\textsuperscript{901-A}—that are  
(Truly) in security, for they  
Are on (right) guidance."

SECTION 10.

83. That was Our argument  
Which We gave to Abraham  
(To use) against his people:\textsuperscript{902}  
We raise whom We will,  
Degree after degree:  
For thy Lord is full  
Of wisdom and knowledge.

84. We gave him Isaac  
And Jacob: all (three)  
We guided:\textsuperscript{903}  
And before him,

\textsuperscript{901-A}. The word "wrong" here refers to ascribing partners to Allah as has been stated by the Prophet (peace be on him) in his explanation of the verse.

\textsuperscript{902}. The spiritual education of Abraham raised him many degrees above his contemporaries, and he was expected to use that knowledge and dignity for preaching the truth among his own people.

\textsuperscript{903}. We have now a list of eighteen Prophets in four groups, covering the great Teachers accepted among the three great religions based on Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The first group to be mentioned is that of Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob. Abraham was the first to have a Book. His Book is mentioned in Q. lxxxvii. 19, though it is now lost. They were therefore the first to receive Guidance in the sense of a Book.
904. In the second group, we have the great founders of families, apart from Abraham, viz., Noah, of the time of the Flood: David and Solomon, the real establishers of the Jewish monarchy: Job, who lived 140 years, saw four generations of descendants, and was blessed at the end of his life with large pastoral wealth (Job xlii. 16, 12); Joseph, who as Minister of State did great things in Egypt and was the progenitor of two Tribes; and Moses and Aaron, the leaders of the Exodus from Egypt. They led active lives and are called “doers of good.”

905. The third group consists not of men of action, but Preachers of Truth, who led solitary lives. Their epithet is: “the Righteous.” They form a connected group round Jesus. Zakariya was the father of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus (iii. 37-41); and Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elias: “this is Elias, which was to come” (Matt. xi. 14); and Elias is said to have been present and talked to Jesus at the Transfiguration on the Mount (Matt. xvii. 3). Elias is the same as Elijah.

906. This is the last group, described as those “favoured above the nations.” It consists of four men who had all great misfortunes to contend with, and were concerned in the clash of nations, but they kept in the path of Allah, and came through above the clash of nations. Isma’il was the eldest son of Abraham: when he was a baby, he and his mother had nearly died of thirst in the desert round Makkah but they were saved by the well of Zamzam, and he became the founder of the new Arab nation. Elisha (Al-Yasa’) succeeded to the mantle of the Prophet Elijah (same as Elias, see last note); he lived in troublous times for both the Jewish kingdoms (of Judah and Israel); there were wicked kings, and other nations were pressing in on them: but he performed many miracles, and some check was given to the enemies under his advice. The story of Jonas (Yiinus) is well-known: he was swallowed by a fish or whale, but was saved by Allah’s mercy: through his preaching, his city (Nineveh) was saved (x. 98). Lot was a contemporary and nephew of Abraham: when the city of Sodom was destroyed for its wickedness, he was saved as a just man (vii. 80-84).

907. I take verse 87 to refer back to all the four groups just mentioned.
We chose them,  
And We guided them  
To a straight Way.

88. This is the Guidance  
Of Allah: He giveth  
That guidance to whom  
He pleaseth, of His servants  
If they were to join  
Other gods with Him,  
All that they did  
Would be vain for them.

89. These were the men  
To whom We gave  
The Book, and Judgement,  
And Prophethood: if these  
(Their descendants) reject them,  
Behold! We shall entrust  
Their charge to a new People  
Who reject them not.

90. Those were the (prophets)  
Who received Allah's guidance.  
Follow the guidance they received;  
Say: "No reward for this  
Do I ask of you:  
This is but  
A Reminder to the nations.

SECTION 11.

91. No just estimate of Allah  
Do they make when they say:  
"Nothing doth Allah send down  
To man (by way of revelation)":

908. *Them, i.e., the Book, and Authority and Prophethood. They were taken away from the other People of the Book and entrusted to the holy Prophet Muhammad and his People.*

909. *Qadara:* to weigh, judge, or estimate the value or capacity of anything; to have power so to do. *Cf. Qadir* in iv. 149 and n. 655. The Jews who denied the inspiration of Muhammad had a good answer in their own books about the inspiration of Moses. To those who do not believe in Moses, the answer is more general: is it a just estimate that they do not believe in Moses?
Say: "Who then sent down
The Book which Moses brought?—
A light and guidance to man:"
But ye make it into
(Separate) sheets for show,
While ye conceal much
(Of its contents): therein
Were ye taught that
Which ye knew not—
Neither ye nor your fathers."
Say: "Allah (sent it down):
Then leave them to plunge
In vain discourse and trifling.

92. And this is a Book
Which We have sent down,
Bringing blessings, and confirming
(The revelations) which came
Before it: that thou
Mayest warn the Mother
Of Cities and all around her.

Of Allah to think either that He has not the power or the will to guide mankind, seeing that He is Omnipotent and the Source of all good! If you say that guidance comes, not through an inspired book or man, but through our general intelligence, we point to the spiritual ignorance of “you and your ancestors” the sad spiritual darkness of men and nations high in the intellectual scale.

910. Cf. v. 44 and n. 750, and v. 46. In those passages Guidance is put before Light, as they refer to ordinary or average men. Here Light is put first as the question is: does Allah send inspiration?

911. The Message to Moses had unity: it was one Book. the present Old Testament is a collection of odd books (“sheets”) of various kinds: see Appendix II. end of S. v. In this way you can make a show, but there is no unity, and much of the spirit of the original is lost or concealed or overlaid. The same applies to the New Testament: see Appendix III, after Appendix II.

912. Mubarak: blessed, as having received Allah’s blessing: bringer of blessings to others, as having been blessed by Allah. Allah’s highest blessing is the Guidance and Light which the Book brings to us, and which brings us nearer to Him.

913. Mother of Cities: Makkah now the Qibla and Centre of Islam. If this verse was (like the greater part of the Chapter) revealed in Makkah before the Hijrat, and before Makkah was made the Qibla of Islam. Makkah was nonetheless the Mother of Cities, being traditionally associated with Abraham (see ii. 125, and n. 217 to ii. 197).

All round Makkah: would mean, the whole world if we look upon Makkah as the Centre.
93. Who can be more wicked
Than one who inventeth
A lie against Allah,
Or saith, "I have
Received inspiration,"
When he hath received
None, or (again) who saith,
"I can reveal the like
Of what Allah hath revealed"?
If thou couldst but see
How the wicked (do fare)
In the agonies
Of death!—the angels
Stretch forth their hands,
(Saying), "Yield up your souls."
This day shall ye receive
Your reward,—a chastisement
Of disgrace, for that ye used
To tell lies against Allah,
And scornfully to reject
Of His Signs!"

94. "And behold! ye come
To Us bare and alone
As We created you
For the first time."

914. An earnest study of the Qur-an is true worship: so is Prayer, and so are all deeds of goodness and charity.

915. Yield up your souls: or “get your souls to come out of your bodies.” The wicked, we may suppose, are not anxious to part with the material existence in their bodies for the “reward” which in irony is stated to be there to welcome them.

916. Some of the various ideas connected with “creation” are noted in n. 120 to ii. 117. In the creation of man there are various processes. If his body was created out of clay, i.e., earthy matter, there was an earlier process of the creation of such earthy matter. Here the body is left behind, and the soul is being addressed. The soul underwent
Ye have left behind you
All (the favours) which
We bestowed on you:
We see not with you
Your intercessors
Whom ye thought to be
Partners in your affairs:
So now all relations
Between you have been
Cut off, and your (pet) fancies
Have left you in the lurch917

SECTION 12.
95. It is Allah Who causeth918
The seed-grain
And the date-stone
To split and sprout.919
He causeth the living

917. The false ideas of intercessors, demi-gods, gods, saviours, etc., now vanish like unsubstantial visions, "leaving not a wrack behind." Now the soul is face to face with reality. Its personal responsibility is brought home to it.

918. Another beautiful nature passage, referring to Allah's wonderful artistry in His Creation. In how few and how simple words, the whole pageant of Creation is placed before us. Beginning from our humble animal needs and dependence on the vegetable world, we are asked to contemplate the interaction of the living and the dead. Here is a teaching, referring not only to physical life but to the higher life above the physical plane,—not only to individual life but to the collective life of nations. Then we take a peep into the daily miracle of morning, noon, and night, and pass on to the stars that guide the distant mariner. We rise still higher to the mystery of the countless individuals from the one human soul,—their sojourn and their destiny. So we get back to the heavens: the description of the luscious fruits which the "gentle rain from heaven" produces, leaves us to contemplate the spiritual fruits which faith will provide for us, with the aid of the showers of Allah's mercy.

919. The seed-grain and the date-stone are selected as types in the vegetable kingdom, showing how our physical life depends on it. The fruits mentioned later (in vi. 99) start another allegory which we shall notice later. Botanists will notice that the seed-
To issue from the dead.
And He is the One
To cause the dead
To issue from the living. 920
That is Allah: then how
Are ye deluded
Away from the truth?

96. He it is that cleaveth
The day-break (from the dark):
He makes the night
For rest and tranquillity,
And the sun and moon
For the reckoning (of time):
Such is the judgment 921

= grain includes the cereals (such as wheat, barley, rice, millet, etc.) which are monocotyledons, as well as the pulses (such as beans, peas, gram etc.) and other seeds which are dicotyledons. These two represent the most important classes of food-grains, while the date-palm a monocotyledon, represents for Arabia both food, fruit, confectionery, thatch and pillars for houses, shady groves in oases, and a standard measure of wealth and well being. “Split and sprout”: both ideas are included in the root falaga, and a third is expressed by the word “cleave” in the next verse for the action of evolving day-break from the dark. For vegetables, “split and sprout” represents a double process: (1) the seed divides, and (2) one part shoots up, seeking the light, and forming leaves and the visible parts of the future tree, and the other part digs down into the dark, forming the roots and seeking just that sustenance from the soil, which is adapted for the particular plant. This is just one small instance of the “judgment and ordering” of Allah, referred to in the next verse.

920. This does not mean that in physical nature there are no limits between life and non-life, between the organic and the non-organic. In fact physicists are baffled at the barrier between them and frankly confess that they cannot solve the mystery of Life. If there is such a barrier in physical nature, is it not all the more wonderful that Allah can create Life out of nothing? He has but to say. “Be,” and it is. He can bring Life from non-Life and annihilate Life. But there are two other senses in which we can contemplate the contrast between the living and the dead. (1) We have just been speaking of the botanical world. Take it as a whole, and see the contrast between the winter of death, the spring of revivification, the summer of growth, and the autumn of decay, leading back to the death of winter. Here is a cycle of living from dead, and dead from living. (2) Take our spiritual life, individual or collective. We rise from the darkness of spiritual nothingness to the light of spiritual life. And if we do not follow the spiritual laws, Allah will take away that life and we shall be again as dead. We may die many deaths. The keys of life and death are in Allah’s hands. Neither Life nor Death are fortuitous things. Behind them both is Allah and only He.

921. The night, the day, the sun, the moon—the great astronomical universe of Allah. How far, and yet how near to us! Allah’s universe is boundless, and we can barely comprehend even its relations to us. But this last we must try to do if we want to be numbered with “the people who know” Tagdir: Cf. vi. 91 and n. 909, iv. 149 and n. 655.
And ordering of (Him),
The Exalted in Power,
The Omniscient.

97. It is He Who maketh
The stars (as beacons) for you,
That ye may guide yourselves,
With their help,
Through the dark spaces
Of land and sea: 922
We detail Our Signs
For people who know.

98. It is He Who hath
Produced you 923
From a single soul:
Then there is a resting place
And a repository: 924
We detail Our signs
For people who understand.

99. It is He Who sendeth down
Rain from the skies: 925
With it We produce
Vegetation of all kinds:

922. See the last note. At sea, or in deserts or forests, or “in fairy scenes forlorn,”—whenever we sweep over wide spaces, it is the stars that act as our guides, just as the sun and moon have already been mentioned as our measures of time.

923. Produced: ansha’a = made you grow, increase, develop, reach maturity: another of the processes of creation. This supplements n. 120 to ii. 117 and n. 916 to vi. 94. It is one of the wonders of Allah’s Creation, that from one person we have grown to be so many, and each individual has so many faculties and capacities, and yet we are all one. In the next verse we have the allegory of grapes and other fruits: all grapes may be similar to look at, yet each variety has a distinctive flavour and other distinctive qualities, and each individual grape may have its own special qualities. So for man.

924. In the sojourn of this life we must respond to Allah’s hand in fashioning us, by making full use of all our faculties, and we must get ready for our departure into the Life that will be eternal.

925. Our allegory now brings us to maturity, the fruit, the harvest, the vintage. Through the seed we came up from nothingness of life; we lived our daily life of rest and work and passed the mile-stones of time; we had the spiritual experience of traversing through vast spaces in the spiritual world, guiding our course through the star of Faith; we grew; and now for the harvest or the vintage! So will man if he has produced the fruits of Faith!
From some We produce
Green (crops), out of which
We produce,
Close-compounded grain
Out of the date-palm
And its sheaths (or spathes)
(Come) clusters of dates
Hanging low and near:
And (then there are) gardens
Of grapes, and olives,
And pomegranates,
Each similar (in kind)
Yet different (in variety): 926
When they begin to bear fruit,
Feast your eyes with the fruit
And the ripeness thereof. 927
Behold! in these things
There are Signs for people
Who believe. 928

100. Yet they make
The Jinns equals 929

926. Each fruit—whether it is grapes, or olives, or pomegranates—looks alike in its species, and yet each variety may be different in flavour, consistency, shape, size, colour, juice or oil contents, proportion of seed to fruit, etc. In each variety individuals may be different. Apply the allegory to man, whose varied spiritual fruit may be equally different and yet equally valuable!

927. And so we finish this wonderful allegory. Search through the world’s literature, and see if you can find another such melody or hymn, so fruity in its literary flavour, so profound in its spiritual meaning!

928. There is a refrain in this beautiful descriptive verses. In verse 97 it is: “We detail Our Signs for people who know.” So far we were speaking of the things we see around us every day. Knowledge is the appropriate instrument for these things. In verse 98 we read: “We detail Our Signs for people who understand.” Understanding is a higher faculty than knowledge, and is necessary for seeing the mystery and meaning of this life. At the end of verse 99 we have: “In these things there are Signs for people who believe.” Here we are speaking of the real fruits of spiritual Life. For them Faith is necessary, as bringing us nearer to Allah.

929. Jinns: who are they? In xviii. 50, we are told that Iblis was one of the Jinns, and it is suggested that that was why he disobeyed the Command of Allah. But in that passage and other similar passages, we are told that Allah commanded the angels to bow down to Adam, and they obeyed except Iblis. That implies that Iblis had been of the company of angels. In many passages Jinns and men are spoken of together. In lv. 14-15, =
With Allah, though Allah
Did create the Jinns;
And they falsely,
Having no knowledge,
Attribute to Him
Sons and daughters,
Praise and glory be
To Him! (for He is) above
What they attribute to Him!

SECTION 13.

101. Wonderful Originator
Of the heavens and the earth:930
How can He have a son
When He hath no consort?
He created all things,
And He hath full knowledge
Of all things.

102. That is Allah, your Lord!
There is no god but He,
The Creator of all things:
Then worship ye Him:
And He hath power
To dispose of all affairs.

103. No vision can grasp Him,
But His grasp is over
All vision; He is
Subtle well-aware.931

= man is stated to have been created from clay, while Jinns from a flame of fire. The root
meaning of jonna, yujanna, is “to be covered or hidden,” and janna yajunna, in the active
voice, “to cover or hide,” as in vi. 76. (Both the Qur-an and the Hadith describe the
Jinn as a definite species of living beings. They are created out of fire and like man,
may believe or disbelieve, accept or reject guidance. The authoritative Islamic texts show
that they are not merely a hidden force, or a spirit. They are personalized beings who
enjoy a certain amount of free will and thus will be called to account.

930. Cf. ii. 117 and n. 120.

931. Latif: fine, subtle, so fine and subtle as to be invisible to the physical eye: so
fine as to be imperceptible to the senses. Cf. xxii. 63, and n. 2844.
104. "Now have come to you,
From your Lord proofs
(To open your eyes):
If any will see,
It will be for (the good
Of) his own soul:
If any will be blind,
It will be to his own
(Harm): I am not (here)
To watch over your doings." 932

105. Thus do We explain
The Signs by various (ways) 933
That they may say,
"Thou hast learnt this
(From somebody),
And that We may make
The matter clear
To those who know. 934

106. Follow what thou art taught
By inspiration from thy Lord:
There is no god but He:
And turn aside from those
Who join gods with Allah.

107. If it had been Allah's Will, 935
They would not have taken

932. I understand "Say" to be understood in the beginning of this verse. The words would then be the words of the Prophet, as in fact is suggested in verse 107 below. That is why I have enclosed them in inverted commas.

933. Cf. vi. 65, and n. 889.

934. The teaching in the Qur-an explains things by various symbols, parables, narratives, and appeals to nature. Those who were in search of knowledge and had thus acquired some knowledge of spiritual things were greatly helped to understand more clearly the things of which, before the varied explanations, they had only one-sided knowledge.

935. Allah's Plan is to use the human will to co-operate in understanding Him and His relations to us. This is the answer to an objector who might say: "If He is All-powerful, why does sin or evil exist in the world? Can He not destroy it?" He can, but His Plan is different, and in any case it is not for a Prophet to force any one to accept the truths which he is inspired to preach and proclaim.
False gods: but We
Made thee not one
To watch over their doings,
Nor art thou set
Over them to dispose
Of their affairs.

108. Revile not ye
Those whom they call upon
Besides Allah, lest
They out of spite
Revile Allah
In their ignorance.
Thus have We made
Alluring to each people\(^{936}\)
Its own doings.
In the end will they
Return to their Lord
And He shall then
Tell them the truth
Of all that they did.

109. They swear their strongest
Oaths by Allah, that if
A (special) Sign came
To them, by it they would

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936. A man’s actual personal religion depends upon many things—his personal psychology, the background of his life, his hidden or repressed feelings, tendencies, or history (which psychoanalysis tries to unravel), his hereditary dispositions or antipathies, and all the subtle influences of his education and his environment. The task before the man of God is: (1) to use any of these which can subserve the higher ends, (2) to purify such as have been misused, (3) to introduce new ideas and modes of looking at things, and (4) to combat what is wrong and cannot be mended: all for the purpose of leading to the truth and gradually letting in spiritual light where there was darkness before. If that is not done with discretion and the skill of a Teacher, there may be not only a reaction of obstinacy, but an unseemly show of dishonour to the true God and His Truth, and doubts would spread among the weaker brethren whose faith is shallow and infirm. What happens to individuals is true collectively of nations or groups of people. They think in their self-obsession that their own ideas are right. Allah in His infinite compassion bears with them, and asks those who have purer ideas of faith not to vilify the weaknesses of their neighbours, lest the neighbours in their turn vilify the real truth and make matters even worse than before. In so far as there are mistakes, Allah will forgive and send His grace for helping ignorance and folly. In so far as there is active evil, He will deal with it in His own way. Of course the righteous man must not hide his light under a bushel, or compromise with evil, or refuse to establish right living where he has power to do so.
Believe. Say: "Certainly (All) Signs are in the power Of Allah: but what will Make you (Muslims) realise That (even) if (special) Signs Came, they will not believe."  

110. We (too) shall turn To (confusion) their hearts\(^938\) And their eyes, even as they Refused to believe in this In the first instance: We shall leave them In their trespasses, To (stumble blindly).\(^939\)

SECTION 14.

111. Even if We did send Unto them angels, And the dead did speak Unto them, and We gathered Together all things before\(^940\) Their very eyes, they are not

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937. If the Unbelievers are merely obstinate, nothing will convince them. There is no story more full of miracles than the story of Jesus. Yet in that same story we are told that Jesus said: "A wicked adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas": Matt. xvi. 4. There are Signs given by Allah every day—understood by those who believe. A mere insistence upon some particular or special Sign means mere contumacy and misunderstanding of the religious world.

938. Where there is sheer obstinacy and ridicule of faith, the result will be that such a sinner’s heart will be hardened and his eyes will be sealed, so that he cannot even see the things visible to ordinary mortals. The sinner gathers impetus in his descent towards wrong.

939. Cf. ii. 15. Allah’s grace is always ready to help human weakness or ignorance, and to accept repentance and give forgiveness. But where the sinner is in actual rebellion, he will be given rope, and it will be his own fault if he wanders about distractedly, without any certain hope or refuge.

940. The most stupendous miracles even according to their ideas would not have convinced them. If the whole pageant of the spiritual world were brought before them, they would not have believed, because they—of their own choice and will—refuse knowledge and faith.
The ones to believe,  
Unless it is in Allah’s Plan.  
But most of them  
Ignore (the truth).

112. Likewise did We make  
For every Messenger  
An enemy,— satans\(^{941}\)  
Among men and Jinns,  
Inspiring each other  
With flowery discourses  
By way of deception.  
If thy Lord had so willed,  
They would not have  
Done it: so leave them  
And what they forge.

113. To such (deceit)  
Let the hearts of those  
Incline, who have no faith  
In the Hereafter: and let them  
Delight in it, and let them  
Earn from it what they may.\(^{942}\)

114. Say: “Shall I seek  
For judge other than Allah?—  
When He it is  
Who hath sent unto you  
The Book, explained in detail.”\(^{943}\)

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941. What happened in the history of the Holy Prophet happens in the history of all righteous men who have a Message from Allah. The spirit of evil is ever active and uses men to practise deception by means of highly embellished words and plausible excuses and objections. Allah permits these things in His Plan. It is not for us to complain. Our faith is tested, and we must stand the test steadfastly.

942. People who have no faith in the future destiny of man listen to and be taken in by the deceit of evil. If they take a delight in it, let them. See what they gain by it. Their gains will be as deceitful as their delight. For the end of evil must be evil.

943. The righteous man seeks no other standard of judgment but Allah’s Will. How can he, when Allah in His grace has explained His Will in the Qur-an, with details which men of every capacity can understand? The humblest can learn lessons of right conduct in daily life, and the most advanced can find the highest wisdom in its teaching, enriched as it is with all kinds of beautiful illustrations from nature and the story of man.
They know full well,
To whom We have given
The Book, that it hath been
Sent down from thy Lord
In truth. Never be then
Of those who doubt.

115. The Word of thy Lord
Doth find its fulfilment
In truth and in justice:
None can change His Words:
For He is the one Who
Heareth and knoweth all.

116. Wert thou to follow
The common run of those
On earth, they will lead
Thee away from the Way
Of Allah. They follow
Nothing but conjecture: they
Do nothing but lie.

117. Thy Lord knoweth best
Who strayeth from His Way:
He knoweth best
Those who are rightly guided.

118. So eat of (meats)
On which Allah's name
Hath been pronounced,
If ye have faith
In His Signs.

119. Why should ye not
Eat of (meats) on which
Allah's name hath been
Pronounced, when He hath
Explained to you in detail
What is forbidden to you—
Except under compulsion?

944. Cf. v. 3. When a clear law has explained what is lawful and unlawful in food, it is wrong to raise fresh scruples and mislead the ignorant.
But many do mislead men
By low desires
Without knowledge. Thy Lord
Knoweth best those who transgress.

120. Eschew all sin.
Open or secret:
Those who earn sin
Will get due recompense
For their "earnings."

121. Eat not of (meats)
On which Allah's name
Hath not been pronounced:
That would be impiety.
But the satans
Ever inspire their friends
To contend with you
If ye were to obey them,
Ye would indeed be Pagans.

SECTION 15.

122. Can he who was dead, To whom We gave life,
And a Light whereby
He can walk amongst men,
Be like him who is
In the depths of darkness.
From which he can
Never come out?
Thus to those without Faith
Their own deeds seem pleasing.

945. Here is an allegory of the good man with his divine mission and the evil man with his mission of evil. The former, before he got his spiritual life, was like one dead. It was Allah's grace that gave him spiritual life, with a Light by which he could walk and guide his own footsteps as well as the footsteps of those who are willing to follow Allah's light. The opposite type is that which hates Allah's light, which lives in the depths of darkness, and which plots and burrows against all that is good. But the plots of evil recoil on itself, although it thinks that they will hurt the good. Can these two types be for a moment compared with each other? Perhaps the lead in every centre of population is taken by the men of evil. But the good men should not be discouraged. They should work in righteousness and fulfil their mission.
Besides the teaching in Allah’s Word, and the teaching in Allah’s world, of nature and history and human contacts, many Signs come to the Prophets, which they humbly receive and understand; and many Signs also come to the ungodly, in the shape of warnings or otherwise, which the ungodly either do not heed, or deliberately reject. The Signs in the two cases are not the same, and that becomes one of their perverse arguments against Faith. But Allah’s working will be according to His Will and Plan, and not according to the wishes or whims of the ungodly.

Allah’s Will is the Qad̤a wa Qadr, which is so much misunderstood. That decree is unalterable, and that is His Will. It means that in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, there are laws of justice, mercy, grace, penalty, etc., which work as surely as anything we know. If, then, a man refuses Faith, becomes a rebel, with each step he goes further and further down, and his pace will be accelerated; he will scarcely be able to take spiritual breath, and his recovery, in spite of Allah’s mercy which he has rejected, will be as difficult as if he had to climb up to the skies. On the other hand, the godly will find, with each step, the next step easier. Jesus expressed this truth paradoxically: “He that hath, to him shall be given; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath”: Mark. iv. 25.
Those whom He willeth
To leave straying,—He maketh
Their breast close and constricted,
As if they had to climb
Up to the skies: thus
Doth Allah lay abomination
On those who refuse to believe.

126. This is the Way
Of thy Lord, leading straight:
We have detailed the Signs
For those who Receive admonition.

127. For them will be a Home
Of Peace with
Their Lord: He will be
Their Friend, because
They practised (righteousness).

128. On the day when He will gather
Them all together, (and say):
"O ye assembly of Jinns"
Much (toll) did ye take
Of men." Their friends
Amongst men will say:
"Our Lord! we made profit
From each other: but (alas!)
We reached our term—
Which Thou didst appoint
For us." He will say:
"The Fire be your dwelling-place:
You will dwell therein for ever,
..."
Except as Allah willeth.\textsuperscript{951}
For thy Lord is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

129. Thus do We make
The wrong-doers turn
To each other, because
Of what they earn.\textsuperscript{952}

SECTION 16.

130. "O ye assembly of Jinns
And men! came there not
Unto you messengers from
amongst you,\textsuperscript{953}
Setting forth unto you
My Signs, and warning you
Of the meeting of this Day
Of yours?" They will say:
"We bear witness against
Ourselves." It was
The life of this world
That deceived them. So
Against themselves will they
Bear witness that they
Rejected Faith.

131. (The messengers were sent) thus,
For thy Lord would not
Destroy the towns unjustly whilst
Their occupants were unwarned.

\textsuperscript{951} Eternity and infinity are abstract terms. They have no precise meaning in our human experience. The qualification, "except as Allah willeth," makes it more intelligible, as we can form some idea—however inadequate—of a Will and Plan, and we know Allah by His attribute of Mercy as well as of Justice.

\textsuperscript{952} See n. 950 above. Evil consorts with evil because of their mutual bargains. But in doing so they save the righteous from further temptation.

\textsuperscript{953} "Messengers from amongst you." This is addressed to the whole gathering of men and Jinns.
132. To all are degrees (or ranks)\(^{954}\)
   
   According to their deeds:
   
   For thy Lord
   
   Is not unmindful
   
   Of anything that they do.

133. Thy Lord is Self-sufficient,\(^{955}\)
   
   Full of Mercy: if it were
   
   His Will, He could destroy
   
   You, and in your place
   
   Appoint whom He will
   
   As your successors, even as
   
   He raised you up
   
   From the posterity
   
   Of other people.

134. All that hath been\(^{956}\)
   
   Promised unto you
   
   Will come to pass:
   
   Nor can ye frustrate it
   
   (In the least bit).

135. Say: “O my people!
   
   Do whatever ye can:\(^{957}\)
   
   I will do (my part):
   
   Soon will ye know
   
   Who it is whose end

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954. On good and evil there are infinite degrees, in our deeds and motives; so will there be degrees in our spiritual position. For everything is known to Allah, better than it is to ourselves.

955. Allah is not dependent on our prayer or service. It is out of His Mercy that He desires our own good. Any race or people to whom He gives chances should understand and that its failure does not affect Allah. He could create others in their place, as He did in times past, and is doing in our own day, if only we had the wit to see it.

956. Both the good news and the warning which Allah’s messengers came to give will be fulfilled. Nothing can stop Allah’s Will. See n. 947 to vi. 125.

957. In so far as this is addressed to the Unbelievers it is a challenge: “Do your utmost; nothing will deter me from my duty: we shall see who wins in the end. “Passing from the particular occasion, we can understand it in a more general sense, which is true for all time. Let the evil ones do their worst. Let those who believe do all they can, according to their opportunities and abilities. The individual must do the straight duty that lies before him. In the end Allah will judge, and His judgment is always true and just.
958. There is scathing sarcasm here, which some of the Commentators have missed. The Pagans have generally a big Pantheon, though above it they have a vague idea of a Supreme Allah. But the material benefits go to the godlings, the fancied “partners” of Allah; for they have temples, priests, dedications, etc., while the true and supreme Allah has only lip-worship, or at best a share with numerous “partners.” This was so in Arabia also. The shares assigned to the “partners” went to the priests and hangers-on of the “partners”, who were many and clamorous for their rights. The share assigned to Allah possibly went to the poor, but more probably went to the priests who had the cult of the “partners”, for the Supreme God had no separate priests of His own. It is also said that when heaps were thus laid out, if any portion of Allah’s heap fell into the heaps of the “partners” the priests greedily and promptly appropriated it, while in the contrary case, the “partners” priests were careful to reclaim any portion from what they called “Allah’s heap.” The absurdity of the whole thing is ridiculed. Allah created everything: how can He have a share?

959. The false gods and idols—among many nations, including the Arabs—were supposed to require human sacrifices. Ordinarily such sacrifices are revolting to man, but they are made “alluring”—a sacred rite by Pagan custom, which falsely arrogates to itself the name of religion. Such customs, if allowed, would do nothing but destroy the people who practise them, and make their religion but a confused bundle of revolting superstitions.

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960. A taboo of certain foods is sometimes a device of the priesthood to get special things for itself. It has to be enforced by pretending that the prohibition for others is by the Will of Allah. It is a lie or invention against Allah. Most superstitions are.

961. Cattle dedicated to heathen gods may be reserved from all useful work, in that case they are a dead loss to the community, and they may, besides, do a great deal of damage to fields and crops.

962. If meat is killed in the name of heathen gods, it would naturally not be killed by the solemn rite in Allah's name, by which alone the killing can be justified for food. See n. 698 to v. 4.

963. These are further Pagan superstitions about cattle. Some have already been noted in v. 103, which may be consulted with the notes.
For their (false) attribution
(Of superstitions to Allah),
He will soon punish them:
For He is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

140. Lost are those who slay
Their children, from folly,
Without knowledge, and forbid
Food which Allah hath provided
For them, forging (lies)
Against Allah, They have
Indeed gone astray
And heeded no guidance.

SECTION 17.

141. It is He who produceth
Gardens, with trellises
And without, and dates,
And tilth with produce
Of all kinds, and olives
And pomegranates,
Similar (in kind)
And different (in variety).

Eat of their fruit
In their season, but render
The dues that are proper
On the day that the harvest
Is gathered. But waste not
By excess: for Allah
Loveth not the wasters.

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964. Ansha-a: see vi. 98, n. 923.

965. A beautiful passage, with music to match the meaning. Cf. vi. 99 and notes.

966. “Waste not, want not,” says the English proverb. Here the same wisdom is
preached from a higher motive. See what magnificent means Allah provides in nature for
the sustenance of all His creatures, because He loves them all. Enjoy them in moderation
and be grateful. But commit no excess, and commit no waste: the two things are the
same from different angles of vision. If you do, you take away something from other
creatures and Allah would not like your selfishness.
142. Of the cattle are some
For burden and some for meat: 967
Eat what Allah hath provided
For you, and follow not
The footsteps of Satan:
For he is to you
An avowed enemy.

143. (Take) eight (head of cattle) 968
In (four) pairs:
Of sheep a pair;
And of goats a pair,
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?
Tell me with knowledge
If ye are truthful:

144. Of camels a pair,
And of oxen a pair;
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?
Were ye present when Allah
Ordered you such a thing?
But who doth more wrong
Than one who invents
A lie against Allah,

967. Superstition kills true religion. We come back to the Arab Pagan superstitions
about cattle for food. The horse is not mentioned, because horse flesh was not an article
of diet and there were no superstitions about it. Sheep and goats, camels and oxen were
the usual sources of meat. Sheep and goats were not used as beasts of burden, but camels
(of both sexes) were used for carrying burdens, and oxen for the plough, though cows
were mainly used for milk and meat. The words “some for burden and some for meat”
do not differentiate whole species, except that they give you the first two and the last
two as categories.

968. The superstitions referred to in vi. 139 and v. 103, are further ridiculed in this
verse and the next.
To lead astray men
Without knowledge?
For Allah guideth not
People who do wrong.

SECTION 18.

145. Say: “I find not
In the Message received
By me by inspiration
Any (meat) forbidden
To be eaten by one
Who wishes to eat it,
Unless it be dead meat,
Or blood poured forth,669
Or the flesh of swine,—
For it is an abomination—
Or what is impious, (meat)
On which a name has been
Invoked, other than Allah’s.”
But (even so), if a person
Is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Thy Lord is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

146. For those who followed
The Jewish Law, We forbade
Every (animal) with
Undivided hoof,970

969. Blood poured forth: as distinguished from blood adhering to flesh, or the liver,
or such other internal organs purifying the blood.

970. Zufur may mean claw or hoof; it is in the singular number; but as no animal
has a single claw, and there is no point in a division of claws, we must look to a hoof
for the correct interpretation. In the Jewish Law (Leviticus. xi. 3-6), “whatsoever parteth
the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts” was lawful as
food, but the camel, the coney (rabbit), and the hare were not lawful, because they do
not “divide the hoof”. “Undivided hoof” therefore is the correct interpretation. These
three animals, unlawful to the Jews, are lawful in Islam. Cf. iv. 160.
And We forbade them
The fat of the ox
And the sheep, except
What adheres to their backs
Or their entrails,
Or is mixed up
With a bone:
This in recompense
For their wilful disobedience:
For We are True
(In Our ordinances).

147. If they accuse thee
Of falsehood, say:
"Your Lord is full
Of mercy all-embracing;
But from people in guilt
Never will His wrath
Be turned back.

148. Those who give partners
(To Allah) will say:
"If Allah had wished,
We should not have
Given partners to Him,
Nor would our fathers;
Nor should we have had
Any forbidden thing." So did
Their ancestors argue
Falsely, until they tasted
Of Our wrath. Say:

971. In Leviticus (vii. 23) it is laid down that "ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat." As regards the exceptions, it is to be noticed that priests were enjoined (Leviticus, vii. 6) to eat of the fat in the trespass offering, which was considered holy, viz., "the rump" (back and bone) "and the fat that covereth the inwards" (entrails), (Leviticus, vii. 3).

972. As used by the Pagans, the argument is false, for it implies (a) that men have no personal responsibility, (b) that they are the victims of a Determinism against which they are helpless, and (c) that they might therefore go on doing just what they liked. It is also inconsistent, for if (b) is true, (c) cannot be true. Nor is it meant to be taken seriously.
"Have ye any (certain) Knowledge? If so, produce It before us. Ye follow Nothing but conjecture: Ye do nothing but lie."

149. Say: "With Allah is the argument That reaches home: if it had Been His Will. He could Indeed have guided you all."

150. Say: "Bring forward your witnesses To prove that Allah did Forbid so and so." If they Bring such witnesses, Be not thou amongst them. Nor follow thou the vain Desires of such as treat Our Signs as falsehoods, And Such as believe not In the Hereafter: for they Hold others as equal With their Guardian Lord.

SECTION 19.

151. Say: "Come, I will rehearse What Allah hath (really) Prohibited you from": join not Anything with Him:

973. On the other hand, the argument cuts true and deep, as from Allah to His creatures. Allah is Omnipotent, and can do all that we can conceive. But He, in His Wisdom, has given man some responsibility, and some choice in order to train man's will. If man fails, he is helped in various ways by Allah's mercy and grace. But man cannot go on sinning, and in a state of sin, expect Allah to be pleased with him (vi. 147).

974. The Pagan superstitions were of course baseless, and in many cases harmful and debasing. If Allah's name was taken as supporting them, no true man of God could be taken in, or join in support simply because Allah's name was taken in vain.

975. Cf. vi. 1. Allah, who created and who cherishes and cares for all, should have the first claim on our attention. Those who set up false gods fail to understand Allah's true governance or their own true destiny.

976. Instead of following Pagan superstitions, and being in constant terror of imaginary taboos and prohibitions, we should study the true moral law, whose sanction =
Be good to your parents;
Kill not your children
On a plea of want;—We
Provide sustenance for you
And for them;—come not
Nigh to indecent deeds,
Whether open or secret;
Take not life, which Allah
Hath made sacred, except
By way of justice and law.  \[977\]
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may learn wisdom.

152. And come not nigh
To the orphan’s property,
Except to improve it,
Until he attain the age
Of full strength; give measure
And weight with (full) justice;—
No burden do We place
On any soul, but that
Which it can bear;—
Whenever ye speak, speak justly,
Even if a near relative
Is concerned; and fulfil

\[=\text{is Allah’s Law. The first step is that we should recognise that He is the One and Only Lord and Cherisher. The mention of goodness to parents immediately afterwards suggests: (1) that Allah’s love of us and care for us may—on an infinitely higher plane—be understood by our ideal of parental love, which is purely unselfish: (2) that our first duty among our fellow creatures is to our father and mother, whose love leads us to the conception of divine love. Arising from that is the conception of our converse duties to our children, Allah provides sustenance (material and spiritual) not only for us, but for them; hence any custom like the Pagan custom of sacrificing children to Moloch stands condemned. Then come the moral prohibitions against lewdness and all unseemly acts, relating to sex or otherwise, open or secret. This is followed by the prohibition of killing. All these things are conformable to our own interests, and therefore true wisdom from our own point of view.}\]

\[977.\text{For the comprehensive word } haqq \text{ I have used the two words “justice and law”: other significations implied are: right, truth, what is becoming, etc. It is not only that human life is sacred, but all life is sacred. Even in killing animals for food, a dedicatory formula “in the name of Allah” has to be employed, to make it lawful: see n. 698 to v. 4, and n. 962 to vi. 138.}\]
The Covenant of Allah. 978
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may remember.

153. Verily, this is My Way
Leading straight: follow it:
Follow not (other) paths:
They will scatter you about
From His Path:
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may be righteous. 979

Moreover, We gave Moses
The Book, completing
(Our favour) to those
Who would do right,
And explaining all things980
In detail,—and a guide
And a mercy, that they
Might believe in the meeting
With their Lord

SECTION 20.

155. And this is a Book
Which We have revealed
As a blessing: so follow it
And be righteous, that ye
May receive mercy:

978. Cf. v. 1, and n. 682.

979. Note again the triple refrain with variations, in vi, 151, 152, and 153. In verse 151, we have the moral law, which it is for our own good to follow: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." In verse 152, we have to deal justly and rightly with others; we are apt to think too much of ourselves and forget others: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember." In verse 153 our attention is called to the Straight Way, the Way of Allah, the only Way that leads to righteousness: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous."

980. The revelation to Moses went into the details of people's lives, and thus served as a practical guide to the Jews and after them to the Christians. Admittedly the Message delivered by Christ dealt with general principles only and in no way with details. The message of Islam as in the Qur-an is the next complete guide in point of time after that of Moses.
156. Lest ye should say:
"The Book was sent down
To two Peoples before us,
And for our part, we
Remained unacquainted\(^{981}\)
With all that they learned
By assiduous study;"

157. Or lest ye should say:
"If the Book had only
Been sent down to us,
We should have followed
Its guidance better than they."
Now then hath come
Unto you a Clear (Sign)\(^{982}\)
From your Lord,—and a guide
And a mercy: then who
Could do more wrong
Than one who rejecteth
Allah's Signs, and turneth
Away therefrom? In good time
Shall We requite those
Who turn away from Our Signs,
With a dreadful chastisement
For their turning away.

158. Are they waiting to see
If the angels come to them,
Or thy Lord (Himself),
Or certain of the Signs
Of thy Lord!
The day that certain
Of the Signs of the Lord
Do come, no good

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\(^{981}\) Because the diligent studies of the earlier People of the Book were in languages
foreign to the new People of Islam, or because they were meant for circumstances
different from those of the new world after Islam.

\(^{982}\) The Qur'àn and the life and the teaching of Muḥammad the Messenger of
Allah.
Will it do to a soul
To believe then,
If it believed not before
Nor earned righteousness
Through its Faith. Say:
“Wait ye: we too
Are waiting.”

As for those who divide
Their religion and break up
Into sects, thou hast
No part in them in the least:
Their affair is with Allah:
He will in the end
Tell them the truth
Of all that they did.

He that doeth good
Shall have ten times
As much to his credit:
He that doeth evil
Shall only be recompensed
According to his evil.

No wrong shall be done
Unto them.

983. There is no merit in faith in things that you are compelled to acknowledge when they actually happen. Faith is belief in things which you do not see with your eyes but you understand with your intellect if your whole will consents to it, it results in deeds of righteousness, which are the evidence of your faith.

984. The waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses: the foolish man without faith is waiting for things which will not happen, and is surprised by the real things which do happen; the righteous man of faith is waiting for the fruits of righteousness, of which he has an assured hope.

985. Divide their religion: *farrāq*: *i.e.*, (1) make a distinction between one part of it and another, take the part which suits them and reject the rest; or (2) have religion one day of the week and the world the rest of the six days; or (3) keep "religion in its right place," as if it did not claim to govern the whole life: make a sharp distinction between the secular and the religious, or (4) show a sectarian bias, seek differences in views, so as to break up the unity of Islam.

986. Allah is just as well as generous. To the good the reward is multiplied ten times (*i.e.*, far above merits) on account of His generosity. To the evil, the punishment is no more than commensurate with their sin, and even so the door of mercy is always open to those who sincerely repent and show it by their conduct.
161. Say: “Verily, my Lord
Hath guided me to
A Way that is straight,—
A religion of right,—
The Path (trod) by Abraham
The true in faith,
And he (certainly)
Joined not gods with Allah.”

162. Say: “Truly, my prayer
And my service of sacrifice,
My life and my death,
Are (all) for Allah,
The Cherisher of the Worlds:

163. No partner hath He:
This am I commanded,
And I am the first
Of those who submit
To His Will.

164. Say: “Shall I seek
For (my) Lord
Other than Allah.
When He is the Cherisher
Of all things (that exist)?
Every soul draws the meed
Of its acts on none
But itself: no bearer
Of burdens can bear
The burden of another.
Your return in the end
Is towards Allah: He will tell
You the truth of the things
Wherein ye disputed.”

987. The doctrine of personal responsibility again. We are fully responsible for our acts ourselves: we cannot transfer the consequences of someone else. Nor can any one vicariously atone for our sins. If people have honest doubts or differences about important questions of religion, they should not start futile disputes. All will be clear in the end. Our duty here is to maintain unity and discipline, and do the duty that comes to us.
165. It is He Who hath made
You the inheritors\textsuperscript{988}
Of the earth: He hath raised
You in ranks, some above
Others: that He may try you
In the gifts He hath given you:
For thy Lord is quick
In punishment: yet He
Is indeed Oft-forgiving
Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{988} Cf. ii. 30 and n., where I have translated "Khalifa" as "Vicegerent", it being Allah's Plan to make Adam (as representing mankind) vicegerent on earth. Another idea implied in "Khalifa" is that of "successor, heir, or inheritor," \textit{i.e.}, one who has the ultimate ownership after the present possessors, to whom a life-tenancy has been given by the owner, have passed away. In xv. 23 occurs the striking word "heirs" (\textit{wārīhūn}) as applied to Allah: "We give life and death, and We are the Heirs (or Inheritors)." The same idea occurs in iii. 180, where see n. 485.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT AL-ʿĀʾRĪF, 7

This Sūra is closely connected, both chronologically and in respect of the argument, with the previous Sūra. But it expounds the doctrine of revelation and man’s religious history by illustrations from Adam onwards, through various Prophets, and the details of Moses’s struggles, to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, in whom Allah’s revelation is completed.

Summary.—The note, “learn from the past,” is struck from the very beginning. The opposition of Evil to Good is illustrated by the story of Adam and Iblis. Arrogance leads to rebellion; the rebel is jealous and tempts the natural man, who is warned against deceit and all excess (vii. 1-31).

If the warning is not heeded, the future penalties are indicated, while the privileges and the bliss and peace of the righteous are shown in a picture of the Hereafter, as well as in the power and goodness of Allah in the world that we see around us (vii. 32-58).

The story of Noah and the Flood, and the stories of Hūd, ʿĀlīh, Lot, and Shuʿaib, all point to the lesson that the Prophets were resisted and rejected, but truth triumphed in the end, and evil was humbled, for Allah’s Plan never fails (vii. 59-99).

The story of Moses is told in greater detail, not only in his struggles with Pharaoh, but in his preparation for his mission, and his struggles with his own rebellious people. Even from the time of Moses the coming of the unlettered Prophet was foreshadowed (vii. 100-157).

But the people of Moses frequently lapsed from Allah’s Law as promulgated to them, and transgressed Allah’s Covenant, and they were scattered through the earth in sections (vii. 158-171).

The children of Adam have multiplied, but many of them have rejected truth and go by degrees to destruction in ways that they do not realise. The righteous listen to the Message of Allah, and serve Him in humility (vii. 172-206).
Al-A'rāf. or The Heights.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Alif, Lām, Mim, Sād.¹⁰⁸⁹

2. A Book revealed unto thee.—
So let thy heart be oppressed¹⁰⁹⁰
No more by any difficulty
On that account,—
That with it thou mightest
Warn (the erring) and a reminder to
The Believers.

3. Follow (O men!) the revelation
Given unto you from your Lord,
And follow not, as friends
Or protectors, other than Him.
Little it is ye remember
Of admonition.¹⁰⁹¹

989. This is a combination of four Abbreviated Letters. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I (at the end of Sūra II). The combination here includes the three letters A.L.M., which occurred at the beginning of Sūra II. and are discussed in n. 25 to ii. 1.

The additional letter Sād occurs in combination here and in Sūra xix, and by itself at the beginning of S. xxxviii, and nowhere else. The factor common to S. vii. S. xix. and S. xxxviii. is that in each case the core of the Sūra consists in the stories (qīṣās) of the Prophets. In this Sūra we have the stories of Noah, Hūd, Sāliḥ, Lōt, Shu‘aib, and Moses, leading up to Muḥammad, and in S. xxxviii. the stories of David Solomon, and Job similarly lead up to Muḥammad, occupying three out of the five sections. Sūra xix consists almost entirely of such stories. In this Sūra vii. we have the religious history of mankind traced—the Beginning the Middle, and the End.

990. Heart: in the original, breast. I have used the word most appropriate to the English idiom. The meaning is that Al-Muṣṭāfā is consoled for all the difficulties which he encountered in his mission, with the fact that he had clear guidance in the Book for his preaching.

991. This is added in order that men might not be puffed up with such little knowledge as they possessed, for there are great heights to be scaled in the spiritual kingdom.
4. How many towns have We Destroyed (for their sins)? Our punishment took them On a sudden by night Or while they slept For their afternoon rest.

5. When (thus) Our punishment Took them, no cry Did they utter but this: “Indeed we did wrong.”

6. Then shall we question Those to whom Our Message Was sent and those by whom We sent it.

7. And verily, We shall recount Their whole story With knowledge, for We Were never absent (At any time or place).

8. The balance that day Will be true (to a nicety): Those whose scale (of good) Will be heavy, will prosper:

9. Those whose scale will be light, Will find their souls

992. The religious story of man begins with a prelude. Think of the towns and nations ruined by their iniquity. Allah gave them many opportunities, and sent them warners and teachers. But they arrogantly went on in their evil ways, till some dreadful calamity came and wiped out their traces. In a warm climate the disturbance in the heat of the midday rest is even more than the disturbance at night. It was when the catastrophe came that the people realised their sins, but it was too late.

993. In the final reckoning, the warners and teachers will give evidence of their preaching the truth, and the wicked will themselves have to acknowledge the truth. We picture it like a court scene, when the story is related, but the Judge knows all, even more than the parties can tell.

994. Allah (being all-knowing) is never absent from any place or at any time, for Time and Place are relative conceptions for our limited natures, while He is the Absolute, independent of such relative conceptions.
In perdition, for that they
Wrongfully treated Our Signs.

10. It is We Who have
Placed you with authority
On earth, and provided
You therein with means
For the fulfilment of your life.\(^{995}\)
Small are the thanks
That ye give!

SECTION 2.

11. It is We Who created you
And gave you shape:\(^{996}\)
Then We bade the angels
Prostrate to Adam, and they
Prostrated, not so Iblis;
He refused to be of those\(^{997}\)
Who prostrate.

12. (Allah) said: "What prevented
Thee from prostrating
When I commanded thee?"
He said: "I am better
Than he: Thou didst create
Me from fire, and him from clay".\(^{998}\)

\(^{995}\) That is, all the material things which are necessary to sustain, beautify, and refine life, as well as all those powers, faculties, and opportunities which are instrumental in bringing up life to a higher plane and preparing man for his high destiny.

\(^{996}\) It was after Adam (as standing for all mankind) had been so taught that the angels were asked to prostrate to him, for, by Allah's grace, his status had actually been raised higher. Note the transition from "you" (plural) in the first clause to "Adam" (plural) in the second clause: Adam and mankind are synonymous: the plural is reverted to in vii. 14, 16-18.

\(^{997}\) Iblis not only refused to bow down: he refused to be of those who prostrated. In other words he arrogantly despised the angels who prostrated as well as man to whom they prostrated and he was in rebellion against Allah for not obeying His order. Arrogance, jealousy, and rebellion were his triple crime.

\(^{998}\) Notice the subtle wiles of Iblis: his egotism in putting himself above man, and his falsehood in ignoring the fact that Allah had not merely made man's body from clay, but had given him spiritual form.—in other words, had taught him the nature of things and raised him above the angels.
13. (Allah) said: “Get thee down From it:999 it is not For thee to be arrogant Here: get out, for thou Art of the meanest (of creatures).”

14. He said: “Give me respite Till the day they are Raised up.”

15. (Allah) said: “Be thou Among those who have respite.”1000

16. He said: “Because thou Hast thrown me out1001 (Of the Way), lo! I will Lie in wait for them On Thy Straight Way:

17. “Then will I assault them From before them and behind them, From their right and their left: Nor wilt Thou find, In most of them, Gratitude (for Thy mercies).”1002

18. (Allah) said: “Get out From this, despised

999. The incident marks the ejection of Iblis from the Garden owing to his rebelliousness born of arrogance.

1000. Are there others under respite? Yes, Iblis has a large army of wicked seducers, and those men who are their dupes. For though degradation takes effect at once, its appearance may be long delayed.

1001. Another instance of Iblis’s subtlety and falsehood. He waits till he gets the respite. Then he breaks out into a lie and impertinent defiance. The lie is in suggesting that Allah had thrown him out of the Way, in other words misled him: whereas his own conduct was responsible for his degradation. The defiance is in his setting snares on the Straight Way to which Allah directs men.

1002. The assault of evil is from all sides. It takes advantage of every weak point, and sometimes even our good and generous sympathies are used to decoy us into the snares of evil. Man has every reason to be grateful to Allah for all His loving care and yet man in his folly forgets his gratitude and does the very opposite of what he should do.
And expelled. If any
Of them follow thee,–
Hell will I fill
With you all.

19. "O Adam! dwell thou"
And thy wife in the Garden,
And enjoy (its good things)
As ye wish: but approach not
This tree, lest you become of
The unjust."

20. Then began Satan to whisper
Suggestions to them,
In order to reveal to them
Their shame
That was hidden from them
(before): he said: “Your Lord
Only forbade you this tree,
Lest ye should become angels
Or such beings as live for ever.”

21. And he swore to them
Both, that he was
Their sincere adviser.

22. So by deceit he brought about
Their fall: when they
Tasted of the tree.

1003. Now the story turns to man. He was placed in the Garden of comfort and bliss, but it was Allah’s Plan to give him a limited faculty of choice. All that he was forbidden to do was to approach the Tree, but he succumbed to Satan’s suggestions.


1005. The transition from the name “Iblis” to the name “Satan” is similar to that in ii. 36, where it is explained in n. 52.

1006. Our first parents as created by Allah (and this applies to all of us) were innocent in matters material as well as spiritual. They knew no evil. But the faculty of choice, which was given to them and which raised them above the angels, also implied that they had the capacity of evil, which by the training of their own will, they were to reject. They were warned of the danger. When they fell, they realised the evil. They were (and we are) still given the chance, in this life on a lower plane, to make good and recover the lost status of innocence and bliss.
Their shameful parts became manifest
To them, and they began
To sew together the leaves
Of the Garden over their bodies.
And their Lord called
Unto them: "Did I not
Forbid you that tree,
And tell you that Satan
Was an avowed
Enemy unto you?"

23. They said: "Our Lord
We have wronged our own souls:
If Thou forgive us not
And bestow not upon us
Thy Mercy, we shall
Certainly be lost.

24. (Allah) said: "Get ye down,
With enmity between yourselves.
On earth will be your dwelling-place
And your means of livelihood,—
For a time."

25. He said: "Therein shall ye
Live, and therein shall ye
Die: but from it shall ye
Be taken out (at last)." 1007

SECTION 3.

26. O ye Children of Adam!
We have bestowed raiment 1008

1007. Cf. this whole passage about Adam with the passage in ii. 30-39, and with
other passages in subsequent Sūras. In places the words are precisely the same, and yet
the whole argument is different. In each case it exactly fits the context. In S. ii. the
argument was about the origin of man. Here the argument is a prelude to his history
on earth, and so it continues logically in the next section to address the Children of
Adam, and goes on afterwards with the story of the various prophets that came to guide
mankind. Truth is one, but its apt presentment in words shows a different facet in
different contexts.

1008. The body: is pure and beautiful, as long as it is not defiled by misuse: its
clothing and ornaments may be good or meretricious, according to the motives in the
Upon you to cover
Your shame, as well as
To be an adornment to you.
But the raiment of righteousness—
That is the best.
Such are among the Signs
Of Allah, that they
May receive admonition!

27. O ye Children of Adam!
Let not Satan seduce you,
In the same manner as
He got your parents out
Of the Garden, stripping them
Of their raiment, to expose
Their shame: for he
And his tribe see you
From a position where ye
Cannot see them: We made
The Satans friends
(Only) to those without Faith.

28. When they commit an
Indecency, they say:
"We found our fathers
Doing so"; and "Allah
Commanded us thus":
Say: "Nay, Allah never
Command what is Indecent:
Do ye say of Allah
What ye know not?

= mind and character: if good, they are the symbols of purity and beauty: but the best
clothing and ornament we could have comes from righteousness, which covers the
nakedness of sin, and adorns us with virtues.

1009. That is, by fraud and deceit,—by putting you off your guard and telling lies.
Adam's story here becomes an introduction to the later religious history of mankind: vii.
20-22. In the Garden, Satan's deceit stripped off their raiment of honour and innocence.
In this life on a lower plane he seeks to strip us of the raiment of righteousness. And
he can take up positions on a vantage ground of worldly power or influence or riches,
in which he and his confederates are not seen in their true colours. They may assume
a fair-seeming disguise of disinterested friendship or high motives of patriotism or public
spirit, or loyalty to ancestors, when beneath it there is nothing but spite and selfishness.
29. Say: "My Lord hath commanded Justice; and that ye set Your whole selves (to Him)" at every time and place Of prayer, and call upon Him, Making your devotion sincere Such as He created you In the beginning, so Shall ye return."

30. Some He hath guided: Others have Deserved the loss of their way; In that they took The Satans in preference To Allah, for their friends And protectors, and think That they receive guidance.

31. O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel

1010. For wajh, see ii. 112 and n. 114. Our devotion should be sincere, not as in other men’s sight, but by presenting our whole selves, heart and soul, to Allah. Even so, it may not be enough; for the sight of our heart and soul may be faulty. We should call upon Allah to give us the light, by which our sincerity may commend itself to Him as true sincerity “as in His sight”.

1011. Cf. vi. 94. Our sincerity should be real sincerity, as in His sight for when we return to Him, we shall be stripped of all pretence, even such self-deception as may satisfy us in this life.

1012. Guidance is for all. But in some it takes effect: in others the doors are closed against it, because they have taken Satan for their friend. If they have lost their way, they have richly deserved it; for they deliberately took their choice, even though, in their self-righteousness, they may think that their sin is their virtue, and that their Evil is their Good.

1013. Beautiful apparel: zinat: adornments or apparel for beautiful living: construed to mean not only clothes that add grace to the wearer, but toilet and cleanliness, attention to hair, and other small personal details which no self-respecting man or woman ought to neglect when going solemnly even before a great human dignitary, if only out of respect for the dignity of the occasion. How much more important it is to attend to these details when we solemnly apply our minds to the Presence of Allah. But the caution against excess applies: men must not go to prayer in silks or ornaments appropriate to women. Similarly sober food, good and wholesome, is not to be divorced from offices of religion; only the caution against excess applies strictly. A dirty, unkempt, slovenly Faqir could not claim sanctity in Islam.
At every time and place
Of prayer: eat and drink:
But waste not by excess,
For Allah loveth not the wasters.

SECTION 4.

32. Say: Who hath forbidden
The beautiful (gifts) of Allah,\textsuperscript{1014}
Which He hath produced
For His servants,
And the things, clean and pure,
(Which He hath provided)
For sustenance?
Say: They are, in the life
Of this world, for those
Who believe, (and) purely\textsuperscript{1015}
For them on the Day
Of Judgment. Thus do We
Explain the Signs in detail
For those who know.

33. Say: The things that my Lord
Hath indeed forbidden are:\textsuperscript{1016}
Indecent deeds, whether open
Or secret; sins and trespasses

\textsuperscript{1014}. Asceticism often means the negation of art and beauty, it has no necessary sanctity attached to it.

\textsuperscript{1015}. The beautiful and good things of life are really meant for, and should be the privilege of those with faith in Allah. If they do not always have them in this life, and if there is sometimes the semblance of others having them who do not deserve them, let us remember that this is a test from Allah. In the life to come they will be purely for the faithful.

\textsuperscript{1016}. The forbidden things are described in four categories: (1) what is shameful or unbecoming; the sort of things which have also legal and social sanctions, not of a local but of a universal kind; they may be called offences against society: (2) sins against self and trespasses or excesses of every sort; these are against truth and reason; here would come in indiscipline, failure in doing intangible duties not clearly defined by law; selfishness or self-aggrandisement, which may be condoned by custom and not punished by law, etc.; (3) erecting fetishes or false gods; this is treason against the true God; and (4) corrupting religion by debasing superstitions, etc.
People: *ummat.* I do not know whether “generation” would not be more appropriate here. If so, it would refer to the Time-Spirit, for it affects a whole number of people living contemporaneously, and while we deal grammatically with a group, we really have in mind the individuals composing the group. Anyway, the lesson is what is suggested in the following verses. There is only a limited time for an individual or for a group of people. If they do not make good during that time of probation, the chance is lost, and it cannot come again. We cannot retard or advance the march of time by a single hour or minute. (“Hour” in the text expresses an indefinite but short period of time).
For such, their portion appointed must reach them From the Book of Decrees: Until, when Our messengers (Of death) arrive and take Their souls, they say: “Where are the things That ye used to invoke Besides Allah?” They will reply, “They Have left us in the lurch.” And they will bear witness Against themselves, that they Had rejected Allah.

38. He will say: “Enter ye In the company of The Peoples who passed away Before you—men and Jinns—Into the Fire. Every time A new People enters, It curses its sister-People (That went before), until They follow each other, all Into the Fire. Saith the last About the first: “Our Lord! It is these that misled us: So give them a double Punishment in the Fire.”

1018. It must not be supposed that the rebels against Allah would at once be cut off in this life for their sins. They will get the portion allotted to them, including the good things of life and the chance of repentance and reformation, during their probationary period on this earth. During that period they will have a full run. After that period expires, they will be called to account. They will themselves see that the false things, in which they put their trust, were false, and they will confess their sin, but it will be too late.
To those who reject Our Signs and treat them With arrogance, no opening Will there be of the gates Of heaven, nor will they Enter the Garden, until The camel can pass Through the eye of the needle: Such is Our reward For those in sin.

41. For them there is Hell, as a couch (Below) and folds and folds

SECTION 5.

40. To those who reject Our Signs and treat them With arrogance, no opening Will there be of the gates Of heaven, nor will they Enter the Garden, until The camel can pass Through the eye of the needle: Such is Our reward For those in sin.

41. For them there is Hell, as a couch (Below) and folds and folds

1019. The earlier generations committed a double crime: (1) their own sins, (2) the bad example they set for those that followed. We are responsible not only for our own misdeeds, but for those which our example and our teaching to our juniors may induce them to commit. But it does not lie in the mouth of the juniors to ask for a double punishment for seniors: the motive is not justice, but pure spite, which is itself a sin. Further, the later generations have to answer for two things: (1) their own sins, and (2) their failure to learn from the past, from the experiences of those who preceded them. They should have an advantage in this respect, being “in the foremost files of Time,” but they did not learn. Thus there was nothing to choose between the earlier and later generations in the matter of guilt. But how few people understand this!

In vi. 160, we were told that good was rewarded tenfold, but evil was punished according to its guilt, in perfect justice. This verse is in no way inconsistent with it. Two crimes must have a double penalty.

1020. Wrong-doers have really no sense of honour towards each other. “Honour among thieves” is an exceptional, not an ordinary, experience. In real life, guilt and crime are apt to indulge in mean spite and bitter recriminations against accomplices.
Of covering above: such
Is Our requital of those
Who do wrong.

42. But those who believe
And work righteousness,—
No burden do We place
On any soul, but that
Which it can bear,—
They will be Companions
Of the Garden, therein
To dwell (for ever).

43. And We shall remove
From their hearts any
Rancour;¹⁰²¹
Beneath them will be
Rivers flowing;—and they
Shall say: “Praise be to Allah,
Who hath guided us
To this (felicity): never
Could we have found
Guidance, had it not been
For the guidance of Allah:
Indeed it was the truth
That the Messengers of our Lord
Brought unto us.” And they
Shall hear the cry:
“Behold! the Garden before you!
Ye have been made¹⁰²²

¹⁰²¹. A man who may have suffered or been disappointed may have a lurking sense
of injury at the back of his mind, which may spoil his enjoyment on account of past
memory intruding in the midst of felicity. In such cases memory itself is pain. Even
sorrow is intensified by memory: as Tennyson says, “A sorrow’s crown of sorrows is
remembering happier things.” But that is in this our imperfect life. In the perfect felicity
of the righteous, all such feelings will be blotted out. No “heartaches” then and no
memories of them! The clouds of the past will have dissolved in glorious light, and no
past happiness will be comparable with the perfect happiness which will have then been
attained. Nor will any sense of envy or shortcoming be possible in that perfect bliss.

¹⁰²². Jesus said: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”: Matt. v. 5. Here we are told: blessed are the righteous, for they shall inherit the kingdom of
heaven. The stress here is on actual practical deeds of righteousness: whether they find
their rewards on earth or not is immaterial: their attention is directed to an infinitely
44. The Companions of the Garden Will call out to the Companions Of the Fire: “We have Indeed found the promises Of our Lord to us true: Have you also found Your Lord’s promises true?” They shall say, “Yes”: but\textsuperscript{1023} A Crier shall proclaim Between them: “The curse Of Allah is on the wrong-doers;—

45. “Those who would hinder (men) From the path of Allah Desiring to make Something crooked;\textsuperscript{1024} They were those who Denied the Hereafter.”

46. Between them shall be A veil, and on the Heights\textsuperscript{1025}

= greater reward, the kingdom of heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount this is promised to the “poor in spirit”: Matt. v. 3.

\textsuperscript{1023} The Companions of the Fire can only answer a single word, “Yes,” such is their state of misery. Even so, their voice is drowned in the voice of the Crier, who explains their state: they are in a state of curse, that is, deprivation of the grace and mercy of Allah. Such deprivation is the highest misery that souls can suffer.

\textsuperscript{1024} The unrighteous reflect their own crooked minds when the path of Allah is before them. Instead of going straight, they try to find something in it that suits their own crooked ideas. Frankly they have no faith in the final Goal, the Hereafter.

\textsuperscript{1025} This is a difficult passage, and Commentators have interpreted it in different ways. Three distinct schools of thought may be discerned in the interpretation. (1) One school thinks that the men on the Heights are angels, or such men of exalted spiritual dignity (e.g., the great prophets), as will be able to know the souls at sight as regards their real worth: the Heights will be their exalted stations, from which they will welcome the righteous with a salutation of peace, even before the righteous have entered heaven; the salutation of peace being itself an assurance of salvation to those whom they salute. (2) Another school of thought thinks that the men on the Heights are such souls as are not decidedly on the side of merit or decidedly on the side of sin, but evenly balanced on a partition between heaven and hell. Their case is yet to be decided, but their salutation to the righteous is a wistful salutation, because they hope for Allah’s Mercy.
SECTION 6

47. When their eyes shall be turned Towards the Companions Of the Fire, they will say: “Our Lord! send us not To the company Of the wrong-doers.”

48. The men on the Heights Will call to certain men Whom they will know From their marks, saying: “Of what profit to you Were your hoards and your Arrogant ways?

49. “Behold! are these not The men whom you swore That Allah with His Mercy

1026. Their eyes: according to interpretation (2) of the last note, “their” would refer to the people whose fate has not yet been decided, and the speech would be theirs; according to interpretations (1) and (3) in that note, “their” would refer to the Companions of the Garden, who would realise the terrible nature of hell, and express their horror of it. I prefer the latter. Then the mention of the “men on the Heights” and their speech in verse 48 comes in naturally as a different kind of speech from a different kind of men.

1027. This speech is in three parts: (1) the last lines of this verse are addressed to the Companions of the Fire, reminding them (as a bench of judges might speak to a prisoner) of the futility of their wealth and riches and arrogance in their earthly life: (2) the second part, in the first half of verse 49, recalls to their minds how false was their contempt of the good but lowly men who are now to be the inheritors of heaven: and (3) the latter part of verse 49, “enter ye the Garden” is addressed to the Blessed, to give them a welcome to their state of felicity.
Would never bless?
Enter ye the Garden:
No fear shall be on you,
Nor shall ye grieve."

50. The Companions of the Fire
Will call to the Companions
Of the Garden: "Pour down
To us water or anything
That Allah doth provide
For your sustenance."
They will say: "Both
These things hath Allah forbidden
To those who rejected Him;" 1028

51. "Such as took their religion
To be mere amusement
And play, and were deceived
By the life of the world."
That day shall We forget them1029
As they forgot the meeting
Of this day of theirs,
And as they were wont
To reject Our Signs.

52. For We had certainly
Sent unto them a Book,
Based on knowledge,
Which We explained
In detail—a guide
And a mercy
To all who believe.

1028. The Companions of the Fire will thirst for water and not get it, and for sustenance which will not be theirs, while the Companions of the Garden will have the crystal waters of the springs and rivers and they will enjoy the bliss of Allah’s Countenance, which will be their supreme nourishment and the fruit of their life of probation and seeking. These things will not be transferable. Cf. also xxxvii. 41-47, 62-67.

1029. “Forgetfulness” may be involuntary, from a defect of memory, or figuratively, a deliberate turning away from, or ignoring of, something we do not want, as when we say in an argument, “you conveniently forget that so-and-so is so-and-so.” Here the latter kind is meant. If men deliberately ignored the Hereafter in spite of warnings, can they expect to be received by Allah. Whom they themselves rejected?
53. Are they waiting for its fulfilment?
On the day when it is fulfilled
Those who have forgotten it
Before will say: “The Messengers
Of our Lord did indeed
Bring true (tidings). Have we
No intercessors now to intercede
On our behalf? Or could we
Be sent back? Then should we
Behave differently from our
Behaviour in the past.”
In fact they will have lost
Their souls, and the things
They forged will leave
Them in the lurch.

SECTION 7.

54. Your Guardian Lord
Is Allah, Who created
The heavens and the earth
In six Days, then He
Settled Himself on the Throne.

1030. If those without Faith want to wait and see what happens in the Hereafter, they will indeed learn the truth, but it will be too late for them to profit by it then. All the false ideals and false gods which they put their trust upon will leave them in the lurch. If they thought that the goodness or greatness of others would help them, they will be undeceived on the day when their personal responsibility will be enforced. There will be no salvation except on their own record. How they will then wish that they had another chance! But their chance will be gone.

1031. A sublime verse, comparable to the Throne Verse ii. 255. As for the Creation in six Days, in xxii. 47, we are told that a Day in the sight of Allah is like a thousand years of our reckoning, and in lxx. 4, the comparison is with 50,000 of our years. In the history of our material earth, we may reckon six great epochs of evolution.

1032. Here, we are told of the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days. But lest we should be obsessed with the Jewish idea that Allah rested on the seventh day, we are told that the Creation was but a prelude to Allah’s work: for His authority is exercised constantly by the laws which He establishes and enforces in all parts of His Creation. The beautiful imagery of night and day seeking out each other in rapid succession is still further enforced in the Arabic by the double accusative of the verb yugshi, showing the mutual interactions of the day and the night, each covering the other in turn. The heavenly bodies show an order which is evidence of His constant care and government. Not only that, but it is only He Who creates, maintains, and governs, and no one else.
He draweth
The night as a veil
O'er the day, each seeking
The other in rapid succession:
And the sun,
The moon, and the stars,
(All) are subserviant
By His Command.
Verily, His are the
Creation and the Command
Blessed
Be Allah, the Cherisher
And Sustainer of the Worlds!

55. Call on your Lord
With humility and in private: 1033
For Allah loveth not
Those who trespass beyond bounds.

56. Do not mischief on the earth,
After it hath been 1034
Set in order, but call
On Him with fear 1035
And longing (in your hearts):
For the Mercy of Allah
Is (always) near
To those who do good.

57. It is He Who sendeth
The Winds like heralds

1033. In prayer, we must avoid any arrogance or show or loudness, or vanity of requests or words. If excess is condemned in all things, it is specially worthy of condemnation when we go humbly before our Lord—we poor creatures before the Omnipotent Who knoweth all.

1034. The man who prays with humility and earnestness finds the ground prepared by Allah for his spiritual advancement. It is all set in order, and cleared of weeds. He does not, like the wicked, upset that order, to introduce evil or mischief into it.

1035. Fear and longing: the fear of Allah is really a fear lest we should diverge from His Will, or do anything which would not be pleasing to Him: unlike ordinary fear, it therefore brings us nearer to Allah, and in fact nourishes our longing and desire for Him.
Of glad tidings, going before. His Mercy: when they have Carried the heavy-laden Clouds. We drive them To a land that is dead, Make rain to descend thereon, And produce every kind Of harvest therewith: thus Shall We raise up the dead: Perchance ye may remember.

58. From the land that is clean And good, by the Will Of its Cherisher, springs up Produce, (rich) after its kind. But from the land that is Bad, springs up nothing But that which is scanty Thus do we explain the Signs By various (symbols) to those Who are grateful.

1036. The Parable is complete in its triple significance. (1) In the physical world the winds go like heralds of glad tidings; they are the advance guard, behind which is coming a great army of winds driving heavily laden clouds before it; the wise Providence of Allah is their General, who directs them towards a parched land, on which the clouds deliver their gladdening showers of mercy, which convert the dead land into a living, fertile, and beautiful land bearing a rich harvest. (2) In the spiritual world, the winds are the great motive forces in the mind of man, or in the world around him, that bring the clouds or instruments of Allah's Mercy, which descend and fertilise souls hitherto spiritually dead. (3) If we can see or experience such things in our life here below, can we doubt the resurrection?

1037. The triple parable explained in the last note is here continued. (1) In the physical world, the fertilising showers of rain yield a rich harvest on good soil, but bad soil yields little or nothing. (2) In the spiritual world, also, Allah's Mercies evoke no response in some souls which have chosen evil. (3) In the final reckoning, though all will be raised, not all will achieve the fulfilment of their lives.

1038. Those who are grateful are those who joyfully receive Allah's Message, and respond to it by deeds of righteousness.
SECTION 8.

59. We sent Noah to his people. He said: "O my people! Worship Allah! ye have No other god but Him. I fear for you the Punishment Of a dreadful Day!"

60. The leaders of his people Said: "Ah! we see thee In evident error."

61. He said: "O my people! There is no error In me: on the contrary I am a messenger from The Lord and Cherisher Of the Worlds!"

62. "I but convey to you" The Message of my Lord. Sincere is my advice to you, And I know from Allah Something that ye know not.

63. "Do ye wonder that There hath come to you A reminder from your Lord, Through a man of your own People, to warn you, So that ye may fear Allah And haply receive His Mercy?"

64. But they rejected him, And We delivered him, And those with him, In the Ark:

1039. The story of Noah in greater detail will be found in xi. 25-49. Here the scheme is to tell briefly the stories of some of the Prophets between Noah and Moses, and lead up thus to a lesson for the contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad himself. When Noah attacked the wickedness of his generation, he was laughed at for a madman, for he mentioned the Great Day to come in the Hereafter. Allah's retribution came soon afterwards—the great Flood, in which his unbelieving people were drowned, but he and those who believed in him and came into the Ark were saved.
The tomb of the Prophet Hūd (qabr Nabi Ḥūd) is still traditionally shown in Ḥadhramaut, latitude 16° N, and longitude 49 ½ E, about 90 miles north of Mukalla. There are ruins and inscriptions in the neighbourhood. See “Ḥadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled,” by D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, Leyden, 1932.

1040. The ‘Ād people, with their prophet Hūd, are mentioned in many places. See especially xxvi. 123-140, and xlvi. 21-26. Their story belongs to Arabian tradition. Their eponymous ancestor ‘Ād was fourth in generation from Noah, having been a son of ‘Aus, the son of Aram, the son of Sám, the son of Noah. They occupied a large tract of country in Southern Arabia, extending from Ummān at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf to Ḥadhramaut and Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people were tall in stature and were great builders. Probably the long, winding tracts of sands (aṣqāf) in their dominions (xlvi. 21) were irrigated with canals. They forsook the true God, and oppressed their people. A three years famine visited them, but yet they took no warning. At length a terrible blast of wind destroyed them and their land, but a remnant, known as the second ‘Ād or the Thamūd (see below) were saved, and afterwards suffered a similar fate for their sins.
68. "I but convey to you
   The messages of my Lord:
   I am to you a sincere
   And trustworthy adviser".

69. "Do ye wonder that
   There hath come to you
   A message from your Lord
   Through a man of your own
   People, to warn you?
   Call in remembrance
   That He made you
   Inheritors after the people
   Of Noah, and gave you
   A stature tall among the nations.
   Call in remembrance
   The benefits (ye have received)
   From Allah: that so
   Ye may prosper."

70. They said: "Comest thou
   To us, that we may worship
   Allah alone, and give up
   That which our fathers used to worship
   Bring us what thou
   Threatenest us with,
   If so be that thou
   Tellest the truth!"

71. He said: "Punishment
   And wrath have already
   Come upon you from your Lord:
   Dispute ye with me
   Over names which ye

1041. The past tense may be understood in three ways. (1) A terrible famine had already afflicted the 'Ad as a warning before they were overwhelmed in the final blast of hot wind (see the last note). (2) The terrible insolence and sin into which they had fallen was itself a punishment. (3) The prophetic past is used, as much as to say: "Behold! I see a dreadful calamity: it is already on you!"

1042. Why dispute over names and imaginary gods, the inventions of your minds? Come to realities. If you ask for the punishment and are waiting in insolent defiance, what can I do but also wait—in fear and trembling for you, for I know that Allah's punishment is sure!"
SECTION 10.

72. We saved him and those Who adhered to him, By Our Mercy and We Cut off the roots of those Who rejected Our Signs And did not believe.

73. To the Thamūd people (We sent) Šāliḥ, one Of their own brethren: He said: “O my people!

1043. The Thamūd people were the successors to the culture and civilisation of the ‘Ād people, for whom see n. 1040 and vii. 65 above. They were cousins to the ‘Ād, apparently a younger branch of the same race. Their story also belongs to Arabian tradition, according to which their eponymous ancestor Thamūd was a son of ‘Abir (a brother of Aram), the son of Sām, the son of Noah. Their seat was in the north-west corner of Arabia (Arabia Petraea), between Madinah and Syria. It included both rocky country (hijr. xv. 80), and the spacious fertile valley (Wādī) and plains country of Qurū, which begins just north of the City of Madinah and is traversed by the Hijāz Railway. When the holy Prophet in the 9th year of the Hijra led his expedition to Taḥbūk (about 400 miles north of Madinah) against the Roman forces, on a reported Roman invasion from Syria, he and his men came across the archaeological remains of the Thamūd. The recently excavated rock city of Petra, near Ma‘ān, may go back to the Thamūd, though its architecture has many features connecting it with Egyptian and Graeco-Roman culture overlaying what is called by European writers Nabataean Culture. Who were the Nabateans? They were an old Arab tribe which played a considerable part in history after they came into conflict with Antigonus I in 312 B.C. Their capital was Petra, but they extended their territory right up to the Euphrates. In 85 B.C. they were lords of Damascus under their king Ḥāritha (Aretas of Roman history). For some time they were allies of the Roman Empire and held the Red Sea littoral. The Emperor Trajan reduced them and annexed their territory in A.D. 105. The Nabateans succeeded the Thamūd of Arabian tradition. The Thamūd are mentioned by name in an inscription of the Assyrian King Sargon, dated 715 B.C., as a people of Eastern and Central Arabia (Encyclopaedia of Islam). See also Appendix VII to S. xxvi.

With the advance of material civilisation, the Thamūd people became godless and arrogant, and were destroyed by an earthquake. Their prophet and warner was Šāliḥ, and the crisis in their history is connected with the story of a wonderful she-camel: see next note.
Worship Allah; ye have
No other god but Him.
Now hath come unto you
A clear (Sign) from your Lord!
This she-camel of Allah
Is a Sign unto you:
So leave her to graze
In Allah's earth, and let her
Come to no harm,
Or ye shall be seized
With a grievous punishment.”

74. “And remember how He
Made you inheritors
After the ‘Ád people
And gave you habitations
In the land: ye build
For yourselves palaces and castles
In (open) plains, and carve out
Homes in the mountains;
So bring to remembrance
The benefits (ye have received)
From Allah, and refrain
From evil and mischief
On the earth.”

75. The leaders of the arrogant Party among his people said
To those who were reckoned
Worship Allah; ye have
No other god but Him.
Now hath come unto you
A clear (Sign) from your Lord!
This she-camel of Allah
Is a Sign unto you:
So leave her to graze
In Allah’s earth, and let her
Come to no harm,
Or ye shall be seized
With a grievous punishment.”

1044. The story of this wonderful she-camel, that was a sign to the Thamūd, is variously told in tradition. We need not follow the various versions in the traditional story. What we are told in the Qurʾān is: that (1) she was a Sign or Symbol, which the prophet Shāliḥ, used for a warning to the haughty oppressors of the poor: (2) there was scarcity of water, and the arrogant or privileged classes tried to prevent the access of the poor or their cattle to the springs, while Shāliḥ intervened on their behalf (xxvi. 155, liv. 28); (3) like water, pasture was considered a free gift of nature, in this spacious earth of Allah (vii. 73), but the arrogant ones tried to monopolise the pasture also; (4) this particular she-camel was made a test case (liv. 27) to see if the arrogant ones would come to reason; (5) the arrogant ones, instead of yielding to the reasonable rights of the people, ham-strung the poor she-camel and slew her, probably secretly (xci. 14, liv. 29): the cup of their iniquities was full, and the Thamūd people were destroyed by a dreadful earthquake, which threw them prone on the ground and buried them with their houses and their fine buildings.
Powerless-those among them\(^\text{1045}\) Who believed: “Know ye Indeed that Șāliḥ is A messenger from his Lord?” They said: “We do indeed Believe in the revelation\(^\text{1046}\) Which hath been sent Through him.”

76. The arrogant party said: “For our part, we reject What ye believe in.”

77. Then they ham-strung The she-camel, and insolently Defied the order of their Lord, Saying: “O Șāliḥ! bring about Thy threats, if thou art A messenger (of Allah)!"

78. So the earthquake took them\(^\text{1047}\) Unawares, and they lay Prostrate in their homes In the morning!

79. So Șāliḥ left them,\(^\text{1048}\)

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1045. As usually happens in such cases, the Believers were the lowly and the humble, and the oppressors were the arrogant, who in selfishly keeping back nature’s gifts (which are Allah’s gifts) from the people, were deaf to the dictates of justice and kindness. Șāliḥ took the side of the unprivileged, and was therefore himself attacked.

1046. Notice the relation between the question and the answer. The godless chiefs wanted to discredit Șāliḥ, and put a personal question, as much as to say, “Is he not a liar?” The Believers took back the issue to the higher plane, as much as to say, “We know he is a man of Allah, but look at the justice for which he is making a stand: to resist it is to resist Allah”. The answer of the godless was to reject Allah in words, and in action to commit a further act of cruelty and injustice in ham-stringing and killing the she-camel, at the same time hurling defiance at Șāliḥ and his God.

1047. The retribution was not long delayed. A terrible earthquake came and buried the people and destroyed their boasted civilisation. The calamity must have been fairly extensive in area and intense in the terror it inspired, for it is described (liv. 31) as a “single mighty blast” (sa’īhātān wāhidātān), the sort of terror-inspiring noise which accompanies all big earthquakes.

1048. Șāliḥ was saved by Allah’s mercy as a just and righteous man. His speech here may be either a parting warning, or it may be a soliloquy lamenting the destruction of his people for their sin and folly.
1049. Lūṭ is the Lot of the English Bible. His story is biblical, but freed from some shameful features which are a blot on the biblical narrative, (e.g., see Gen. xix. 30-36). He was a nephew of Abraham, and was sent as a Prophet and warner to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities utterly destroyed for their unspeakable sins. They cannot be exactly located, but it may be supposed that they were somewhere in the plain east of the Dead Sea. The story of their destruction is told in the 19th chapter of Genesis. Two angels in the shape of handsome young men came to Lot in the evening and became his guests by night. The inhabitants of Sodom in their lust for unnatural crime invaded Lot's house but were repulsed. In the morning, the angels warned Lot to escape with his family. “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” (Gen. xix. 24-26).

Note that Lot's people are the people to whom he is sent on a mission. He was not one of their own brethren, as was Sāliḥ or Shu‘aib. But he looked upon his people as his brethren (I. 13), as a man of God always does.
Indeed men who want
To be clean and pure!" 1050

83. But We saved him
And his family, except
His wife: she was
Of those who lagged behind 1051

84. And we rained down on them
A shower (of brimstone): 1052
Then see what was the end
Of those who indulged
In sin and crime!

SECTION 11.

85. To the Madyan people 1053

1050. An instance of the withering sarcasm that hardened sinners use against the righteous. They wound with words, and follow up the insult with deeds of injustice, thinking that they would bring the righteous into disgrace. But Allah looks after His own, and in the end, the wicked themselves are overthrown when the cup of their iniquity is full.

1051. In the biblical narrative she looks back, a physical act (see n. 1049): here she is a type of those who lag behind, i.e., whose mental and moral attitude, in spite of their association with the righteous, is to hark back to the glitter of wickedness and sin. The righteous should have one sole objective, the Way of Allah. They should not look behind, nor yet to the right or the left.

1052. The shower is expressly stated in Q. xi. 82 to have been of stones. In xv. 73-74, we are told that there was a terrible blast or noise (saihat) in addition to the shower of stones. Taking these passages into consideration along with Gen. xix. 24. (see n. 1049 above), I think it is legitimate to translate: “a shower of brimstone.”

1053. “Madyan” may be identified with “Midian”. Midian and the Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, though the particular incident here mentioned belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition. The Midianites were of Arab race, though, as neighbours of the Canaanites, they probably intermixed with them. They were a wandering tribe: it was Midianite merchants to whom Joseph was sold into slavery, and who took him to Egypt. Their principal territory in the time of Moses was in the northeast of the Sinai Peninsula, and east of the Amalekites. Under Moses the Israelites waged a war of extermination against them: they slew the kings of Midian, slaughtered all the males, burnt their cities and castles, and captured their cattle (Num. xxxi. 7-11). This sounds like total extermination. Yet a few generations afterwards, they were so powerful that the Israelites for their sins were delivered into the captivity of the Midianites for seven years: both the Midianites and their camels were without number: and the Israelites hid from them in “dens..... caves, and strongholds” (Judges vii. 1-6). Gideon destroyed them again, (Judges vii. 1-25), say about two centuries after Moses. As the decisive battle was near the hill of Moreh, not far south of Mount Tabor, we may localise the Midianites =
We sent Shu‘aib,\textsuperscript{1054} one
Of their own brethren: he said:
"O my people! worship Allah;
Ye have no other god
But Him. Now hath come
Unto you a clear (Sign)
From your Lord! Give just
Measure and weight, nor withhold
From the people the things
That are their due; and do
No mischief on the earth
After it has been set
In order: that will be best
For you, if ye have Faith."

= on this occasion in the northern parts of the Jordan valley, at least 200 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula.

This and the previous destruction under Moses were local, and mention no town of Midian. In later times there was a town of Madyan on the east side of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It is mentioned in Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy: \textit{(Encyclopaedia of Islam)}. Then it disappears from geography. In Muslim times it was a revived town with quite a different kind of population, but it never flourished. The Midianites disappeared from history.

\textsuperscript{1054} Shu‘aib belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties (see n. \textsuperscript{1064} below). If, as the Commentators tell us, Shu‘aib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great-grandson of Madyan (a son of Abraham), he would be only about a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew Bible would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jathro was a Midianite and that another name, Hobah, is mentioned for a father-in-law of Moses in Num x. 29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly a nomad tribe, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. Shu‘aib’s mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (vii. 91). If this happened in the century after Abraham, there is no difficulty in supposing that they were again a numerous tribe, three or five centuries later, in the time of Moses (see last note). As they were a mixed wandering tribe, both their resilience and their eventual absorption can be easily understood. But the destruction of the settlement or settlements (if the Wood or Aika was a separate settlement, see n. \textsuperscript{2000} to xv. 78) to which Shu‘aib was sent to preach was complete, and no traces of it now remain.

The name of the highest mountain of Yemen, Nabi Shu‘aib (11,000 ft.) has probably no connection with the geographical territory of the nomad Midianites, unless we suppose that their wanderings extended so far south from the territories mentioned in the last note.
The Midianites were in the path of a commercial highway of Asia, viz., that between two such opulent and highly organised nations as Egypt and the Mesopotamian group comprising Assyria and Babylonia. Their besetting sins are thus characterised here: (1) giving short measure or weight, whereas the strictest commercial probity is necessary for success. (2) a more general form of such fraud, depriving people of rightful dues. (3) producing mischief and disorder, whereas peace and order had been established (again in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense); (4) not content with upsetting settled life, taking to highway robbery, literally as well as (5) metaphorically, in two ways, viz., cutting off people from access to the worship of Allah, and abusing religion and piety for crooked purposes, i.e., exploiting religion itself for their crooked ends, as when a man builds houses of prayer out of unlawful gains or ostentatiously gives charity out of money which he has obtained by force or fraud, etc. After setting out this catalogue of besetting sins Shu'aib makes two appeals to the past: (1) You began as an insignificant tribe, and by Allah's favour you increased and multiplied in numbers and resources: do you not then owe a duty to Allah to fulfil His Law? (2) What was the result in the case of those who fell into sin! Will you not take warning by their example?

So Shu'aib began his argument with faith in Allah as the source of all virtue, and ended it with destruction as the result of all sin. In the next verse he pleads with them to end their controversies and come to Allah.

Madyan is torn by internal conflict. Shu'aib comes as a peace-maker, not in virtue of his own wisdom, but by an appeal to the truth, righteousness and justice of Allah. As we see later, the real motives of his opponents were selfishness, arrogance, violence, lawlessness, and injustice. But he appeals to their better nature, and is prepared to argue on the basis that the party which wants to suppress those who believe in Allah's Message and in righteousness, has some sincere mental difficulty in accepting Shu'aib's mission. "If," he says to them, "that is the case, do you think it justifies your intolerance, =

86. "And squat not on every road. Breathing threats, hindering From the path of Allah Those who believe in Him, And seek to make it crooked; But remember how ye were Little, and He gave you increase. And see What was the end Of those who did mischief. 1055

87. "And if there is a party Among you who believes In the Message with which I have been sent, and a party Which does not believe, 1056 Hold yourselves in patience Until Allah doth decide
1058. The gentle, all-persuasive arguments of Shu'aib fell on hard hearts. Their only reply was: "Turn him out!—him and his people." When courtesy and a plea for toleration are pitted against bigotry, what room is there for logic? But bigotry and unrighteousness have their own crooked ways of pretending to be tolerant. "Yes," they said. "We are very tolerant and long-suffering! But we are for our country and religion. Come back to the ways of our fathers, and we shall graciously forgive you!" "Ways of their fathers!"—they meant injustice and oppression, high-handedness to the poor and the weak, fraud under cover of religion, and so on! Perhaps the righteous were the poor and the weak. Were they likely to love such ways? Perhaps there was implied a bribe as well as a threat. "If you come back and wink at our iniquities, you shall have scraps of prosperity thrown at you. If not, out you go in disgrace!"

1059. The answer of the righteous is threefold. (1) "Coming back is all very well. But do you mean that we should practise the vices we detest?" (2) "You want us to lie against our conscience and our Lord, after we have seen the evil of your ways." (3) = your violence, or your persecution? On the contrary, events will prove by themselves who is right and who is wrong." To the small band who believe in his mission and follow his teaching, he would preach patience and perseverance. His argument to them would be: "You have faith; surely your faith is strong enough to sustain you in the hope that Allah's truth will triumph in the end; there is no cause for despair or dejection."

How exactly these past experiences fit the times of our holy guide Muḥammad! And it is for that analogy and that lesson that the stories of Noah, Hūd, Śāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu'aib are related to us,—all different, and yet all pointing to the great lessons in Muḥammad's life.

1057. See the argument in the last note. Allah's decision may come partly in this very life, either for the same generation or for succeeding generations, by the logic of external events. But in any case it is bound to come spiritually on a higher plane eventually, when the righteous will be comforted and the sinners will be convinced of sin from their own inner conviction.

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If we returned to your religion
After Allah hath rescued
Us therefrom; nor could we
By any manner of means
Return thereto unless it be
As in the will of Allah, 
Our Lord. Our Lord
Comprehends all things in
His knowledge
In Allah is our trust.
Our Lord! Decide thou
Between us and our people
In truth, for thou
Art the best to decide.”

90. The leaders, the Unbelievers
Among his people, said:
“If ye follow Shu’aib,
Be sure then ye are ruined!”

="Neither bribes nor threats, nor specious appeals to patriotism or ancestral religion can move us: the matter rests with Allah. Whose will and pleasure we obey, and on Whom alone we rely. His knowledge will search out all your specious pretences."

1060. This, of course, does not mean that any one can ever return to evil ways with Allah’s consent. Shu’ain has already emphatically repudiated the idea of returning “to your ways after Allah hath rescued us therefrom.” But even if their ways had been good, the human will, he goes on to say, has no data to rely upon, and he and his followers would only be guided by Allah’s Will and Plan.

1061. Having answered the insincere quibblers among the godless, the righteous turn to Allah in earnest prayer. The endless controversies in this world about abstract or speculative things never end even where both sides are sincere in their beliefs. The decision must be taken to Allah, Who sits on the throne of Truth, and Whose decisions will, therefore, be free from the errors and imperfections of all human judgment. The sincere have nothing to fear in the appeal to Him, as their motives are pure.

1062. The answer of the Unbelievers is characteristic. As all their bribes and subtleties have failed, they resort to threats, which are worse than the argument of the stick. “All right,” they say, “there is nothing but ruin before you!” That means that the Believers will be persecuted, held up to obloquy, ostracised, and prevented from access to all means of honourable livelihood; their families and dependants will be insulted, reviled, and tortured, if they could but be got into the enemy’s power: their homes destroyed, and their names held up to ridicule and contempt even when they are gone. But, as verse 92 says, their wicked designs recoiled on themselves; it was the wicked who were ruined and blotted out.
11164.

Can we get any idea of the chronological place of the destruction of the Midianites? In n. 1053 (vii. 85) we have discussed the geographical aspects. The following considerations will help us in getting some idea of their period.

1. The stories of Noah, Hûd, Ŝâlih, Lût, and Shu'âib seem to be in chronological order. Therefore Shu'âib came after Abraham, whose nephew Lût was.

2. If Shu'âib was in the fourth generation from Abrahaîm, (see n. 1590 to xi. 89), it would be impossible for him to have been a contemporary of Moses, who came many centuries later. This difficulty is recognised by Ibn Ka'dîrî and other classical commentators.

3. Shu'âib's messages attacked the many sins of his people (see n. 1055) and are, therefore, expressed in the plural, while Ŝâlih's fight was chiefly against selfish arrogance, and his message is expressed in the singular; (2) the Thamûd were the more cultured people of the two, and perished in their own pride; as Ŝâlih said, “ye love not good counsellors’; the Midianites were a rougher people, and their minds were less receptive of argument or faith; as Shu'âib said, they were a people who “refused to believe.”

1063. The fate of the Madyan people is described in the same terms as that of the Thamûd in verse 78 above. An earthquake seized them by night, and they were buried in their own homes, no longer to vex Allah's earth. But a supplementary detail is mentioned in xxvi. 189, “the punishment of a day of overshadowing gloom,” which may be understood to mean a shower of ashes and cinders accompanying a volcanic eruption. Thus a day of terror drove them into their homes, and the earthquake finished them. The lament of Shu'âib in verse 93 is almost the same as that of Ŝâlih in verse 79, with two differences: (1) Shu'âib's messages attacked the many sins of his people (see n. 1055) and are, therefore, expressed in the plural, while Ŝâlih's fight was chiefly against selfish arrogance, and his message is expressed in the singular; (2) the Thamûd were the more cultured people of the two, and perished in their own pride; as Ŝâlih said, “ye love not good counsellors’; the Midianites were a rougher people, and their minds were less receptive of argument or faith; as Shu'âib said, they were a people who “refused to believe.”

91. But the earthquake took them Unawares, and they lay Prostrate in their homes Before the morning! 1063

92. The men who rejected Shu'âib became as if They had never been In the homes where they Had flourished: the men Who rejected Shu'âib— It was they who were ruined!

93. So Shu'âib left them, Saying: “O my people! I did indeed convey to you The Messages for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel, But how shall I lament Over a people who refuse To believe!” 1064

1064. Can we get any idea of the chronological place of the destruction of the Midianites? In n. 1053 (vii. 85) we have discussed the geographical aspects. The following considerations will help us in getting some idea of their period. (1) The stories of Noah, Hûd, Ŝâlih, Lût, and Shu'âib seem to be in chronological order. Therefore Shu'âib came after Abraham, whose nephew Lût was. (2) If Shu'âib was in the fourth generation from Abrahaîm, (see n. 1590 to xi. 89), it would be impossible for him to have been a contemporary of Moses, who came many centuries later. This difficulty is recognised by Ibn Ka'dîrî and other classical commentators. (3) The identification of Shu'âib with Jethro the father-in-law of Moses is without warrant; see n. 1054 (vii. 85). (4) Shu'âib =...
SECTION 12.

94. Whenever We sent a prophet
To a town, We took up
Its people in suffering
And adversity, in order
That they might call in humility. 1065

95. Then We changed their suffering
Into prosperity, until they grew1066
And multiplied, and began
To say: “Our fathers (too)
Were touched by suffering
And affluence”. Behold!
We took them to account
Of a sudden, while they
Realised not (their peril).

96. If the people of the towns
Had but believed and feared
Allah, We should indeed
Have opened out to them
(All Kinds of) blessings
From heaven and earth;

= must have been before Moses; see vii. 103. (5) The Medianites who were destroyed by Moses and by Gideon after him (n. 1053) were local remnants, as we may speak of the Jews at the present day; but their existence as a nation in their original home-lands seems to have ended before Moses: “they became as if they had never been in the homes where they had flourished” (vii. 92). (6) Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy mention a town of Madyan, but it was not of any importance (n. 1053). (7) After the first centuries of the Christian era, Madyan as a town appears as an unimportant place resting on its past.

1065. Man was originally created pure. The need of a prophet arises when there is some corruption and iniquity, which he is sent to combat. His coming means much trial and suffering, especially to those who join him in his protest against wrong. Even so peaceful a prophet as Jesus said: “I came not to send peace but a sword” (Matt. x. 34). But it is all in Allah’s Plan, for we must learn humility if we would be worthy of Him.

1066. Allah gives enough rope to the sinful. They grow and multiply, and become scornful. Neither suffering nor affluence teaches them the lessons which they are meant to learn, viz., patience and humility, gratitude and kindness to others. They take adversity and prosperity alike as a matter of chance. “O yes!” they say, “such things have happened in all ages! Our fathers had such experience before us, and our sons will have them after us. Thus goes on the world for all time!” But does it? What about the decree of Allah? They are found napping when Nemesis overtakes them in the midst of their impious tomfoolery!
97. Did the people of the towns
Feel secure against the coming
Of Our wrath by night
While they were asleep?

98. Or else did they feel
Secure against its coming
In broad daylight while they
Played about (care-free)?

99. Did they then feel secure
Against Allah’s devising
But no one can feel
Secure from the Plan
Of Allah, except those
(Doomed) to ruin?1068

SECTION 13.

100. To those who inherit
The earth in succession
To its (previous) possessors,
Is it not a guiding (lesson)
That, if We so willed,

1067. This and the two following verses should be read together. They furnish a commentary on the story of the five prophets that has already been related. Allah’s wrath may come by night or by day, whether people are arrogantly defying Allah’s laws or are sunk in lethargy or vain dreams of unreality. Who can escape Allah’s decree, and who can feel themselves outside it except those who are seeking their own ruin?

1068. This closes that chapter of the narrative which deals with Prophets who were rejected by their own people, but who stood firm on Allah’s message and were able to rescue a remnant who believed. In each case there were special circumstances and special besetting sins, which have been explained in the notes. The nations which as a body could not be won over to Allah’s Law perished. So far we have been dealing with the corruptions and iniquities within each nation. In the story of Moses we have first a struggle against the bondage of Egypt, one of the foremost powers then in the world, the rescue of the Israelites and their wanderings, and their proving themselves unworthy and being left to wander in a new sense when they rejected the new Prophet (Muḥammad) who came to renew Allah’s Message.
We could punish them (too)
For their sins, and seal up
Their hearts so that they
Could not hear?\textsuperscript{1069}

101. Such were the towns
Whose story We (thus)
Relate unto thee:
There came indeed to them
Their Messengers with clear (Signs);
But they would not believe
What they had rejected before.\textsuperscript{1070}
Thus doth Allah seal up
The hearts of those
Who reject Faith.

102. Most of them We found not
Men (true) to their covenant:
But most of them We found
Rebellious and disobedient.

103. Then after them We sent
Moses with Our Signs
To Pharaoh and his chiefs.
But they wrongfully rejected them:
So see what was the end
Of those who made mischief.

1069. The stories which have been related should give a warning to present and future generations which have inherited the land, the power, or the experience of the past. They should know that if they fall into the same sins they will meet with the same fate: when through their contumacy their hearts are hardened, they do not listen to the advice that falls on their ears.

1070. Those who have heard the Message and rejected it find it more difficult afterwards to retrace their steps. Evil has blocked the channels of Allah’s grace to them. It begins with their breaking their Covenant with Allah: with each step afterwards they fall deeper and deeper into the mire.
104. Moses said: "O Pharaoh! I am a messenger from The Lord of the Worlds,—One for whom it is right To say nothing but truth About Allah. Now have I Come unto you (people), from Your Lord with a clear (Sign): So let the Children of Israel Depart along with me."

105. One for whom it is right To say nothing but truth About Allah. Now have I Come unto you (people), from Your Lord with a clear (Sign): So let the Children of Israel Depart along with me.

106. (Pharaoh) said: "If indeed Thou hast come with a Sign,

1071. The story of Moses is told in many places in the Holy Qur'an, with a special lesson in each context. In ii. 49-71, the story is an appeal to the Jews from their own scripture and traditions, to show their true place in the religious history of mankind, and how they forfeited it. Here we have an instructive parallelism in that story to the story of Muhammad's mission,—how both these men of Allah had to fight against (1) a foreign foe, arrogant, unjust, faithless, and superstitious, and (2) against the same class of internal foe among their own people. Both of them won through. In the case of Moses, the foreign foe was Pharaoh and his Egyptians, who boasted of their earlier and superior civilisation; in the case of the Prophet Muhammad the foreign foes were the Jews themselves and the Christians of his day. Moses led his people nearly to the Land of promise in spite of rebellions among his own people; Muhammad succeeded completely in overcoming the resistance of his own people by his own virtues and firmness of character, and by the guidance of Allah. What was a hope when these Makkan verses were revealed became an accomplishment before the end of his life and mission on earth.

1072. "Pharaoh" (Arabic, Fir'ain) is a dynastic title, not the name of any particular king in Egypt. It has been traced to the ancient Hieroglyphic words, Per-ëau, which mean "Great House." The nin is an "infirm" letter added in the process of Arabisation. Who was the Pharaoh in the story of Moses? If the Inscriptions had helped us, we could have answered with some confidence, but unfortunately the Inscriptions fail us. It is probable that it was an early Pharaoh of the XVIIIth Dynasty, say Thothmes I., about 1540 B.C. See appendix IV. on Egyptian Chronology and Israel, printed at the end of this Sura.

1073. Notice that Moses, in addressing Pharaoh and the Egyptians, claims his mission to be not from his God, or his people's God but from "your Lord," from "the Lord of the Worlds." And his mission is not to his people only: "I come unto you (Egyptian people) from your Lord." "The spirit of our version is entirely different from the spirit of the same story as told in the Old Testament (Exod. chapters i. to xv.). In Exod. iii. 18, the mission of Moses is expressed to be as from "the Lord God of the Hebrews."

The essence of the whole Islamic story is this: Joseph's sufferings and good fortune were not merely a story in a romance. Joseph was a prophet; his sufferings and his subsequent rise to power and position in Egypt were to be a lesson (a) to his wicked brothers who sold him into slavery, (b) to his people who were stricken with famine and found a welcome in Egypt, and (c) to the Egyptians, who were arrogant over their high
Show it forth,—
If thou tellest the truth.”

1074

Then (Moses) threw his rod,
And behold! it was
A serpent, plain (for all to see)!

1075

And he drew out his hand,
And behold! it was white
To all beholders!

SECTION 14.

109. Said the Chiefs of the people
Of Pharaoh: “This is indeed
A sorcerer well-versed.

= material civilisation, but had yet to be taught the pure faith of Abraham. Israel prospered in Egypt, and stayed there perhaps two to four centuries. (Renan allows only one century). Times changed, and the racial bigotry of the Egyptians showed its head again, and Israel was oppressed. Moses was raised up with a threefold mission again (a) to learn all the learning of the Egyptians and preach Allah’s Truth to them as one who had been brought up among themselves, (b) to unite and reclaim his own people, and (c) to rescue them and lead them to a new world, which was to open out their spiritual horizon and lead them to the Psalms of David and the glories of Solomon.

1074. The ensuing dialogue shows the psychology on the two sides. Pharaoh is sitting in his court, with his ministers and chiefs around him. In their arrogance they are only amused at the effrontery and apparent revolt of the Israelite leaders, and they rely upon their own superior worldly power, aided by the magic which was a part of the Egyptian religion. Confronting them stand two men, Moses with his mission from Allah, and his brother Aaron who was his lieutenant. They are confident, not in their own powers, but in the mission they had received. The first thing they have to do is to act on the subjective mind of the Egyptians, and by methods which by Allah’s miracle show that Egyptian magic was nothing before the true power of Allah.

1075. The serpent played a large part in Egyptian mythology. The great sun-god Ra won a great victory over the serpent Apophis, typifying the victory of light over darkness. Many of their gods and goddesses took the forms of snakes to impress their foes with terror. Moses’s rod as a type of a serpent at once appealed to the Egyptian mentality. The contempt which the Egyptians had entertained in their minds before was converted into terror. Here was some one who could control the reptile which their great god Ra himself had such difficulty in overcoming!

1076. But the second Sign displayed by Moses was even more puzzling to the Egyptians. Moses drew out his hand from the folds of the garments on his breast, and it was white and shining as with divine light! This was to counter any suggestions of evil, which the serpent might have created. This was no work of evil, of black magic, or a trick or illusion. His hand was transfigured— with a light which no Egyptian sorcerers could produce. In Islamic literature the “white hand” of Moses has passed into a proverb, for a symbol of divine glory dazzling to the beholders.
110. "His plan is to get you out
Of your land: then
What is it ye counsel?" 1077

111. They said: "Keep him
And his brother in suspense
(For a while); and send
To the cities men to collect-

112. And bring up to thee
All (our) sorcerers well-versed." 1078

113. So there came
The sorcerers to Pharaoh:
They said, "Of course
We shall have a (suitable)
Reward if we win!" 1079

114. He said: "Yea, (and more),--
For ye shall in that case
Be (raised to posts)
Nearest (to my person)."

115. They said: "O Moses!
Wilt thou throw (first),

1077. The two Signs had the desired effect on the Egyptians. They were impressed, but they judged them by their own standards. They thought to themselves, "These are ordinary sorcerers: let us search out our best sorcerers and show them that they have superior power." But like all worldly people, they began to fear for their own power and possessions. It was far from Moses's intention to drive out the Egyptians from their own land. He merely wanted to end the Egyptian oppression. But the Egyptians had a guilty conscience, and they judged other people's motives by their own. They discussed the matter in Council on quite wrong premises.

1078. The advice of the Council to Pharaoh shows a misreading of the situation. They were in a panic about what the magic of this evidently powerful sorcerer could do against them. So they advised the Pharaoh to summon their most powerful sorcerers from all over the country, and in the meantime to hold Moses and Aaron in suspense,—neither to yield to them nor definitely to oppose them. The Prophets of Allah could well afford to wait. Time is always in favour of Truth.

1079. The most noted sorcerers of Pharaoh came. Their art was built up on trickery and imposture, and the first thing they could think of was to make a selfish bargain for themselves. The Pharaoh and his Council would in their present state of panic agree to anything. And so they did. Pharaoh not only promised them any rewards they desired if they foiled the strange power of these men, but he also promised them the highest dignities round his own person. And so the contest begins, with due observance of the amenities observed by combatants before they come to close grips.
Or shall we have
The (first) throw?"

116. Said Moses: "Throw ye (first)."
So when they threw,
They bewitched the eyes
Of the people, and struck
Terror into them: and they
Showed a great (feat of) magic.

117. We revealed to Moses
"Throw thy rod": and behold!
It swallows up
All the falsehoods
Which they fake!

118. Thus truth was confirmed.
And all that they did
Was made of no effect.

119. So they were vanquished
There and then, and
Turned about humble.

120. But the sorcerers fell down
Prostrate in adoration.

121. Saying: "We believe
In the Lord of the Worlds.

1080. Moses and his brother Aaron were pitted against the most skilful magic-men of Egypt, but they were calm and confident and let the magic-men have their innings first. As is usual in this world, the magicians trickery made a great impression on the people, but when Moses threw his rod, the illusion was broken, and the falsehood was all shown up. In the Old Testament story (Exod. vii. 10-12) it was Aaron that threw the rod, and he threw it before the magicians. Aaron's rod became a serpent. Then the magicians threw their rods, and they became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. The story given to us is more dramatic and less literal. We are told in general terms that Moses first allowed the magic-men to play their tricks. It was a simple shepherd's crook with which he used to feed his flocks. With Allah's grace behind him, he was able to expose all false trickery and establish the Truth.

1081. The proud ones of the Court-Pharaoh and his chiefs—were hard-hearted, and the exposure of the imposture only made them wreak their rage on those whom they could reach. On the other hand the effect on the humbler ones—those who had been made the dupes and instruments of the imposture—was quite different. Their conscience was awakened. They fell down to the ground in adoration of the Lord of the Worlds, and confessed their faith.
122. “The Lord of Moses and Aaron.”

123. Said Pharaoh: “Believe ye In Him before I give You permission? Surely This is a trick which ye Have planned in the City To drive out its people: But soon shall ye know (The consequences).”

124. “Be sure I will cut off Your hands and your feet On opposite sides, and I Will crucify you all.”

125. They said: “For us, We are but sent back Unto our Lord.”

126. “But thou dost wreak Thy vengeance on us Simply because we believed In the Signs of our Lord When they reached us! Our Lord! pour out on us Patience and constancy, and take Our souls unto Thee.

1082. Pharaoh and his Court were doubly angry: first because they were made to look small when confronted by the power of Allah, and secondly, because their dupes and instruments were snatched away from them. These men, the sorcerers, at once recognised the Sings of Allah, and in their case the mission of Moses, and Aaron was fulfilled. They turned back on their past life of false worship, and oppression of the weak, and confessed the One true God. As usually happens, hardened sinners resent all the more the saving of any of their companions from sin and error. Judging other people’s motives by their own, they accuse them of duplicity, and if they have the power, they take cruel revenge. Here the Pharaoh threatens the repentant sinners with the extreme punishment for treason and apostasy (cutting off of hands and feet, combined with an ignominious death on the cross, as in the case of the worst malefactors). But they remained firm, and prayed to Allah for patience and constancy. Probably their influence spread quietly in the commonalty. Ultimately it appeared on the Throne itself, in the person of Amenophis IV about five or six generations afterwards.
As Muslims (who bow To Thy Will)!^{1083},

SECTION 15.

127. Said the chiefs of Pharaoh’s People: “Wilt thou leave Moses and his people, To spread mischief in the land, And to abandon thee And thy gods?” He said “Their male children will we Slay; (only) their females Will we save alive; And we have over them (Power) irresistible.”^{1084}

128. Said Moses to his people: “Pray for help from Allah,”

1083. These Egyptians, by their patience and constancy, show that their repentance was true. Thus in their case the mission of Moses was fulfilled directly, and their number must have amounted to a considerable figure. They were martyrs to their faith, and their martyrdom affected their nation in two ways. In the first place, as they were the pick of those who practised magic in Egypt, their conversion and disappearance dealt a staggering blow to the whole system. Secondly, the indirect effect of their martyrdom on the commonalty of Egypt must have been far greater than can be measured by numbers. The banner of Allah was planted, and the silent spiritual fight must have gone on ever since, though history, in recording outward events, is silent on the slow and gradual processes of transformation undergone by Egyptian religion. From a chaotic pantheon of animals and animal gods, the worship of the sun and the heavenly bodies, and the worship of the Pharaoh as the embodiment of power, they gradually came to realise the oneness and mercy of the true God. After many glimpses of Monotheism on Egyptian soil itself, the Gospel of Jesus reached them, and eventually Islam.

1084. Pharaoh’s order against the sorcerers was drastic enough. But his Council is not satisfied. What about Moses and the Israelites? They had a seeming victory, and will now be more mischievous than ever. They appeal to Pharaoh’s vanity and his superstition and sense of power. “If you leave them alone,” they say, “where will be your authority? You and your gods will be defied!” Pharaoh has a ready answer. He was really inwardly cowed by the apparent power of Moses. He dared not openly act against him. But he had already, before the birth of Moses, passed a cunning order to destroy the whole people of Israel. Through the instrumentality of midwives (Exod. i. 15) all the male children were to be destroyed, and the females would then be for the Egyptians: the race of Israel would thus be at an end. This order was still in force, and would remain in force until the despised race was absorbed. But Egyptian cunning and wickedness had no power against Allah’s Plan for those who had faith. See verse 129 below.
And (wait) in patience and constancy:
For the earth is Allah’s,
To give as a heritage
To such of His servants
As He pleaseth; and the end
Is (best) for the righteous. 1085

129. They said: "We have had (Nothing but) trouble, both before
And after thou camest 1086
To us." He said:
"It may be that your Lord
Will destroy your enemy
And make you inheritors 1087
In the earth; that so
He may see how ye act."

SECTION 16.

130. We punished the people
Of Pharaoh with years
(Of drought) and shortness
Of crops; that they might
Receive admonition.

131. But when good (times) came,
They said, "This is due
To us;" when gripped
By calamity, they ascribed it

1085. Notice the contrast between the arrogant tone of Pharaoh and the humility and faith taught by Moses. In the end the arrogance was humbled, and humility and faith were protected and advanced.

1086. There is a slight note of querulousness in the people’s answer. But Moses allays it by his own example and courage, and his vision of the future: which was amply fulfilled in time. See verse 137 below.

1087. The Israelites, despoiled and enslaved, were to be rescued and made rulers in Palestine. David and Solomon were great kings and played a notable part in history. But the greatness of Israel was conditional: they were to be judged by their deeds. When they fell from grace, other people were given honour and power. And so it came to be the turn of the Muslims, and so on. Allah gives His gifts to those who are righteous and obey His Law.
To evil omens connected
With Moses and those with him!
Behold! in truth the omens
Of evil are theirs.\footnote{1088}
In Allah's sight, but most
Of them do not understand!

132. They said (to Moses):
"Whatever be the Signs
Thou bringest, to work
Therewith thy sorcery on us.,\footnote{1089}
We shall never believe
In thee."

133. So We sent on them:
Wholesale Death,\footnote{1090}
Locusts, Lice, Frogs,
And Blood: Signs openly\footnote{1091}
Self-explained: but they
Were steeped in arrogance,
A people given to sin.

134. And when the Plague
Fell on them, they said:
"O Moses! on our behalf
Call on thy Lord in virtue

\footnote{1088}. Their superstition ascribed the punishment of their own wickedness to some evil omen. They thought Moses and his people brought them ill-luck. They did not look within themselves to see the root of evil, and the cause of their punishment! So it happens in all ages. People blame the righteous for something which they do, different from other men, instead of searching out their own lapses from rectitude, which are punished by Allah.

\footnote{1089}. A type of obstinacy and resistance to Allah's message. As they believed in sorcery and magic, they thought anything unusual was but sorcery and magic, and hardened their hearts against Truth.

\footnote{1090}. \(\mathfrak{T}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{n}\) = a widespread calamity, causing wholesale death and destruction. It may be a flood, or a typhoon, or an epidemic, among men or cattle. Perhaps the last is meant, if we may interpret by the Old Testament story. See also Exod. ix. 3, 9, 15; xii. 29.

\footnote{1091}. In xvii. 101, the reference is to nine Clear Signs. These are: (1) the Rod (vii. 107), (2) the Radiant Hand (vii. 108), (3) the years of drought or shortage of water (vii. 130), (4) short crops (vii. 130), and the five mentioned in this verse, viz., (5) epidemics among men and beasts, (6) locusts, (7) lice, (8) frogs, and (9) the water turning to blood.
Of his promise to thee:
If thou wilt remove
The Plague from us,
We shall truly believe in thee,
And we shall send away
The Children of Israel
With thee.'

135. But when We removed
The Plague from them
According to a fixed term
Which they had to fulfil.
Behold! they broke their word!

136. So We exacted retribution
From them: We drowned them
In the sea, because they
Rejected Our Signs, and failed
To take warning from them.

1092. The demand of Moses was two-fold: (1) come to Allah and cease from oppression, and (2) let me take Israel out of Egypt. At first it was laughed at and rejected with scorn. When the Plagues came for punishment, each time the Egyptians suffered, they promised amendment and begged Moses to intercede and cause the plague to cease. But every time it ceased, they went back to their evil attitude, until the final retribution came. This is a type of the sinner's attitude for all times.

1093. The intercession of Moses was to pray. Each plague or penalty had its appointed term in Allah's decree. That term was duly fulfilled before the plague ceased. The intercession meant two things: (1) that Allah's name was invoked and His presence duly brought home to the mind and heart of the sinner who promised repentance, and (2) that the sinner was given a further chance when the prayer was accepted. This again is a universal truth.

1094. When at last Pharaoh let Israel go, they selected, not the highway to Canaan, along the Mediterranean and by Gaza, because they were unarmed and would have encountered immediate opposition there, but by way of the wilderness of Sinai. They crossed the Red Sea, while Pharaoh's host which came in pursuit was drowned. Cf. ii. 50.

1095. Where was the Council of Pharaoh held in which Moses addressed Pharaoh? Egypt's primary capital in the XVIIIth Dynasty was Thebes (=Not-Ammon), but that was more than 400 miles to the south of the Delta, in whose corner Israel dwelt. Memphis, on the apex of the Delta, a little south of where Cairo is now, was also over 100 miles from Israel's habitations. The interview must have been either in a Palace near Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, or in Zaan (=Tanis), the Deltaic capital built by a former dynasty, which was of course still available for the reigning dynasty, and which was not far from the Israelite settlement.
137. And We made a people, considered weak (and of no account),
Inheritors of lands
In both East and West,-
Lands whereon We sent
Down Our blessings.
The fair promise of thy Lord
Was fulfilled for the Children
Of Israel, because they had
Patience and constancy,
And We levelled to the ground
The great Works and fine Buildings
Which Pharaoh and his people
Erected (with such pride).

138. We took the Children of Israel
(With safety) across the sea.
They came upon a people
Devoted entirely to some idols
They had. They said:
"O Moses! fashion for us..."

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1096. Israel, which was despised, became a great and glorious nation under Solomon. He had goodly territory, and was doubly blest. His land and people were prosperous, and he was blessed with wisdom from Allah. His sway and his fame spread east and west. And thus Allah’s promise to Israel was fulfilled. Note that Syria and Palestine had once been under the sway of Egypt. At the same time the proud and rebellious Pharaoh and his people were brought low. The splendid monuments which they had erected with so much skill and pride were mingled with the dust. Their great cities—Thebes (or No-Ammon), Memphis (or Noph, sacred to the Bull of Osiris), and the other splendid cities, became as if they had not existed, and archaeologists have had to dig up their ruins from the sands. The splendid monuments—temples, palaces, tombs, statues, columns, and stately structures of all kinds—were buried in the sands. Even monuments like the Great Sphinx, which seem to defy the ages, were partly buried in the sands, and owe their rescue to the comparatively recent researches of archaeologists. As late as 1743 Richard Pococke in his Travels in Egypt (p. 41), remarked: “Most of those pyramids are very much ruined.”

1097. Who were these people? We are now in the Sinai Peninsula. Two conjectures are possible. (1) The Amalekites of the Sinai Peninsula were at perpetual war with the Israelites. They were probably an idolatrous nation, but we have very little knowledge of their cult. (2) From Egyptian history we know that Egypt had worked from very ancient times some copper mines in Sinai. An Egyptian settlement may have been here. Like all mining camps it contained from the beginning the dregs of the population. When the mines ceased to be worked, the settlement, or what remained of it, must have...
degenerated further. Cut off from civilisation, its cult must have become still narrower, without the refining influences which a progressive nation applies even to its idolatry. Perhaps Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis, lost all its allegorical meaning for them, and only gross and superstitious rites remained among them. The text speaks of "some idols they had," implying that they had merely a detached fragment of a completer religion. This was a snare in the path of the Israelites, whom many generations of slavery in Egypt had debased into ignorance and superstition.

1098. If conjecture 2 in the last note is correct, this idolatrous worship was but the fragment of a ruin from Egypt, and Moses's reproach is biting: "You, who have been rescued from the bondage of living Egypt,—do you hanker after the bondage of a dead cult debased even from that which you have been rescued?"

_Mutabbar_ = broken in pieces, smashed into fragments, destroyed.

1099. This is Allah's reminder to Israel through the mouth of Moses. There was a double trial: (1) while the bondage lasted, the people were to learn patience and constancy in the midst of affliction; (2) when they were rescued, they were to learn humility; justice, and righteous deeds of prosperity.
SECTION 17.

142. We appointed for Moses
Thirty nights, and completed
(The period) with ten (more):
Thus was completed the term
With his Lord; 100
Forty nights. And Moses
Had charged his brother Aaron
(Before he went up):
"Act for me amongst my people:
Do right, and follow not
The way of those
Who do mischief." 1101

143. When Moses came
To the place appointed by Us,
And his Lord addressed him,
He said: "O my Lord!
Show (Thyself) to me,
That I may look upon Thee." 1102
Allah said: "By no means
Canst thou see Me (direct);

1100. The forty nights’ exclusion of Moses on the Mount may be compared with the forty days fast of Jesus in the wilderness before he took up his ministry (Matt. iv. 2). In each case the Prophets lived alone apart from their people, before they came into the full blaze of the events of their Ministry.

1101. When for any reason the man of God is absent from his people, his duty of leadership (khilāfat) should be taken up by his brother,—not necessarily a blood-brother, but one of his society or brotherhood. The deputy should discharge it in all humility, remembering three things: (1) that he is only a deputy, and bound to follow the directions of his Principal, (2) that right and justice are of the essence of power, and (3) that mischief gets its best chance to raise its head in the absence of the Principal, and that the deputy should always guard against the traps laid for him in the Principal’s absence.

1102. Even the best of us may be betrayed into overweening confidence of spiritual ambition not yet justified by the stage we have reached. Moses had already seen part of the glory of Allah in his Radiant White Hand, that shone with the glory of Divine light (vii. 108, n. 1076). But he was still in the flesh, and the mission to his people was to begin after the Covenant of Sinai.
1103. But Allah—the Cherisher of all His creatures—treats even our improper requests with mercy, compassion, and understanding. Even the reflected glory of Allah is too great for the grosser substance of matter. The peak on which it shone became as powder before the ineffable glory, and Moses could only live by being taken out of his bodily senses. When he recovered from his swoon, he saw the true position, and the distance between our grosser bodily senses and the true splendour of Allah's glory. He at once turned in penitence to Allah, and confessed his faith.

1104. "First to believe." Cf. the expression "first of those who bow to Allah in Islam" in vi. 14 and vi. 163. "First" means here not the first in time, but most zealous in faith. It has the intensive and not the comparative meaning.

1105. "Above (other) men": i.e. among his contemporaries. He had a high mission, and he had the honour of speaking to Allah.

1106. Allah's revelation is for the benefit of His creatures, who should receive it with reverence and gratitude. While Moses was having these great spiritual experiences on the Mount, his people below were ungrateful enough to forget Allah and make a golden calf for worship (vii. 147).
And We ordained
For him in the Tablets
In all matters, Admonition
And explanation of
All things, (and said):
"Take and hold these
With firmness, and enjoin
Thy people to hold fast
By the best in the precepts."
Soon shall I show you
The homes of the wicked,
(How they lie desolate).

Those who behave arrogantly
On the earth in defiance
Of right—them will I
Turn away from My Signs:
Even if they see all the Signs,
They will not believe in them;
And if they see the way
Of right conduct, they will

1107. The Tablets of the Law contained the essential Truth, from which were derived the positive injunctions and prohibitions, explanations and interpretations, which it was the function of the prophetic office to hold up for the people to follow. The precepts would contain, as the Shari'at does, matters absolutely prohibited, matters not prohibited but disapproved, matters about which there was no prohibition or injunction, but in which conduct was to be regulated by circumstances; matters of positive and universal duty, matters recommended for those whose zeal was sufficient to enable them to work on higher than minimum standards. No soul is burdened beyond its capacity; but we are asked to seek the best and highest possible for us in conduct.

1108. Notice the transition from the "We" of authority and honour and impersonal dignity, to the "I" of personal concern in specially guiding the righteous.

1109. Literally, the homes of the wicked, both individuals and nations, lie desolate, as in the case of the ancient Egyptians, the 'Ad., and the Thamūd.

1110. The argument may be simplified thus in paraphrase. The right is established on the earth as Allah created it: Nature recognises and obeys Allah's law as fixed for each portion of Creation. But man, because of the gift of Will, sometimes upsets this balance. The root-cause is his arrogance, as it was in the case of Iblīs. Allah's Signs are everywhere, but if they are rejected with scorn and blasphemy, Allah will withdraw His grace, for sin hardens the heart and makes it impervious to the truth. Want of faith produces a kind of blindness to spiritual facts, a kind of deafness to the warnings of a Day of Account. If we had contumaciously rejected faith, can we hope for anything but justice—the just punishment of our sins.
Not adopt it as the Way;  
But if they see the way  
Of error, that is  
The Way they will adopt.  
For they have rejected  
Our Signs, and failed  
To take warning from them.

147. Those who reject Our Signs  
And the Meeting in the Hereafter—  
Vain are their deeds:  
Can they expect to be rewarded  
Except as they have wrought?

SECTION 18.

148. The people of Moses made,  
In his absence, out of their  
ornaments, the body of a calf, (for worship):

1111. Rejected Our Signs: again a return to the Plural of impersonal Dignity and Authority, from the singular of personal concern in granting grace and guidance to the righteous.

1112. The making of the golden calf and its worship by the Israelites during the absence of Moses on the Mount were referred to in ii. 51, and some further details are given in xx. 85-97. Notice how in each case only those points are referred to which are necessary to the argument in hand. A narrator whose object is mere narration, tells the story in all its details, and is done with it. A consummate artist, whose object is to enforce lessons, brings out each point in its proper place. Master of all details, he does not ramble, but with supreme literary skill, just adds the touch that is necessary in each place to complete the spiritual picture. His object is not a story but a lesson. Here notice the contrast between the intense spiritual communion of Moses on the Mount and the simultaneous corruption of his people in his absence. We can understand his righteous indignation and bitter grief (vii. 150). The people had melted all their gold ornaments, and made the image of a calf like the bull of Osiris in the city of Memphis in the wicked Egypt that they had turned their backs upon.

1113. Image of a Calf. Jasad is literally a body, especially the body of a man according to Khalil quoted by Ragib. In xxi. 8, it is used obviously for the human body, as also in xxxviii. 34; but in the latter case, the idea of an image, without any real life or soul, is also suggested. In the present passage I understand many suggestions: (1) that it was a mere image, without life; (2) as such, it could not low, therefore the appearance of lowing, mentioned immediately afterwards, was a fraud: (3) unlike its prototype, the bull of Osiris, it had not even the symbolism of Osiris behind it; the Osiris myth, in the living religion of Egypt, had at least some ethical principles behind it.
Having lowing sound did they\(^{1114}\)
Not see that it could
Neither speak to them, nor
Show them the Way?
They took it for worship
And they did wrong.

149. When they repented, and saw That they had erred,
They said: “If our Lord Have not mercy upon us
And forgive us, we shall Indeed be among the Losers.

150. When Moses came back To his people, angry and grieved, He said: “Evil it is that ye Have done in my place In my absence: did ye\(^{1115}\)
Make haste to bring on The judgment of your Lord?”
He put down the Tablets,\(^ {1116}\)
Seized his brother by (the hair

\(^{1114}\) The lowing of the golden calf was obviously a deception practised by the promoters of the cult. Lytton in his “Last Days of Pompeii” exposes the deception practised by the priests of Isis. Men hidden behind images imposed on the credulity of the commonalty.

\(^{1115}\) Did ye make haste...? ‘In your impatience, could you not wait for me? Your lapse into idolatry has only hastened Allah’s wrath. If you had only waited, I was bringing to you in the Tablets the most excellent teaching in the commands of Allah.’ There is subtle irony in the speech of Moses. There is also a play upon words: ‘ijl = calf: and ‘ajila = to make haste: no translation can bring out these niceties.

\(^{1116}\) Put down the Tablets: we are not told that the Tablets were broken: in fact vii. 154 (below) shows that they were whole. They contained Allah’s Message. There is a touch of disrespect (if not blasphemy) in supposing that Allah’s Messenger broke the Tablets in his incontinent rage, as is stated in the Old Testament: “Moses’s anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and brake them beneath the Mount.” (Exod. xxxii. 10). On this point and also on the point that Aaron (in the Old Testament story) ordered the gold to be brought, made a molten calf, fashioned it with a graving tool, and built an altar before the calf (Exd. xxxii. 2-5), our version differs from that of the Old Testament. We cannot believe that Aaron, who was appointed by Allah to assist Moses as Allah’s Messenger, could descend so low as to seduce the people into idolatry, whatever his human weaknesses might be.
1117. Moses was but human. Remembering the charge he had given to Aaron (vii. 142) he had a just grievance at the turn events had taken. But he did not wreak his vengeance on the Tablets of Allah's law by breaking them. He laid hands on his brother.

1118. Aaron's speech is full of tenderness and regret. He addresses Moses as "son of my mother."—an affectionate term. He explains how the turbulent people nearly killed him for resisting them. And he states in the clearest terms that the idolatry neither originated with him nor had his consent. In xx. 85, we are told that a fellow described as the Sāmirī had led them astray. We shall discuss this when we come to that passage.

1119. As Moses was convinced that his brother was guiltless, his wrath was turned to gentleness. He prayed for forgiveness—for himself and his brother: for himself because of his wrath and for his brother because he had been unable to suppress idolatry among his people. And like a true leader that he is, he identifies himself with his lieutenant for all that has happened. Even more, he identifies himself with his whole people in his prayer in verse 155 below. Herein, again, is a type of what the Holy Prophet Muḥammad did for his people.

1120. The consequences were twofold: (1) spiritual, in that Allah's grace is withdrawn, and (2) even in the present life of this world, in that godly men also shun the sinner's company, and he is isolated.
Thus do We recompense Those who invent (falsehoods).

153. But those who do wrong But repent thereafter and (Truly) believe,-verily Thy Lord is thereafter Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

154. When the anger of Moses Was appeased, he took up The Tablets: in the writing Thereon was Guidance and Mercy For such as fear their Lord.

155. And Moses chose seventy\textsuperscript{1121} Of his people for Our place Of meeting: when they Were seized with violent quaking,\textsuperscript{1122} He prayed: “O my Lord! If it had been Thy Will Thou couldst have destroyed, Long before, both them And me: wouldst Thou Destroy us for the deeds Of the foolish ones among us? This is no more than\textsuperscript{1123} Thy trial: by it Thou causest

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1121. Seventy of the elders were taken up to the Mount, but left at some distance from the place where Allah spoke to Moses. They were to be silent witnesses, but their faith was not yet complete, and they dared to say to Moses: “We shall never believe in thee until we see Allah in public” (ii.55). They were dazed with thunder and lightning, and might have been destroyed but for Allah’s mercy on the intercession of Moses.

1122. \textit{Rajāt}: violent quaking, earthquake, I take it to refer to the same event as is described by the word \textit{Sā’iqat} in ii. 55, the thunder and lightning that shook the mountainside.

1123. Moses was guiltless, but he identifies himself with his whole people, and intercedes with Allah on their behalf. He recognises that it was a trial, in which some of his people failed to stand the test. Such failure was worthy of punishment. But he pleads for mercy for such as erred from weakness and not from contumacy, and were truly repentant, although all who erred were in their several degrees worthy of punishment.
Whom Thou wilt stray,\textsuperscript{1124} And Thou leadest whom Thou wilt into the right path. Thou art our Protector: So forgive us and give us Thy mercy; for Thou art The Best of those who forgive.

156. "And ordain for us That which is good, In this life And in the Hereafter: For we have turned unto Thee."
He said: "I afflict My Punishment On whom I will; But My Mercy extendeth\textsuperscript{1125} To all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those Who do right, and pay Zakat and those Who believe in Our Signs;\textsuperscript{1126}

157. "Those who follow the Messenger, The unlettered Prophet, Whom they find mentioned In their own (Scriptures),\textsuperscript{1127}

\textsuperscript{1124} Cf. ii. 26.

\textsuperscript{1125} Allah's mercy is in and for all things. All nature subserves a common purpose, which is for the good of all His creatures. Our faculties and our understandings are all instances of His grace and mercy. Each unit or factor among His creatures benefits from the others and receives them as Allah's mercy to itself: and in its turn, each contributes to the benefit of the others and is thus an instance of Allah's mercy to them. His mercy is universal and all-pervasive; while His justice and punishment are reserved for those who swerve from His plan and (to use a mediaeval juridicial formula) go out of His Peace.

\textsuperscript{1126} The personal grace and mercy—and their opposite—are referred to the singular pronoun "I" while the impersonal Law, by which Allah's Signs operate in His universe, is referred to the plural pronoun of authority and dignity, "We".

\textsuperscript{1127} In this verse is a pre-figuring, to Moses, of the Arabian Messenger, the last and greatest of the messengers of Allah. Prophecies about him will be found in the Taurât and the Injîl. In the reflex of the Taurât as now accepted by the Jews, Moses says: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, =
In the Taurat and the Gospel:-  
For he commands them  
What is just and Forbids them  
What is evil; he allows  
Them as lawful what is good  
(And pure) and prohibits them  
From what is bad (and impure):  
He releases them  
From their heavy burdens  
And from the yokes\(^{1128}\)  
That are upon them.  
So it is those who believe  
In him, honour him,  
Help him, and follow the Light  
Which is sent down with him.\(^{1129}\)  
It is they who will prosper.\(^{1130}\)

SECTION 20.

158. Say: “O men! I am sent\(^{1131}\)  
Unto you all, as the Messenger

\(^{1128}\) Aglāl: plural of gullun, a yoke, an iron collar. In the formalism and exclusiveness of the Jews there were many restrictions which were removed by Islam, a religion of freedom in the faith of Allah, of universality in the variety of races, languages, manners and customs.

\(^{1129}\) Light which is sent down with him: the words are “with him”, not “to him”, emphasizing the fact that the Light which he brought illumines every one who has the privilege of joining his great and universal Fellowship.

\(^{1130}\) Falāḥ = prosperity in its general sense as well as in its spiritual sense. In the general sense it means that right conduct is the only door to happiness and well-being. In the spiritual sense it means that Faith and its fruits (right conduct) are the only gates to salvation.

\(^{1131}\) Our attention having been directed to various prophets, who were sent with missions to their several peoples, and in each of whose careers there is some pre­figurement of the life of the last and greatest of them, we are now asked to listen to the proclamation of Muḥammad’s universal mission. We contemplate no longer, after this, =
Of Allah, to Whom belongeth
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth: there is no god
But He: it is He that giveth
Both life and death. So believe
In Allah and His Messenger.
The unlettered Prophet, 1132
Who believeth in Allah
And His Words: follow him
That (so) ye may be guided.”

159. Of the people of Moses
There is a section
Who guide and do justice
In the light of truth.

160. We divided them into twelve
Tribes1133
Or nations. We directed
Moses by inspiration,
When his (thirsty) people asked
Him for Water: “Strike the rock
With thy staff”: out of it
There gushed forth twelve springs:

= partial truths. It is not now a question of saving Israel from the bondage of Egypt, nor
teaching Midian the ethics of business, nor reclaiming the people of Lot from sexual sin
or Thämid from the sin of oppression in power, or ‘Ad from arrogance and ancestor­
worship. Now are set forth plainly the issues of Life and Death, the Message of Allah,
the One Universal God to all mankind.

1132. “Unlettered,” as applied to the Prophet here and in verse 157 above, has three
special significations. (1) He was not versed in human learning: yet he was full of the
highest wisdom, and had a most wonderful knowledge of the previous Scriptures. This
was a proof of his inspiration. It was a miracle of the highest kind, a “Sign”, which every
one could test then, and every one can test now. (2) All organised human knowledge
tends to be crystallized, to acquire a partial bias or flavour of some “school” of thought.
The highest Teacher had to be free from any such taint, just as a clean slate is necessary
if a perfectly clear and bold message has to be written on it. (3) In iii. 20 and lxii. 2,
the epithet is applied to the Pagan Arabs, because, before the advent of Islam, they were
unlearned.

1133. We now come to some incidents in Jewish history, which have been referred
to in ii. 57-60. Here they have special reference to their bearing on the times when early
Islam was preached. The Twelve Tribes and the parable drawn from them have been
explained in n. 73 to ii. 60.
Each group knew its own place
For water. We gave them
The shade of clouds, and sent
Down to them manna and quails,
(Saying): "Eat of the good things
We have provided for you":
(But they rebelled); to Us
They did no harm, but
They harmed their own souls.\textsuperscript{1134}

161. And remember it was
Said to them:
"Dwell in this town
And eat\textsuperscript{1135} therein as ye wish,
But say forgive (us)
And enter the gate
In a posture of humility:
We shall forgive you
Your faults; We shall increase
(The portion of) those who do
good."

162. But the transgressors among them
Changed the word from that
Which had been given them
So we sent on them
A plague from heaven.
For that they repeatedly
transgressed.\textsuperscript{1136}

SECTION 21.

163. Ask them concerning the town
Standing close by the sea.

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\textsuperscript{1134} Cf. ii. 57 and n. 71.

\textsuperscript{1135} As in vii. 19, we may construe "eat" here to mean not only eating literally, but enjoying the good things of life.

\textsuperscript{1136} Cf. ii. 58-59, and n. 72. The story is here told by way of parable for the times of Islam. Hence we have a few verbal changes: e.g., "dwell in this town" instead of "enter this town." etc.
Behold! they transgressed
In the matter of the Sabbath,1137
For on the day of their Sabbath
Their fish did come to them,
Openly (holding up their heads.)
But on the day they had
No Sabbath, they came not:
Thus did We make a trial
Of them, for they were
Given to transgression.

164. When some of them said:
"Why do ye preach
To a people whom Allah
Will destroy or visit
With a terrible punishment?"
Said the preachers: "To discharge
Our duty to your Lord
And perchance they may fear Him."

165. When they disregarded the warnings
That had been given them,
We rescued those who forbade
Evil; but We visited
The wrong-doers with a
Grievous punishment, because
They were given to transgression.

166. When in their insolence
They transgressed (all) prohibitions.

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1137. Cf. ii. 65 and n. 79. Fishing, like every other activity, was prohibited to Israel on the Sabbath day. As this practice was usually observed, the fish used to come up with a sense of security to their water channels or pools openly on the Sabbath day, but not on other days when fishing was open. This was a great temptation to the law-breakers, which they could not resist. Some of their men of piety protested, but it had no effect. When their transgressions, which we may suppose, extended to other commandments, passed beyond bounds, the punishment came.

1138. There are always people who wonder, no doubt sincerely, what good it is to preach to the wicked. The answer is given to them here: (1) every man who sees evil must speak out against it; it is his duty and responsibility to Allah; (2) there is always a chance that the warning may have effect and save a precious soul. This passage has a special meaning for the times when our Holy Prophet was preaching in Makkah, apparently without results. But it applies to all times.
We said to them:
"Be ye apes,
Despised and rejected."

167. Behold! thy Lord did declare¹⁴⁰
That He would send
Against them, to the Day
Of Judgment, those who would
Afflict them with grievous
Chastisement. Thy Lord is quick
In retribution, but He is also
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

168. We broke them up
Into sections on this earth.¹⁴¹
There are among them some
That are the righteous, and some
That are the opposite.
We have tried them
With both prosperity and adversity:
In order that they
Might turn (to Us).

169. After them succeeded
An (evil) generation: they
Inherited the Book, but
They chose (for themselves)¹⁴²
The vanities of this world,

¹¹³⁹. Cf. ii. 65, n. 79.

¹¹⁴⁰. See Deut, xi. 28: "A curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day": also Deut. xxviii. 49; "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth: a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand": and many other passages.

¹¹⁴¹. The dispersal of the Jews is a great fact in the world's history. Nor has their persecution ended yet, nor is it likely to end as far as we can foresee.

¹¹⁴². Merely inheriting a Book, or doing lip service to it, does not make a nation righteous. If they succumb to the temptations of the world, their hypocrisy becomes all the more glaring. "High finance" is one of these temptations. Cf. also ii. 80: "the Fire shall not touch us except for a few numbered days": and ii. 88, about their blasphemous self-sufficiency.
Saying (for excuse): “(Everything) Will be forgiven us.”
(Even so), if similar vanities Came their way, they would
(Again) seize them.
Was not the Covenant\textsuperscript{1143} Of the Book taken from them, That they would not Ascribe to Allah anything But the truth? And they Study what is in the Book. But best for the righteous Is the Home in the Hereafter. Will ye not understand?

170. As to those who hold fast By the Book and establish Regular Prayer,—never Shall we suffer the reward Of the righteous to perish.

171. When We raised the Mount Over them, as if it had been A canopy, and they thought It was going to fall on them (We said): “Hold firmly\textsuperscript{1144} To what We have given you, And bring (ever) to remembrance What is therein;\textsuperscript{1145} Perchance ye may fear Allah”.

SECTION 22.

172. When thy Lord drew forth\textsuperscript{1146} From the Children of Adam—

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1143} Cf. Exod. xix. 5-8; xxiv 3; xxxiv. 27; and many other passages.
\item \textsuperscript{1144} Cf. ii. 63 and n.
\item \textsuperscript{1145} Therein = in the Book or Revelation, in “what We have given you.”
\item \textsuperscript{1146} This passage has led to differences of opinion in interpretation. According to the dominant opinion of commentators each individual in the posterity of Adam had a separate existence from the time of Adam, and a Covenant was taken from all of them.
\end{itemize}
From their loins—
Their descendants, and made them
Testify concerning themselves,
(saying):
"Am I not your Lord
(Who cherishes and sustains you)?"—
They said: "Yea!
We do testify!"1147 (This), lest
Ye should say on the Day
Of Judgment: "Of this we
Were never mindful":

173. Or lest ye should say:
“Our fathers before us
Took false gods,
But we are (their) descendants
After them: wilt Thou then
Destroy us because of the deeds
Of men who followed falsehood1148

174. Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail;

= which is binding accordingly on each individual. The words in the text refer to the
descendants of the Children of Adam, i.e., to all humanity, born or unborn, without any
limit of time. Adam's seed carries on the existence of Adam and succeeds to his spiritual
heritage. Humanity has been given by Allah certain powers and faculties, whose
possession creates on our side special spiritual obligations which we must faithfully
discharge: see v. i. and n. 682. These obligations may from a legal point of view be
considered as arising from implied Covenants. In the preceding verse (vii 171) a reference
was made to the implied Covenant of the Jewish nation. Now we consider the implied
Covenant of the whole of humanity, for the Holy Prophet's mission was world-wide.

1147. The Covenant is completed in this way. We acknowledge that Allah is our
Creator, Cherisher, and Sustainer: therefore we acknowledge our duty to Him: when we
so testify concerning ourselves, the obligation is as it were assumed by us; for it follows
from our very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted.

1148. The latent faculties in man are enough to teach him the distinction between
good and evil, to warn him of the dangers that beset his life. But to awaken and stimulate
them, a personal appeal is made to each individual through the "still small voice" within
him. This in its uncorrupted state acknowledges the truth and, as it were, swears its
Covenant with Allah. There is, therefore, no excuse for any individual to say, either (1)
that he was unmindful, or (2) that he should not be punished for the sins of his fathers,
because his punishment (if any) comes from his personal responsibility and is for his own
rejection of faith and the higher spiritual influences.
And perchance they may turn
(Un to Us).

175. Relate to them the story\(^{1149}\)
Of the man to whom
We sent Our Signs,
But he passed them by:
So Satan followed him up,
And he went astray.

176. If it had been Our Will,
We should have elevated him
With Our Signs: but he
Inclined to the earth,
And followed his own vain
desires.\(^{1150}\)

His similitude is that
Of a dog: if you attack
Him, he lolls out his tongue,
Or if you leave him alone,
He (still) lolls out his tongue.\(^{1151}\)
That is the similitude
Of those who reject Our Signs;
So relate the story;
Perchance they may reflect.

1149. Commentators differ whether this story or parable refers to a particular individual, and if so, to whom. The story of Balaam the seer, who was called out by Israel’s enemies to curse Israel, but who blessed Israel instead, (Num. xxii., xxiii., xxiv.) is quite different. It is better to take the parable in general sense. There are men, of talents and position, to whom great opportunities of spiritual insight come, but they perversely pass them by. Satan sees his opportunity and catches them up. Instead of rising higher in the spiritual world, their selfish and worldly desires and ambitions pull them down, and they are lost.

1150. Notice the contrast between the exalted spiritual honours which they would have received from Allah if they had followed His Will, and the earthly desires which eventually bring them low to the position of beasts and worse.

1151. The dog, especially in the hot weather, lolls out his tongue, whether he is attacked and pursued and is tired, or he is left alone. It is part of his nature to slobber. So with the man who rejects Allah. Whether he is warned or left alone, he continues to throw out his dirty saliva. The injury he will do will be to his own soul. But there may be infection in his evil example. So we must protect others. And we must never give up hope of his own amendment. So we must continue to warn him and make him think.
177. Evil as the example are  People who reject Our Signs  And wrong their own souls.

178. Whom Allah doth guide.−  He is on the right path:  Whom He rejects from His  guidance.−  Such are the persons who lose.¹⁵²

179. Many are the Jins and men  We have made for Hell:  They have hearts wherewith they  Understand not, eyes wherewith ¹⁵³  They see not, and ears wherewith  They hear not. They are  Like cattle,−nay more  Misguided: for they  Are heedless (of warning).

180. The most beautiful names¹⁵⁴  Belong to Allah:  So call on him by them;  But shun such men as  Distort His names:  For what they do, they will  Soon be requited.

181. Of those We have created  Are people who direct

¹⁵² Those who reject Allah will be deprived of Allah's grace and guidance. His Mercy is always open for sincere repentance. But with each step downwards, they go lower and lower, until they perish.

¹⁵³ Cf. ii. 18. Though they have apparently all the faculties of reason and perception, they have so deadened them that those faculties do not work, and they go headlong into Hell. They are, as it were, made for Hell.

¹⁵⁴ As we contemplate Allah's nature, we can use the most beautiful names to express His attributes. There are hundreds of such attributes. In the opening Sūra, we have these indicated in a few comprehensive words, such as Rahmān (most Gracious), Rahīm (most Merciful), Rabb-ul-ālāmin (Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds). Our bringing such names to remembrance is part of our Prayer and Praise. But we must not associate with people who use Allah's names profanely, or so as to suggest anything derogatory to His dignity or His unity. Cf. xvii. 110.
(Others) with truth,
And dispense justice therewith.

SECTION 23.

182. Those who reject Our Signs,
   We will lead them step by step
   To ruin while they know not: 1154-A

183. Respite will I grant
   Unto them: for My scheme
   Is strong (and unfailing).

184. Do they not reflect?
   Their Companion is not seized 1155
   With madness: he is but
   A perspicuous warner. 1156

185. Do they see nothing
   In the kingdom of the heavens
   And the earth and all
   That Allah hath created? 1157
   (Do they not see) that
   It may well be that
   Their term is nigh
   Drawing to an end?

1154-A. See also lxviii. 44 and n. 5626.

1155. *Their companion, i.e., the Holy Prophet, who lived with and amongst them.*
He was accused of madness because he behaved differently from them. He had no selfish
ambitions; he was always true, in thought, word, and deed: he was kind and considerate
to the weak, and was not dazzled by worldly power or wealth or position: he was
undeterred by fear of the strong, the mockery of the cynics, the bitterness of the evil,
or the indifference of the heedless. That is why he stood out boldly against wrong: he
did not mince his words, and his warnings were not mealy-mouthed.

1156. *Mubin; perspicuous.* The reason why I have not used a simpler word, such as
“plain” or “clear” is explained in n. 716 to v. 15. Al-Muṣṭafā’s sermons were not polite
reminders, with an eye to the flattery of weaknesses in high places or national vanities
or crowd passions. They brought out every foible into the glare of light, by a fiery
eloquence fed by inspiration from Allah.

1157. *An appeal to Allah’s most wonderful universe should at once convince a*
thinking mind of man’s nothingness, and Allah’s power, glory, and goodness. Man’s term
here is fleeting. If he is not warned by the great Signs, and the Messages which call his
attention to them, is he capable of any faith at all?
In what Message after this
Will they then believe?

186. To such as Allah rejects
From His guidance, there can be
No guide: He will
Leave them in their trespasses,
Wandering in distraction. 1158

187. They ask thee about
The (final) Hour—when
Will be its appointed time?
Say: “The knowledge thereof
Is with my Lord (alone):
None but He can reveal
As to when it will occur.”
Heavy were its burden through
The heavens and the earth.
Only, all of a sudden
Will it come to you.”
They ask thee as if thou
Wert eager in search thereof: 1160
Say: “The knowledge thereof
Is with Allah (alone),
But most men know not.”

188. Say: “I have no power
Over any good or harm
To myself except as Allah

1158. Cf. ii. 15. If Allah’s light is removed, the best of them can only wander hither and thither, like blind men, in distraction.

1159. The fact of its coming is a certainty: the exact time appointed for it is not revealed by Allah. If it were it would be so momentous as to disturb our thoughts and life. It would be a heavy burden to us. Our duty is to be prepared for it at all times. It will come when we least expect it. In the present Gospels Jesus says the same thing: he does not know the Hour, but it will come suddenly. “But of that day and that Hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” (Mark. xiii. 32-33).

1160. Ḥāṣi is usually construed to mean; “eager or anxious in search of”: the preposition following here is ‘ān = concerning, about. Some commentators (including Rāġib) understand it in this passage to mean “well-acquainted.” In xix. 47, with the preposition bi following it, it signifies “well-disposed to”, favourable to, good to, kind to.”
Willeth. If I had knowledge
Of the unseen, I should have
Multiplied all good, and no evil
Should have touched me:
I am but a warner,
And a bringer of glad tidings
To those who have faith."  

SECTION 24.

189. It is He Who created
You from a single person,
And made his mate
Of like nature, in order
That he might dwell with her
(In love). When they are
United, she bears a light
Burden and carries it about
(Unnoticed). When she grows
Heavy, they both pray
To Allah their Lord (saying):
"If Thou givest us
A goodly child,
We vow we shall
(Ever) be grateful."

1161. A warner to all, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith, because they will profit by the glad tidings. As every one is invited to faith, the glad tidings are offered to all, but they are not necessarily accepted by all.

1162. Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504, where the construction is explained.

1163. The mystery of the physical birth of man, as it affects the father and the mother, only touches the imagination of the parents in the later stages when the child is yet unborn and yet the life stirs within the body of the expectant mother. The coming of the new life is a solemn thing, and is fraught with much hope as well as much unknown risk to the mother herself. The parents in their anxiety turn to Allah. If this feeling of solemnity, hope, and looking towards Allah were maintained after birth, all would be well for the parents as well as for the rising generation. But the attitude changes, as the verses following show.

1164. Goodly: ṣāliḥ: includes the following ideas: sound in body and mind; healthy; righteous; of good moral disposition.
1165. When the child is born, the parents forget that it is a precious gift of Allah—a miracle of Creation, which should lift their minds up to the higher things of Allah. Instead, their gradual familiarity with the new life makes them connect it with many superstitious ideas or rites and ceremonies, or they take it as a matter of course, as a little plaything of the material world. This leads to idolatry or false worship, or the setting up of false standards, in derogation of the dignity of Allah.

1166. When false worship takes root, the teacher of Truth finds much to discourage him. As far as he is concerned, it seems as if he has produced no effect. Yet his duty is to continue his work. in the spirit of verse 199 below, forgiving all opposition, teaching what is right, and not joining the ignorant in their attitude of doubt and indecision.

1167. False gods, whether idols or deified men, or ideas and superstitions, have no existence of their own, independent of Allah’s creation. They are Allah’s creatures, and like servants are subject to His authority. Deified men are not real men, but false ideas of men. They cannot help themselves: how can they help others?
Or hands to lay hold with?
Or ears to see with?
Or eyes to hear with?
Say: "Call your 'god-partners', Scheme (your worst) against me.
And give me no respite!

196. "For my Protector is Allah. Who revealed the Book, (From time to time),
And He will Befriend the righteous.

197. "But those ye call upon Besides Him, are unable To help you, and indeed To help themselves."

198. If thou callest them To guidance, they hear not. Thou wilt see them Looking at thee, but They see not.169

199. Hold to forgiveness; Command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant.170

1168. Here is a test and a challenge. If the false gods had any power or even existence, collect them all together, and, says the Prophet of Allah. "Let them do their worst against me." They cannot: because the whole thing is based on a superstition and a chimera.

1169. The beauty and righteousness of Al-Mustafa's life were acknowledged on all hands, until he received the mission to preach and to fight against evil. What happened then? Evil erected barricades for itself. It had eyes, but it refused to see. It had ears, but it refused to hear. It had intelligence, but it blocked up its channels of understanding. Even now, after Fourteen centuries, a life of unexampled purity, probity, justice, and righteousness is seen in false lights by blind detractors!

1170. Allah comforts the Prophet and directs his mind to three precepts: (1) to forgive injuries, insults, and persecution; (2) to continue to declare the faith that was in him, and not only to declare it, but to act up to it in all his dealings with friends and foes; (3) to pay no attention to ignorant fools, who raised doubts or difficulties, hurled taunts or reproaches, or devised plots to defeat the truth; they were to be ignored and passed by, not to be engaged in fights and fruitless controversies, or conciliated by compromises.
200. If a suggestion from Satan
Assail thy (mind),\textsuperscript{1171}
Seek refuge with Allah;
For He heareth and knoweth
(All things).

201. Those who fear Allah,
When a thought of evil
From Satan assaults them,
Bring Allah to remembrance,
When lo! they see (aright)\textsuperscript{1172}

202. But their brethren (the evil ones)\textsuperscript{1173}
Plunge them deeper into error.
And never relax (their efforts).

203. If thou bring them not
A revelation,\textsuperscript{1174} they say:
"Why hast thou not
Got it together?"
Say: "I but follow
What is revealed to me
From my Lord:

\begin{quote}
Wa'ama inzilatukum min ash-shaytān šajā'ah yasu'ūd
dan'alla nis'ābun
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Et allāhu a'ūdha ar-rahimā tāmaddun
Min al-shaytān na'tihum la'a mā hāmil bihūn
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Wāhūthum nīmantum in al-bādi'
Lā yiṣṣurūn
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Wā'ayathum tulāhāta bā'tūlahāwā'ā lā aṣ'ābihāna
Qa'lla huwa 'ain ma'āḥi'alla in 'ain ba'da bābiṣyār
Min riyā'ibihum wa'dārwa yāqūtūbūn
\end{quote}

1171. Even a Prophet of Allah is but human. He might think that revenge or retaliation, or a little tactful silence when evil stalks abroad, or some compromise with ignorance, might be best for the cause. He is to reject such suggestions.

1172. Allah protects His own, as no one else can. He is the sure refuge—and the only one—for men of faith. If we are confused or angry, being blinded by this world, He will open our eyes.

1173. We go back to consider the ungodly, whom we left at verse 198, in order to be taught our behaviour towards evil. The forces of evil never relax their efforts to draw their “brethren” (those who go into their family) deeper and deeper into the mire of sin and destruction.

1174. “Ayat” here, I think, means specially an Āyat of the Holy Qur-ān. The infidels did not believe in revelation, and used to taunt the Holy Prophet, as much as to say that he used to put together words and promulgate them as revelation. The answer is contained in the sentence that follows. No human composition could contain the beauty, power, and spiritual insight of the Qur-ān. Without inspiration it is impossible to suppose that a man, with or without literary and philosophic training could produce such a book as the Qur-ān. Commentators of the Qur-ān, however, consider Āyah here to refer to miracle as the context seems to evidence.
1176. The higher you are in spiritual attainment, the more is your desire and your opportunily to serve and worship your Lord and Cherisher and the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds: and the greater is your pride in that service and that worship.

204. When the Qur-ān is read, Listen to it with attention, And hold your peace: That ye may receive Mercy.

205. And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance In thy (very) soul, With humility and remember Without loudness in words, In the mornings and evenings; And be not thou Of those who are unheedful.

206. Those who are near To thy Lord, disdain not To worship Him: They glorify Him And prostrate before Him.

1175. "Lights": eyes, faculty of spiritual insight. The revelation is for us (1) spiritual eyes, (2) guidance, and (3) mercy, (1) is the highest in degree: just as a blind man, if he is given eyes and the faculty of sight, is at once removed into an entirely new world, so those who can reach the stage of spiritual insight pass into and become citizens of a wholly new spiritual World, (2) is next in degree; the man of the world can act up to the teaching about right conduct and prepare for the Hereafter, (3) is the Mercy of Allah, free to every one, saint and sinner, who sincerely believes and puts his trust in Allah.

1176. The higher you are in spiritual attainment, the more is your desire and your opportunity to serve and worship your Lord and Cherisher and the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds: and the greater is your pride in that service and that worship.

1177. At this stage a Sajda or prostration is indicated, as a sign of our humble acceptance of the privilege of serving and worshipping Allah,—a fitting close to Sura in which we are led, through a contemplation of the stories of the Messengers of Allah, to the meaning of revelation and its relation to our moral and spiritual progress.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Anfāl, 8.

In the previous Introductions to the Sūras we have shown how each Sūra is a step or gradation in the teaching of the Qurān. The first seven Sūras, comprising a little less than one-third of the Qurān, form a gradation, sketching the early religious history of man and leading up to the formation of the new Ummat or Community of the Holy Messenger. Now we begin another gradation, consolidating that Ummat and directing us as to various phases in our new collective life.

In this chapter we have the lessons of the Battle of Badr enforced in their larger aspects: (1) the question of war booty; (2) the true virtues necessary for fighting the good fight; (3) victory against odds; (4) clemency and consideration for one's own and for others in the hour of victory.

As regards booty taken in battle, the first point to note is that that should never be our sole aim in war. It is only an accidental circumstance, a sort of windfall. Secondly, no soldier or troop has any prior right to it. A righteous war is a community affair, and any accessions resulting from it belong to Allah. Thirdly, certain equitable principles of division should be laid down to check human greed and selfishness. A fifth share goes to the Imam; and he can use it at his discretion; for his own expenses, and for the relief of the poor and suffering, and the orphans and widows (viii. 41). The remainder was divided, according to the Prophet's practice, not only among those who were actually in the fight physically, but all who were in the enterprise, young and old, provided they loyally did some duty assigned to them. Fourthly, there should be no disputes, as they interfere with internal discipline and harmony.

As regards the military virtues, which are the types of virtues throughout life, we are shown by an analysis of the incidents of Badr how against the greatest odds, Allah's help will give the victory if men are fighting not for themselves but for the sacred Cause of Allah. And directions are given for the treatment of prisoners and for maintaining the solidarity of the Muslim community.

The date of this Sūra is shortly after the battle of Badr, which was fought on Friday, the 17th of Ramadān in the second year of the Hijra. A short account of the battle is given in n. 352 to iii. 13.

Summary.—All booty is really at the disposal of Allah's Messenger under directions from Allah. Men of faith accept and obey these directions with cheerfulness. Victory and the prize of victory come from Allah, as was proved at Badr (viii. 1-19).
Intro. to S. 8.

Obedience and intelligent discipline, zeal, faith, and gratitude to Allah, are the true passports to success and protection from the assaults of evil. Evil will be piled up with evil and destroyed (viii. 20-37).

The battle of Badr was a testing time, and showed how virtue and valour can conquer against odds. Steadfastness and obedience; faith, courage, and fearlessness: due preparation and free expenditure of resources and energy:—these are expected from you by Allah, and His help is all-sufficient (viii. 38-64.)

Even tenfold odds against you do not count if you are fighting for truth and faith against enemies of truth and faith; but remember clemency and consideration in the hour of victory (viii. 65-75.)
1178. The occasion was the question of the division of the booty after the battle of Badr. See Introduction to this Sûra.

1179. Booty taken in a lawful and just war. It belongs to the Cause, in this case the Cause of Allah, as administered by His Messenger. The chief thing is to remain staunch to the Cause of Allah, and have no differences among those who stand for the Cause. Our internal relations must be kept straight: they must not be disturbed by cupidity or worldly considerations of gain, for any windfalls of this kind should be outside our calculations.

1180. Sustenance: The object is to warn off from the love of booty. To all true Believers Allah gives generous sustenance in any case.
4. Such in truth are the Believers:  
They have grades of dignity  
With their Lord, and forgiveness,  
And generous sustenance:

5. Just as thy Lord ordered thee  
Out of thy house in truth,  
Even though a party among  
The Believers disliked it,

6. Disputing with thee concerning  
The truth after it was made  
Manifest, as if they were  
Being driven to death  
While they see it.

7. Behold! Allah promised you  
One of the two parties,  
That it should be yours:  
Ye wished that the one

1181. Just as: the comparison takes us back to the first clause in verse 4: “such in truth are the Believers”—just as thy Lord also is just and true in ordering thee out to fight against heavy odds, when the alternative was to fight against the unarmed caravan which would have given thee abundant booty almost without a fight. To appreciate the full meaning, remember that the word *haqq*, translated “truth” means also “right,” “just”, “what is becoming.” The true Believers believe in truth and do right in obedience to Allah’s command. So Allah also, in asking them to fight against odds, is not asking them to rush to destruction, but is providing them with an opportunity of vindicating the truth in scorn of worldly advantage. And He made good His promise by giving them victory.

1182. In verse 6 we have again the word “truth”: some of the Believers disputed concerning “the truth”: they did not feel sure that the course recommended was the right course. They thought it would be certain destruction: they saw death almost staring them in the face.

1183. Just before Badr there were two alternatives before the Muslims in Madinah to save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Makkani Quraish with all their resources from the rich Syrian trade. One, which had least danger for the time being, and also promised much booty, was to fall upon the Quraish caravan returning from Syria to Makkah richly laden, and led by Abi Sufyān with only 40 men unarmed. From a worldly point of view this was the safest and most lucrative course. The other alternative, was to leave the booty out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraish army of 1,000 men coming from Makkah. The Muslims had no more than 300 men, ill-armed, to oppose this force. But if they could defeat it, it would shake the selfish autocracy which was in possession of Makkah. By Allah’s help they won a splendid victory, and the standard of Truth was established, never to be lowered again.
Calm (presence of mind) is essential in battle and in all posts of danger. If the mind is too much in a state of excitement, it cannot carry out a well-considered or well-concerted plan. This spirit of calm confidence on the part of the Muslims won against the blustering violence of the Quraish.

1184. Cf. iii. 123, 125, 126. The number of angels, a thousand at Badr and three thousand and five thousand at Uhud, is equal to the strength of the enemy.

1185. All help comes ultimately from Allah. In special cases it may take special forms to put heart into us, and to fit in with our feelings and our psychology.

1186. Cf. iii. 154 for Uhud. Calm (presence of mind) is essential in battle and in all posts of danger. If the mind is too much in a state of excitement, it cannot carry out a well-considered or well-concerted plan. This spirit of calm confidence on the part of the Muslims won against the blustering violence of the Quraish.
Rain to descend on you\textsuperscript{1187}  
From heaven, to clean you  
Therewith, to remove from you  
The stain of Satan,\textsuperscript{1188}  
To strengthen your hearts,  
And to plant your feet  
Firmly therewith.

12. Remember thy Lord inspired  
The angels (with the message):  
“I am with you: give  
Firmness to the Believers:  
I will instil terror  
Into the hearts of the Unbelievers:  
Smite ye above their necks  
And smite all their  
Finger-tips off them.”\textsuperscript{1189}

13. This because they contended  
Against Allah and His Messenger:  
If any contend against Allah  
And His Messenger. Allah  
Is strict in punishment.

14. Thus (will it be said): “Taste ye  
Then of the (punishment):  
For those who reject  
Is the chastisement of the Fire.”

\textsuperscript{1187} The rain was welcome for many reasons. (1) Water was scarce both for drinking and ablutions; (2) the muslim band, without baggage or equipment or comforts, found that their thirst aggravated their fatigue; (3) the sand was loose, and the rain consolidated it and enabled them “to plant their feet firmly.”

\textsuperscript{1188} “Stain of Satan”. Dirt is physically a symbol of evil, and the Muslims were particular about ablutions before prayer. But the rain also refreshed their spirits and removed any lurking doubts in their minds (suggestions of the Evil) that victory might be impossible in such adverse circumstances.

\textsuperscript{1189} The vulnerable parts of an armed man are above the neck. A blow on the neck, face or head, finishes him off. If he has armour it is difficult to get at his heart. But if his hands are put out of action, he is unable to wield his sword or lance or other weapon, and easily becomes a prisoner.
15. O ye who believe! When ye meet The Unbelievers In hostile array,⁴¹⁹⁰ Never turn your backs To them.

16. If any do turn his back To them on such a day— Unless it be in a stratagem Of war, or to retreat To a troop (of his own)— He draws on himself The wrath of Allah, And his abode is Hell,— An evil refuge (indeed)!

17. It is not ye who Slew them; it was Allah: When thou threwest (a handful)⁴¹⁹¹ Of dust), it was not Thy act, but Allah’s: In order that He might Confer on the Believers

1190. The laws of Jihād are exactly similar to those enforced by military virtue and discipline. Meet your enemy fairly and squarely, not rashly, but after due preparation. Zaḥfān in the text (meeting in hostile array) implies a slow and well-planned proceeding towards a hostile army. When once in combat, carry it through; there is no room for second thoughts. Death or victory should be the motto of every soldier: it may be death for himself individually, but if he has faith, there is triumph in either case for his cause. Two exceptions are recognised: (1) reculer pour mieux sauter, to go back in order to jump forward; or to deceive the enemy by a feint; (2) if an individual or body is, by the chances of battle, isolated from his own force, he can fall back on his force in order to fight the battle. There is no virtue in mere single-handedness. Each individual must use his life and his resources to the best advantage for the common cause.

1191. When the battle began, the Holy Prophet prayed, and threw a handful of dust or sand at the enemy, which, as described in traditions, struck the eyes of the enemy. This had a great psychological effect.
1192. Numerically the odds against the Muslims were three to one. In other ways
they were at a disadvantage: of arms and equipment they had but little, while the enemy
were well-found: they were inexperienced, while the Quraish had brought their foremost
warriors. In all this there was a test. but the test was accompanied by gracious favours
of countless value: their Commander was one in whom they had perfect faith. and for
whom they were ready to lay down their lives; the rain refreshed them; their spirit was
unshaken; and they were fighting in Allah's cause. Thus the trial or test became itself
a blessing.

1193. *Fath* = victory, decision, judgment. The Quraish in Makkah had prayed for
victory: they were confident that their superior numbers, equipment, and experience
would be decisive. With a play on the word, they are told that the decision had come,
and the victory—but not in the sense they had hoped for!

SECTION 3.

20. O ye who believe!
Obey Allah and His Messenger,
And turn not away from him
When ye hear (him speak).
21. Nor be like those who say, 
"We hear," but listen not.\footnote{1194}

22. For the worst of beasts 
In the sight of Allah 
Are the deaf and the dumb,\footnote{1195} Those who understand not.

23. If Allah had found in them 
Any good, He would indeed 
Have made them listen: 
(As it is), if He had made them 
Listen, they would but have 
Turned back and declined (faith).

24. O ye who believe! 
Give your response to Allah 
And His Messenger, when He 
Calleth you to that which 
Will give you life;\footnote{1196} 
And know that Allah 
Cometh in between a man\footnote{1197} 
And his heart, and that 
It is He to Whom 
Ye shall (all) be gathered.

\footnote{1194. Cf. ii. 93.}
\footnote{1195. Cf. ii. 18.}
\footnote{1196. There are two points to note. \(1\) Note that after Allah and His Messenger are mentioned, the pronoun and verb in the next clause are singular: everything that Allah's Messenger put forward as an injunction came by inspiration from Allah: the Messenger made his will coincide completely with Allah's will. \(2\) We are asked actively to give our response in deed and life to the call of duty and conscience, for that call leads to real life, the life eternal, even though it may apparently mean in this world the loss of things that make life dear or the loss of life itself. If we refer this to Jihad, \textit{i.e.}, fighting in and for the Cause, both literally and metaphorically, the meaning becomes quite clear.}
\footnote{1197. If the human heart is refractory and refuses to obey the call of Allah, that is not the end of the matter. Allah has to be reckoned with. The refusal may be because there was some pet human scheme which the heart of man was not willing to give up for Allah's Cause. Will that scheme come to fruition by refusing to serve the higher Cause? By no means. Man proposes, but God disposes. If the scheme or motive was perfectly secret from men, it was not secret from Allah. The heart is the innermost seat of man's affections and desires: but Allah intervenes between man and his heart.}
25. And fear the trial\(^{1198}\)
Which affecteth not in particular
(Only) those of you who do wrong:
And know that Allah
Is strict in punishment.

26. Call to mind when ye
Were a small (band),
Deemed weak through the land,
And afraid that men might
Despoil and kidnap you;\(^{1199}\)
But He provided a safe asylum
For you, strengthened you
With His aid, and gave you
Good things for sustenance:
That ye might be grateful.

27. O ye that believe!
Betray not the trust
Of Allah and the Messenger,
Nor misappropriate knowingly
Things entrusted to you.\(^{1200}\)

1198. *Fitna* has many meanings: (1) the root meaning is trial or temptation, as in ii. 102 and viii. 28; (2) an analogous meaning is trial or punishment, as in v. 71; (3) tumult or oppression, as in ii. 193, and here: and in viii. 39 (4) there is here (viii. 25) the further shade of meaning suggested, discord, sedition, civil war.

This warning against internal discord or tumult was very necessary in the Civil Wars of early Islam, and was never more necessary than it is now. For it affects innocent and guilty alike.

1199. On the immediate occasion the Muslims were reminded that they were a small band in Makkah despised and rejected; living in a state of insecurity for their persons, their lives, their property, and those of their dependants, persecuted and exiled and how by the grace of Allah they found a safe asylum in Madinah how they found friends and helpers, how their many needs were cared for, and how at length they gathered strength and numbers enough to defeat the forces of godlessness, injustice, and oppression.

1200. Trusts may be of various kinds: (1) property, goods, credit, etc.; (2) plans, confidences, secrets, etc.; (3) knowledge, talents, opportunities, etc., which we are expected to use for our fellowmen. Men may betray the trust of Allah and His Prophet by misusing property, or abusing the confidence reposed in them, or the knowledge or talents given to them. On that special occasion, when the plans for the protection of Allah's worshippers against annihilation were of special importance, the Prophet's trust and confidence had to be guarded with special care.
28. And know ye
That your possessions
And your progeny
Are but a trial.¹²⁰¹
And that it is Allah
With whom lies
Your highest reward.

SECTION 4.

29. O ye who believe!
If ye fear Allah,
He will grant you a Criterion¹²⁰²
(To judge between right and wrong).
Remove from you (all) evil deeds
And forgive you:
For Allah is the Lord
Of grace unbounded.

30. Remember how the Unbelievers
Plotted against thee, to keep
Thee in bonds, or slay thee,
Or get thee out (of thy home).¹²⁰³

¹²⁰¹. A big family—many sons—was considered a source of power and strength: iii. 10, 116. So in English, a man with many children is said to have his “quiver full”: Cf. Psalms, cxxvii. 4-5: “As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are the children of thy youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.” So with property and possessions: they add to a man’s dignity, power, and influence. But both possessions and a large family are a temptation and a trial. They may turn out to be a source of spiritual downfall, if they are mishandled, or if the love of them excludes the love of Allah.

¹²⁰². Cf. ii. 53 and ii. 185. The battle of Badr is called the Furqān in Muslim theology, because it was the first trial of strength by battle, in Islam, between the powers of good and evil. Evil was defeated, and those who had real faith were tested and sorted out from those who had not faith enough to follow the banner of Faith. See also viii. 41 and n. 1210.

¹²⁰³. The plots against Al-Muṣṭafā in Makkah aimed at three things. They were not only foiled, but Allah’s wonderful working turned the tables, and brought good out of evil in each case. (1) They tried to hold the Prophet in subjection in Makkah by putting =
They plot and plan,  
And Allah too plans,  
But the best of planners is Allah.

31. When Our Signs are rehearsed  
To them, they say: "We have heard this (before):  
If we wished, we could say (words) like these:  
These are nothing but tales of the ancients."

32. Remember how they said:  
"O Allah! if this is indeed the Truth from Thee,  
Rain down on us a shower of stones from the sky,  
Or send us a grievous chastisement."  

= pressure on his uncles, relatives, and friends. But the more they persecuted, the more the little Muslim community grew in faith and numbers. (2) They tried to injure or slay him. But the wonderful example of his humility, perseverance, and fearlessness furthered the cause of Islam. (3) They tried to get him and his followers out of their homes. But they found a new home in Madinah from which they eventually reconquered not only Makkah but Arabia and the world.

1203-A. Cf. iii. 54.

1204. Cf. vi. 25.

1205. This was actually a challenge thrown out by the Infidels in Makkah not seriously but as a taunt. The answer is in the two following verses. Allah punishes in His own good time, not according to the foolish and frivolous taunts of the Unbelievers. While the Holy Prophet was with them, he—the Mercy of the Worlds—conferred a certain amount of immunity to them. There were also other Muslims, just men who asked for forgiveness. And Allah keeps the door of repentance and forgiveness open to all as long as they make it possible. But let them not be puffed up with pride, or think that they have lasting immunity. What became of Abū Jahl? He and some of his greatest warriors were slain at Badr. The little autocratic clique that prevented Muslims from access to the Sacred Mosque had their punishment not long afterwards. They pretended to be its guardians. But were they? Could they be? Only the righteous could be true guardians to Allah’s places of worship, and particularly to the Central House of the Ka’ba. It was to be a place of pure worship, while their idolatrous worship was mere mummary—whistling and clapping of hands. All false worship advertises itself by noise and unseemly riot: it is said that the Pagans used to go naked round the Ka’ba.
It is only when matters are brought to an issue that evil is separated distinctly from the good. Then evil consorts with evil, and good with good. The evil will be piled into a heap. When the cup is full, the punishment will come. There will be no mistake about it. The good should not be discouraged, because in fighting against them, all forces of evil join together and pool their resources together. The more they do so, the easier is the final arbitrament. It is all in Allah’s Plan.
Into Hell. They will be
The ones to have lost.

SECTION 5.

38. Say to the Unbelievers,
If (now) they desist (from Unbelief),
Their past would be forgiven them;
But if they persist, the punishment
Of those before them is already
(A matter of warning for them).

39. And fight them on
Until there is no more
Persecution,
And religion becomes
Allah’s in its entirety
But if they cease, verily Allah
Doth see all that they do.

40. If they refuse, be sure
That Allah is your Protector—
The Best to protect
And the Best to help.

41. And know that out of
All the booty that ye
May acquire (in war),
A fifth share is assigned

1207. Cf. ii. 193 and n.

1208. If they cease from fighting and from the persecution of truth, Allah judges them by their actions and their motives, and would not wish that they should be harassed with further hostility. But if they refuse all terms, the righteous have nothing to fear: Allah will help and protect them.

1209. The rule is that a fifth share is set apart for the Imam (the Commander) and the rest is divided among the forces. The fifth share reserved is expressed to be for Allah and the Prophet, and for charitable purposes for those to whom charity is due. Ultimately everything is at the disposal of Allah and His Prophet: viii. 1: but four-fifths are divided, and only one-fifth is retained for the special purposes. The Imam has discretion as to the mode of division. In the Prophet’s life-time a certain portion was assigned to him and his near relatives.
1210. Testing: Fūqān: Criterion between right and wrong, decision between the forces of faith and unbelief. The battle of Badr is called by this name. See viii. 29 and n. 1202.

1211. Allah’s power is shown in the events detailed in the three verses following (vv. 42-44), leading to the complete victory of the Muslims over the pagan Quraish.

1212. The little Islamic force from Madinah went out to meet the big Makkhan army, and they met on the two sides of a valley at Badr, while the Quraish caravan was on lower ground towards the sea, about 3 miles from Badr.

1213. They were all at cross purposes. The caravan was making for Makkah, but scarcely thought it could get there. The Quraish force was trying to save the caravan and then annihilate the Muslims. The Muslims had decided to attack the Quraish army from Makkah which turned out to be big, more than three times their number. Yet the two forces met, precisely at the spot and at the time when a decisive battle should take place and the Muslims dispose of the pretensions of the Makkans. If they had carefully planned a mutual appointment, they could not have carried it out more precisely.

On the Muslim side the few martyrs knew that the victory was theirs and those who survived the battle enjoyed the fruits of the victory. On the pagan side, both those who died and those who lived knew fully the issue joined. Even psychologically both sides went in with full determination to decide the issue.
The Muslim army, though they knew their worldly disadvantage, did not realize the full odds against them. The Makkans came exulting in any case, and they despised the contemptible little force opposed to them. Even though they thought the Muslim force was twice as great as it was (iii. 13), still that number was contemptible, when taken with its poor equipment. Both these psychological visions subserved the main Plan, which was to bring the matter to a decisive issue, whether the Pagans of Makkah were to continue their arrogant oppression, or the religion of Allah was to be established in freedom and honour.

43. Remember in thy dream Allah showed them to thee As few: if He had shown Them to thee as many, Ye would surely have been Discouraged, and ye would Surely have disputed In (your) decision: but Allah Saved (you): for He knoweth Well the (secrets) of (all) hearts.

44. And remember when ye met, He showed them to you As few in your eyes, And He made you appear As contemptible in their eyes: That Allah might accomplish A matter already decided And unto Allah Are all matters returned.
SECTION 6.

45. O ye who believe!
   When ye meet a force,
   Be firm, and call Allah
   In remembrance much (and often):
   That ye may prosper:

46. And obey Allah and His Messenger;
   And fall into no disputes,
   Lest ye lose heart
   And your power depart;
   And be patient and persevering:
   For Allah is with those
   Who patiently persevere.¹²¹⁵

47. And be not like those
   Who started from their homes
   Insolutely and to be seen of men,
   And to hinder (men)
   From the path of Allah.¹²¹⁶
   For Allah compasseth
   All that they do.

48. Remember Satan made
   Their (sinful) acts seem
   Alluring to them, and said:
   “No one among men
   Can overcome you this day,
   While I am near to you”:
   But when the two forces
   Came in sight of each other,
   He turned on his heels,
   And said: “Lo! I am clear
   Of you; lo! I see
   What ye see not;

¹²¹⁵ A fine description of the Muslim virtues which make for success and whose loss brings about humiliation and failure. “Power”: literally, “wind”,-the favourable wind for a sailing ship.

¹²¹⁶ A true description of the Makkan army which met its doom.
Lo! I fear Allah; for Allah is strict in punishment." 1217

SECTION 7.

49. Lo! the Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease. 1218
Say: "these people,—their religion has misled them." But if any trust in Allah, behold! Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.

50. If thou couldst see,
When the angels take the souls of the Unbelievers (at death), 1219 (How) they smite their faces and their backs, (saying):
"Taste the chastisement of the blazing Fire—"

51. This is "because of (the deeds) which 1220
Your (own) hands sent forth.
For Allah is never unjust to His servants."

1217. It is the way with the leaders of evil, when they find their cause lost, that they wash their hands of their followers and leave them in the lurch. They see more clearly than their dupes. They are not simpletons: they know the consequences of the wrath of Allah. Satan's "fear" of Allah is terror combined with hatred,—the very opposite of the feeling which is described in Taqwa, viz., the desire to avoid doing anything against Allah's will, such desire being founded on trust in Allah and the love of Allah.

1218. Cf. ii. 10 "disease in the heart."

Trust in Allah brings its own reward: our eyes are opened, and we see how great, good, and wise is the Cherisher of the Worlds. Others may sneer and despise. But the blessing of Allah keeps our minds fresh and our hearts contented.

1219. In contrast to the taunt against those who trust in Allah, "that their religion has misled them." is shown the terrible punishment, after death, of those who laughed at Faith.

1220. The punishment is shown to be due to their own deeds of wrong, because Allah is never unjust to the least of His servants.
52. "(Deeds) after the manner Of the People of Pharaoh And of those before them: They rejected the Signs of Allah, And Allah punished them For their crimes: for Allah Is Strong, and Strict in punishment:

53. "Because Allah will never change The Grace which He hath bestowed On a people until they change What is in their (own) souls: And verily Allah is He Who heareth and knoweth (all things)."

54. "(Deeds) after the manner Of the People of Pharaoh And those before them": They treated as false the Signs Of their Lord so We Destroyed them for their crimes, And We drowned the People Of Pharaoh: for they were all Oppressors and wrong-doers.

55. For the worst of beasts In the sight of Allah Are those who reject Him: They will not believe.

1221. Allah bestows His grace freely, but He never withdraws it arbitrarily. Before He changes their state and circumstances, an actual state of rebellion and contumacy has arisen in their own souls, which brings about its inevitable punishment.

1222. Note that in verse 51, the words were that they rejected the Signs of Allah and were punished: here the words are that they treated the Signs as false and were destroyed—a higher degree of guilt deserved a severer punishment.

1223. In viii. 22 we were warned against "the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah", who do not make use of their faculties of hearing, speaking and understanding, in the service of Allah, and in fact misuse their faculties to blaspheme Allah. The same brute creatures are shone here in another light: they are faithless both to Allah and man.
56. They are those with whom Thou didst make a covenant, But they break their covenant Every time, and they have not The fear (of Allah).

57. If ye gain the mastery Over them in war, Disperse, with them, those Who follow them, That they may remember. 1224-A

58. If thou fearest treachery From any group, throw back (Their Covenant) to them, (so as To be) on equal terms: For Allah loveth not the treacherous.

SECTION 8.

59. Let not the Unbelievers Think that they have escaped, They will never frustrate (them).

60. Against them make ready Your strength to the utmost Of your power, including

1224. The immediate occasion was the repeated treachery of the Banu Quraiza after their treaties with the Muslims. But the general lesson remains, as noted in the two following verses. Treachery in war is doubly wrong, for it endangers so many lives. Such treachery should be punished in such a way that it gets no chance again. Not only the actual perpetrators but those who follow their standard should be rendered powerless. And the broken treaty should be denounced so that the innocent party can at least fight on equal terms. From actual physical warfare we can carry the same lesson to spiritual warfare. A truce or understanding is possible with those who respect definite principles, not with those who have no principles and are merely out for oppression and wickedness.

1224-A. The purpose of the verse is to urge Muslims to act against their enemies described above with a severity and resoluteness which would serve as a deterrent to other enemies of Islam who might be inclined to follow their example and act treacherously towards Muslims.

1225. The immediate occasion of this injunction was the weakness of cavalry and appointments of war in the early fights of Islam. But the general meaning follows. In every fight, physical, moral, or spiritual, arm yourself with the best weapons and the best arms against your enemy, so as to instil wholesome respect into him for you and the Cause you stand for.
Steeds of war, to strike terror
Into (the hearts of) the enemies,
Of Allah and your enemies,
And others besides, whom
Ye may not know, but whom
Allah doth know. Whatever
Ye shall spend in the Cause
Of Allah, shall be repaid
Unto you, and ye shall not
Be treated unjustly.

61. But if the enemy
Incline towards peace,
Do thou (also) incline
Towards peace, and trust
In Allah: for He is the One
That heareth and knoweth
(All things).

62. Should they intend
To deceive thee,—verily Allah
Sufficeth thee: He it is
That hath strengthened thee
With His aid and
With (the company of)
The Believers,

63. And (moreover) He hath put
Affection between their hearts:

1226. There are always lurking enemies whom you may not know, but whom Allah
knows. It is your duty to be ready against all, for the sacred Cause under whose banner
you are fighting.

1227. Be always ready and put all your resources into your Cause. You do not do
so in vain. Allah’s reward will come in various forms. He knows all, and His reward will
always be more generous than you can possibly think of.

1228. While we must always be ready for the good fight lest it be forced on us, even
in the midst of the fight we must always be ready for peace if there is any inclination
towards peace on the other side. There is no merit merely in a fight by itself. It should
be a joyful duty not for itself, but to establish the reign of peace and righteousness and
Allah’s Law.

1229. In working for peace there may be a certain risk of treachery on the other
side. We must take that risk: because the men of Faith have Allah’s aid to count upon
and the strength of the united body of the righteous.
SECTION 9.

64. O Prophet! Sufficient Unto thee is Allah — And unto those Who follow thee Among the Believers. 

65. O Prophet! rouse the Believers To the fight. If there are Twenty amongst you, patient And persevering, they will Vanquish two hundred: if a hundred. They will vanquish a thousand Of the Unbelievers: for these Are a people without understanding.

1230. On the immediate occasion, the greatest miracle and most wonderful working of Allah's grace was the union of hearts produced among the jarring, war-like, excitable elements of Arabia under the gentle, firm, and wise guidance of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. At all times we must pray to Allah for this gift above all — union, understanding, and pure and sincere affection among those who take Allah's name. With it there is strength and success. Without it there is humiliation, slavery, and moral degradation. There may be many causes of difference and dispute. The reconciliation can only come from the glory and wisdom of Allah.

1231. The Believers: mere lip-profession of belief, or even the kind of belief that does not result in action, is not enough. To those whose belief is so sincere that it results in complete trust in Allah and in fearless action in His service, the consequences on this earth do not matter. Allah's good pleasure is enough for them.

1232. In a fight, odds of ten to one against any one are appalling. But they do not daunt the men of faith. Whether they personally win or die, their Cause prevails. They are sure to win: because (1) they have divine aid, and (2) even humanly speaking, those who take up arms against truth and righteousness are fools, and their seeming power is but a broken reed.
66. For the present, Allah
Hath lightened your (burden),
For He knoweth that there is
A weak spot in you:1233
But (even so), if there are
A hundred of you, patient
And persevering, they will
Vanquish two hundred, and if
A thousand, they will vanquish
Two thousand, with the leave
Of Allah: for Allah is with those
Who patiently persevere.

67. It is not fitting
For a Prophet
That he should have
Prisoners of war until
He hath thoroughly subdued1234
The land. Ye look
For the temporal goods
Of this world; but Allah
Looketh to the Hereafter:
And Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.

1233. Given equal conditions, Muslims on account of their faith could win against odds of ten to one. But where their organization and equipment are weak, as was the case about the time of Badr, they were set a lighter task, and asked to tackle no more than odds of two to one against them. As a matter of fact at Badr they won through against odds of more than three to one.

1234. An ordinary war may be for territory or trade, revenge or military glory,—all "temporal goods of this world." Such a war is condemned. But a Jihād is fought under strict conditions laid down by Islam, and solely for the cause of Allah. All baser motives, therefore are strictly excluded. The gain in the shape of ransom from captives has no place in such warfare.

At the same time, if there has been heavy loss of life already, captives may be taken, and it would be for the Imām to exercise his discretion as to the time when it was safe to release them, and whether the release should be free or on parole or on a fine by way of punishment. Destruction and slaughter, however repugnant to a gentle soul like that of Mūhammad, were inevitable where evil tried to suppress the good. Even Jesus, whose mission was more limited, had to say: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword." (Matt. x. 34).

Seventy captives were taken at Badr, and it was decided to take ransom for them. While the general principle of fighting for the purpose of taking captives in order to get their ransom is condemned, the particular action in this case was approved in vv. 68-71.
68. Had it not been for a previous ordainment\textsuperscript{1235} From Allah, a severe punishment Would have reached you For the (ransom) that ye took.

69. But (now) enjoy\textsuperscript{1236} what ye took In war, lawful and good: But fear Allah: for Allah Is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 10.

70. O Prophet! say to those Who are captives in your hands: "If Allah findeth any good\textsuperscript{1237} In your hearts, He will Give you something better Than what has been taken From you, and He will Forgive you: for Allah Is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

\textsuperscript{1235} Though any motive of worldly gain, which may have been in the minds of some among the victorious Muslim army, is condemned as worthy of a severe penalty, what actually happened is ascribed to the Plan of Allah, which was pre-ordained. Among the prisoners taken were the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbās and Ḥadhrat ‘Ali’s brother, Aqil, who afterwards became Muslims. ‘Abbās was an ancestor of the founder of the celebrated ‘Abbāsi Dynasty which played such a notable part in Islamic history. In his case the promise made in verse 70 was amply fulfilled. In the case of all prisoners, if there was any good in their hearts, their very fight against Islam and their capture led to their being blessed with Islam. Thus does Allah’s Plan work in a marvellous way, and evolve good out of seeming evil.

\textsuperscript{1236} Enjoy: literally, eat. See vii. 19. n. 1004, and v. 66. n. 776.

\textsuperscript{1237} This is a consolation to the prisoners of war. In spite of their previous hostility, Allah will forgive them in His mercy if there was any good in their hearts, and confer upon them a far higher gift than anything they have ever lost. This gift in its highest sense would be the blessing of Islam, but even in a material sense, there was great good fortune awaiting them.

Note how comprehensive is Allah’s care. He encourages and strengthens the Muslims, at the same time condemning any baser motives that may have entered their minds. He consoles the prisoners of war and promises them better things if there is any good in them at all. And He offers comfort to those who have left their homes in His Cause, and knits them into closer fellowship with those who have helped them and sympathised with them.
71. But if they have
Treacherous designs against thee,
(O Messenger!), they have already
Been in treason against Allah,\(^{1238}\)
And so hath He given
(Thee) power over them.
And Allah is He who hath
(Full) knowledge and wisdom.

72. Those who believed,
And emigrated
And fought for the Faith,
With their property
And their persons,
In the Cause of Allah,
As well as those
Who gave (them) asylum\(^{1239}\)
And aid,—these are (all)
Friends and protectors,
One of another.
As to those who believed
But did not emigrate
Ye owe no duty
Of protection to them

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1238. If the kindness shown to them is abused by the prisoners of war when they are released, it is not a matter for discouragement to those who showed the kindness. Such persons have in their treachery shown already their treason to Allah, in that they took up arms against Allah’s Prophet, and sought to blot out the pure worship of Allah. The punishment of defeat, which opened the eyes of some of their comrades, evidently did not open their eyes. But Allah knows all, and in His wisdom will order all things for the best. The Believers have done their duty in showing such clemency as they could in the circumstances of war. For them “Allah sufficeth” (viii. 62).

1239. The reference is to the Muhājirūn and the Ansār, the Emigrants and the Helpers, the people who forsook their homes and adopted voluntary exile from Makkah in company with their beloved Leader, and their good friends in Madinah, who gave them asylum and every kind of assistance, moral and material. Under the magnetic personality of the Holy Prophet these two groups became like blood-brothers, and they were so treated in matters of inheritance during the period when they were cut off from their kith and kin.
Until they emigrate;\textsuperscript{1240} But if they seek Your aid in religion, It is your duty To help them, Except against a people With whom ye have A treaty of mutual alliance.\textsuperscript{1241} And (remember) Allah Seeth all that ye do.

73. The Unbelievers are Protectors, one of another: Unless ye do this. (Protect each other), There would be Tumult and oppression On earth, and great mischief.\textsuperscript{1242}

74. Those who believe, And emigrate, And fight for the Faith, In the Cause of Allah,

\textsuperscript{1240} The Believers (Muslims) were entitled to all assistance in matters of religion. But if they were not strong enough to suffer voluntary exile on behalf of the Cause and make the personal sacrifices which their more ardent brethren in faith made, they could not reasonably ask for political or military assistance or protection.

\textsuperscript{1241} If a community suffers voluntary exile on account of persecution and oppression, and some of its weaker brethren stay behind, holding fast to faith but not prepared for the higher sacrifice, the exiles have still a duty to help their weaker brethren in matters of religion. The exiles, being at open war against the State which oppressed them, would be free to fight against such State. But if the weaker brethren are in a State in mutual alliance with the Community, the Community cannot in honour interfere with that State, whether it is Muslim or not. Presumably the alliance implies that the grievances of the weaker brethren will be redressed by the State itself. But it is not honourable to embarrass your own ally.

\textsuperscript{1242} Evil consorts with evil. The good have all the more reason for drawing together and not only living in mutual harmony, but being ready at all times to protect each other. Otherwise the world will be given over to aggressions by unscrupulous people, and the good will fail in their duty to establish Allah’s Peace and to strengthen all the forces of truth and righteousness.
As well as those
Who give (them) asylum
And aid,—these are (all)
In very truth the Believers:
For them is the forgiveness
Of sins and a provision
Most generous. 1243

75. And those who
Accept Faith subsequently, 1244
And emigrate,
And fight for the Faith
In your company,—
They are of you.
But kindred by blood
Have prior rights
Against each other
In the Book of Allah. 1245
Verily Allah is well-acquainted
With all things.

1243. Believers who make all sacrifices in the Cause of Allah have given the best possible proof of their Faith by their actions. They have loved Allah much, and much will be forgiven them. What they sacrificed was, perhaps, judged by universal standards, of small value, but its value will be estimated by the precious love behind it, and its reward will be of no ordinary kind. It will not be a reward in the ordinary sense at all, for a reward is given once for all. It will be a provision which last for ever, and is on the most generous scale.

1244. Those who come into the fold last are none the less brethren in the fullest acceptation of the term. But any special provisions made in the special circumstances of the first martyrs for the Cause will not of course apply to them as the special circumstances which made them necessary have ceased to exist. See next note.

1245. The Book of Allah, i.e., the Eternal Decree, the Preserved Tablet (lxxv. 22). Blood-relationship and its rights and duties do not depend on special circumstances of a temporary nature. Any temporary rights of mutual inheritance established between the early Emigrants and Helpers (n. 1239) would not apply after the revelation of this verse any more.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *At-Tauba, 9*

*At-Tauba* (Repentance) or *Barāat* (Immunity)

Logically this Sūra follows up the argument of the last Sūra (VIII), and indeed may be considered a part of it, although chronologically the two are separated by an interval of seven years.

We saw that Sūra VIII dealt with the large questions arising at the outset of the life of a new Ummat or organised nation: questions of defence under attack, distribution of war acquisitions after victory, the virtues needed for concerted action, and clemency and consideration for one's own and for enemies in the hour of victory. We pass on in this Sūra to deal with the question: what is to be done if the enemy breaks faith and is guilty of treachery? No nation can go on with a treaty if the other party violates it at will; but it is laid down that a period of four months should be allowed by way of notice after denunciations of the treaty; that due protection should be accorded in the intervening period; that there should always be open the door to repentance and reunion with the people of Allah; and that if all there fail, and war must be undertaken, it must be pushed with the utmost vigour.

These are the general principles deducible from the Sūra. The immediate occasion for their promulgation may be considered in connection with the chronological place of the Sūra.

Chronologically, verses 1-29 were a notable declaration of State policy promulgated about the month of Shawwāl, A.H. 9, and read out by Ḥadhrat 'Alī at the Pilgrimage two months later in order to give the policy the widest publicity possible. The remainder of the Sūra, verses 30-129, was revealed a little earlier, say about the month of Ramadhān, A.H. 9, and sums up the lessons of the Prophet's Tabūk expedition in the late summer of A.H. 9 (say October 630).

Tabūk is a place near the frontier of Arabia, quite close to what was then Byzantine territory in the Province of Syria (which includes Palestine). It is on the Hijāz Railway, about 350 miles north-west of Madinah, and 150 miles south of Ma'ān. It had a fort and a spring of sweet water. In consequence of strong and persistent rumours that the Byzantines (Romans) were preparing to invade Arabia and that the Byzantine Emperor himself had arrived near the frontier for the purpose, the Prophet collected as large a force as he could, and marched to Tabūk. The Byzantine invasion did not come off. But the Prophet took the opportunity of consolidating the Muslim position in that direction and making treaties of alliance with certain Christian and Jewish tribes near the Gulf of 'Aqaba. On his return to Madinah he considered the situation. During his
absence the Hypocrites had played, as always a double game, and the policy hitherto followed, of free access to the sacred centre of Islam, to Muslims and Pagans alike, was now altered, as it had been abused by the enemies of Islam.

This is the only Sūra to which the usual formula of Bismillāh is not prefixed. It was among the last of the Sūras revealed, and though the Prophet had directed that it should follow Sūra VIII, it was not clear whether it was to form a separate Sūra or only a part of Sūra VIII. It is now treated as a separate Sūra, but the Bismillāh is not prefixed to it, as there is no warrant for supposing that the Prophet used the Bismillāh before it in his recitation of the Qur-ān. The Sūra is known under many names: the most commonly used are (1) At-Tauba (Repentance), with reference to ix. 104 and (2) Barāat (Immunity), the opening word of the Sūra.

**Summary.**—Treaties with those Pagans who have treacherously broken their terms are denounced, but four months time is given for adjustments or repentance. Pagans to be excluded from the sacred Mosques. Infidelity to be fought (ix. 1-29).

The People of the Book have obscured the light of Allah, but the Truth of Allah must prevail over all. We must be ready to fight for the Faith that is in us: otherwise we shall be unworthy to uphold Allah's banner, and He will raise other people in our place (ix 30-42).

The hypocrites and their double dealing: their evil ways pointed out. Their punishment will be as sure as the blessings of the righteous (ix. 43-72).

All evil should be resisted, unless there is repentance: falsehood is not content with breach of faith but mocks all good: it should not be envied but shunned (ix. 73-99).

The good pleasure of Allah is with those who are sincere and make sacrifices in His cause: He will forgive those who do wrong and repent, but not those who intend mischief and foment unbelief and disunion among believers. The Believers by their self-surrender obtain eternal Felicity. Allah will turn in mercy even to those who, though they waver or fail in duty, turn at last to Him (ix. 100-118).

Those who believe should associate with the righteous and the truthful, actively doing their duty. But if the Community marches out, a part of them should remain behind for the purpose of diligently studying religion and teaching their brethren when they return. Every Sūra increases the faith of those who believe, though those diseased in heart may add doubt to doubt. Trust in Allah, Lord of the Throne of Glory (ix. 119-129).
At-Tauba (Repentance) or Barâat (Immunity)

1. A (declaration) of immunity
From Allah and His Messenger, To those of the Pagans With whom ye have contracted Mutual alliances:

2. Go ye, then for four months, (As ye will), throughout the land, But know yet that ye cannot Frustrate Allah (by your falsehood) But that Allah will cover With shame those who reject Him.

3. And an announcement from Allah And His Messenger, to the people (Assembled) on the day Of the Great Pilgrimage,- That Allah and His Messenger Dissolve (treaty) obligations With the Pagans.

1246. Barâat: usually translated "immunity". I do not think that word correctly represents the Arabic word in this context. I retain it as I cannot think of any single English word as an equivalent. The general sense is explained in the introduction to this Sûra. In verse 3 below I use the periphrasis "dissolve treaty obligations." which goes some way to explain the meaning. The Pagans and enemies of Islam frequently made treaties of mutual alliance with the Muslims. The Muslims scrupulously observed their part, but the Pagans violated their part again and again when it suited them. After some years, experience it became imperative to denounce such treaties altogether. This was done in due form, with four months' notice, and a chance was given to those who faithfully observed their pledges, to continue their alliance.

1247. Four Months: Some Commentators understand by this the four forbidden months in which warfare by ancient Arabian custom was unlawful, viz., Rajab, Zul-qa'dah, Zul-hijjah, and Mu'harram: See ii. 194 n. But it is better to take the signification of the four months immediately following the Declaration. Assuming that the Sûra was promulgated early in Shawwâl (see Introduction), the four months would be Shawwâl, Zul-qa'dah, Zul-hijjah, and Mu'harram, of which the last three would also be the customary Prohibited Months.

1248. The great day of Hajj is either the 9th of Zul-hijjah (‘Arafat), or the 10th (the Day of Sacrifice).
If, then, ye repent,
It were best for you;
But if ye turn away,
Know ye that ye cannot
Frustrate Allah, And proclaim
A grievous chastisement to those
Who reject Faith.

4. (But the treaties are) not dissolved\textsuperscript{1249}
With those Pagans with whom
Ye have entered into alliance
And who have not subsequently
Failed you in aught,
Nor aided any one against you.
So fulfil your engagements
With them to the end
Of their term: for Allah
Loveth the righteous.

5. But when the forbidden months\textsuperscript{1250}
Are past, then fight and slay\textsuperscript{1251}
The Pagans wherever ye find them,
And seize them, beleaguer them,
And lie in wait for them
In every stratagem (of war);

1249. The sacred duty of fulfilling all obligations of every kind, to Muslims and non Muslims, in public as well as private life, is a cardinal feature of Muslim ethics. The question what is to be done with those who abuse this principle by failing in their duty but expect the Muslims to do their part is not to be solved (in the case of treaties) by a general denunciation of treaties but by a careful consideration of the cases where there has been fidelity and not treachery. There we are enjoined to give the strictest fidelity, as it is a part of righteousness and our duty to Allah.

1250. The emphasis is on the first clause: it is only when the four months of grace are past, and the other party show no signs of desisting from their treacherous designs by right conduct, that the state of war supervenes—between Faith and Unfaith.

1251. When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour. According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves. The fighting may take the form of killing, capture, or siege, and ambush and other stratagems. But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party, and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace.
But if they repent,\textsuperscript{1252} 
And establish regular prayers. 
\textit{And pay Zakat} 
Then open the way for them: 
For Allah is Oft-forgiving, 
Most Merciful.

6. If one amongst the Pagans\textsuperscript{1253} 
Ask thee for asylum, 
Grant it to him, 
So that he may hear the Word Of Allah; and then escort him 
To where he can be secure,\textsuperscript{1254} 
That is because they are 
Men without knowledge.

SECTION 2.

7. How can there be a covenant 
Before Allah and His Messenger, 
With the Pagans, except those\textsuperscript{1255}

\textsuperscript{1252} The repentance must be sincere, and that is shown by conduct—a religious spirit of true prayer and charity. In that case we are not to bar the gate against the repentant. On the contrary we must do all we can to make their way easy, remembering that Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{1253} Even among the enemies of Islam, actively fighting against Islam, there may be individuals who may be in a position to require protection. Full asylum is to be given to them, and opportunities provided for hearing the Word of Allah. If they accept the Word, they become Muslims and brethren, and no further question arises. If they do not see their way to accept Islam, they will require double protection: (1) from the Islamic forces openly fighting against their people, and (2) from their own people, as they detached themselves from them. Both kinds of protection should be ensured for them, and they should be safely escorted to a place where they can be safe. Such persons only err through ignorance, and there may be much good in them.

\textsuperscript{1254} That is because they are Men without knowledge.

\textsuperscript{1255} In this section we have the reasons why the treaties with treacherous Pagan foes were denounced. The clause introducing the exception is a parenthetical clause. The word “Pagans” must be connected with verse 8 which follows. In that verse the word \textit{kaifa} resumes the clause introduced by the word \textit{kaifa} at the beginning of verse 7. The exceptional Pagan tribes which remained true to their word were the Banu Ḥamza and the Banu Kināna, who swore their treaty near the Sacred Mosque and faithfully observed it. They were to be given the full benefit of their fidelity even though their kindred tribes were treacherous.
With whom ye made a treaty
Near the Sacred Mosque?
As long as these stand true
To you, stand ye true to them:
For Allah doth love the righteous.

8. How (can there be such
a covenant)\textsuperscript{1256}
Seeing that if they get an advantage
Over you, they respect not
In you the ties either of kinship\textsuperscript{1257}
Or of covenant? With (fair words
From) their mouths they please you,
But their hearts are averse
From you; and most of them
Are rebellious and wicked.

9. The Words of Allah have they sold
For a miserable price,
And (many) have they hindered
From His Way: evil indeed
Are the deeds thy have done.

10. In a Believer they respect not
The ties either of kinship

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\textsuperscript{1256} The exceptions having been stated parenthetically in verse 7, the indictment of
the general mass of Pagan tribes is now set out briefly but fully and convincingly. After
that kind of behaviour how can treaty be possible with them? The counts are: (1) that
whenever they got a slight advantage, they disregarded the ties both of kinship and of
covenant as against the Muslims because of their Faith, thus proving doubly treacherous;
(2) that they spoke fair words, but had venom in their hearts; (3) that their attitude
was one of rebellion against their plighted word; (4) that they disregarded the solemn words
of Allah for some miserable worldly gain; (5) that they tried to prevent other people from
coming to the Way of Allah. The first clause is repeated again as the last clause, to
emphasise their double treachery, and round off the argument.

\textsuperscript{1257} Among the Arabs the ties of kinship were so strong as to be almost
unbreakable. The Pagan Arabs went out of their way to break them in the case of the
Muslims, who were kith and kin to them. Besides the bond of kinship there was the
further bond of their plighted oath in the Treaty. They broke that oath because the other
parties were Muslims!
11. But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and pay Zakat. They are your brethren in Faith: (Thus) do We explain the Signs in detail, for those who understand.

12. But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained.

13. Will ye not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and attacked you first? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom ye should more justly fear, if ye believe!

1258. The catalogue of their sins being set out, it is clear that they were aggressors in the worst possible ways; and war became inevitable.

1259. The chance of repentance and mercy to the worst enemies is again emphasised, in order that people with any understanding may not be misled into thinking that war was an easy or light matter. This emphasis is balanced by the emphasis in the next verse on the causes which made war inevitable for those with any self-respect.

1260. Not only did the enemies break their oaths shamelessly, but they even taunted the Muslims on their faith and the "simple-minded" way in which they continued to respect their pan of the treaty, as if they were afraid to fight!

1261. The argument now takes a new turn. An appeal is made to the Muslims on various grounds: (1) the shameless disregard of treaties by the enemy, (2) the under-hand plots to discredit the Holy Prophet, and turn him out of Madinah as he had been turned out of Makkah, (3) the aggressive taken by the Quraish and their confederates in Madinah after the treaty of Hudaibiya (A.H. 6, Zul-qa‘dah. Feb. 628), (4) the manly attitude that fears Allah rather than men, and (5) the need to prove our sincere faith by test and trial and struggle and sacrifice (ix 16).
14. Fight them, and Allah will
Punish them by your hands,
And disgrace them
Help you (to victory) over them,
Heal the breasts of Believers. 1262

15. And still the indignation of their
hearts. 1263
For Allah will turn (in mercy) 1264
To whom He will: and Allah
Is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

16. Do you think that you
Would be left alone while
Allah has not yet known 1265
Those among you who strive
With might and main, and take
None for friends and protectors
Except Allah, His Messenger,
And the (community of) Believers?
And Allah is well-acquainted
With (all) that ye do.

SECTION 3.

17. It is not for such
As join gods with Allah,

1262. Heal the breasts of believers, i.e., of wounds that they may have sustained from
the assaults, taunts, and cruelty of the enemy.

1263. When the victory comes and the wounds are healed, a great peace comes to
the hearts of those who have suffered, striven, and struggled. The fighting was necessity
forced by injustice and oppression. When Allah’s Law is established, the fire of
indignation is quelled, and the true Peace of Islam is attained.

1264. Allah’s mercy is unlimited. When evil is destroyed, many of those who were
enticed by evil will come into the fold of truth and righteousness, and the cessation of
war and conflict will bring peace, certainly to those who fought for the right, but also
possibly to those whose eyes have been opened to the working of Allah’s Law and who
in healing reconciliation become members of the Brotherhood of Peace in Islam.

1265. We must all be tested and tried, but Allah knows our inmost hearts, and He
will support those who strive in His way, out of sincere love for Him, His Prophet, and
the body of the true men of faith.
To maintain\textsuperscript{1266}
The mosques of Allah
While they witness
Against their own souls
To infidelity. The works
Of such bear no fruit:
In Fire shall they dwell.

18. The mosques of Allah
Shall be visited and maintained
By such as believe in Allah
And the Last Day, establish
Regular prayers, and
Pay Zakat, and fear
None (at all) except Allah\textsuperscript{1267}
It is they who are expected
To be on true guidance.\textsuperscript{1268}

19. Do ye consider the giving\textsuperscript{1269}

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\textsuperscript{1266} 'Amara as applied to mosques implies the following ideas: (1) to build or repair: (2) to maintain in fitting dignity: (3) to visit for purposes of devotion: and (4) fill with light and life and activity. For brevity I have only used "maintain" in the Translation.

Before the preaching of Islam the Pagans built, repaired, and maintained the Mosque, and celebrated Pagan ceremonies in it. They made an income out of it. Islam protested, and the Pagans ejected Muslims and their Leader from Makkah and shut them out from the Ka'ba itself. When the Muslims were strong enough to re-take Makkah (A.H. 8), they purified the Mosque and re-established the worship of the true God. If they became Muslims, it was a different matter. The further question arose: should they be allowed to visit it and practise their unseemly Pagan rites? Obviously this would be derogatory to the dignity and honour of the Mosque, and was forbidden. This was the particular occasion to which the verse refers. The general deduction is clear. A house of Allah is a place of sincere devotion, not a theatre for vulgar rites nor a source of worldly income. Only sincere Believers have a right of entry. Who the sincere Believers are, is explained in the next verse.

\textsuperscript{1267} See the previous note. Sincere Believers are those who have faith in Allah and the future, and have a spirit of devotion and charity—a true and abiding spirit, not merely isolated acts now and again. Moreover they must not bow to worldly greed or ambition, which produces fear of worldly power.

\textsuperscript{1268} Others may call themselves by what names they like. True guidance is shown by the tests here indicated.

\textsuperscript{1269} Giving drinks of cold water to thirsty pilgrims, and doing material services to a mosque are meritorious acts, but they are only external. If they do not touch the soul, their value is slight. Far greater, in the sight of Allah, are Faith, Endeavour, and self-
Of drink to pilgrims,  
Or the maintenance of  
The Sacred Mosque, equal  
To (the pious service of) those  
Who believe in Allah  
And the Last Day, and strive  
With might and main  
In the cause of Allah?  
They are not equal  
In the sight of Allah:  
And Allah guides not  
Those who do wrong.

20. Those who believe, and emigrate  
And strive with might  
And main, in Allah's cause,  
With their goods and their persons,  
Have the highest rank  
In the sight of Allah:  
They are the people  
Who will achieve (salvation).

21. Their Lord doth give them  
Glad tidings of a Mercy  
From Himself, of His good pleasure.  
And of Gardens for them,  
Wherein are delights  
That endure:  
22. They will dwell therein  
For ever. Verily with Allah

= surrender to Allah. Men who practise these will obtain honour in the sight of Allah. Allah’s light and guidance comes to them, and not to those self-sufficient beings who think that a little show of what the world considers piety is enough.

1270. Here is a good description of Jihad. It may require fighting in Allah’s cause, as a form of self-sacrifice. But its essence consists in (1) a true and sincere Faith, which so fixes its gaze on Allah, that all selfish or worldly motives seem paltry and fade away, and (2) an earnest and ceaseless activity, involving the sacrifice (if need be) of life, person, or property, in the service of Allah. Mere brutal fighting is opposed to the whole spirit of Jihad, while the sincere scholar’s pen or preacher’s voice or wealthy man’s contributions may be the most valuable forms of Jihad.
Is a reward, the greatest (of all). 1271

23. O ye who believe! Take not
For protectors your fathers
And your brothers if they love
Infidelity above Faith:
If any of you do so,
They do wrong.

24. Say: If it be that your fathers,
Your sons, your brothers,
Your mates, or your kindred:
The wealth that ye have gained;
The commerce in which ye fear
A decline: or the dwellings
In which ye delight—1272
Are dearer to you than Allah
Or His Messenger, or the striving
In His cause;—then wait
Until Allah brings about1273
His Decision: and Allah
Guides not the rebellious.

SECTION 4.

25. Assuredly Allah did help you
In many battle-fields

1271. Those who strive and suffer in Allah's cause are promised (1) a mercy specially from Himself, (2) His own good pleasure, (3) gardens of perpetual delight, (4) the supreme reward. Allah's own nearness. These are in gradation: (1) is a special mercy, higher than flows out to all creatures: (2) is a consciousness of Allah's good pleasure, which raises the soul above itself; (3) is that state of permanent assurance, and (4) is the final bliss, which is the sight of Allah Himself.

1272. Man's heart clings to (1) his own kith and kin—parents, children, brothers and sisters, husbands or wives, or other relatives, (2) wealth and prosperity, (3) commerce or means of profit and gain, or (4) noble buildings, for dignity or comfort. If these are a hindrance in Allah's cause, we have to choose which we love most. We must love Allah even if it involves the sacrifice of all else.

1273. If we love our earthly ties and comforts, profits and pleasures, more than we love Allah, and therefore fail to respond to Allah's cause, it is not Allah's cause which will suffer. Allah's purpose will be accomplished, with or without us. But our failure to respond to His will must leave us bereft of grace and guidance: "for Allah guides not the rebellious".

- 504 -
And on the day of Hunain. Behold! your great numbers Elated you, but they availed You naught; the land. For all that it is wide, Did constrain you, and ye Turned back in retreat.  

26. But Allah did pour His calm

This is of universal application. But it was strikingly illustrated in the case of those faithful ones who obeyed the Prophet’s call, left the comfort of their homes in Makkah and suffered exile in Madinah, gave up their trade and their possessions, strove and fought for Allah’s cause, sometimes against their own kith and kin or their own tribesmen who were enemies of Islam. They won through. Others were not prepared for such sacrifice, but their failure did not stop the accomplishment of Allah’s plan and purpose.

1274. Hunain is on the road to Taif from Makkah about fourteen miles to the east of Makkah. It is a valley in the mountainous country between Makkah and Taif. Immediately after the conquest of Makkah, (A.H. 8), the Pagan idolaters, who were surprised and chagrined at the wonderful reception which Islam was receiving, organised a great gathering near Taif to concert plans for attacking the Prophet. The Hawazin and the Thaqif tribes took the lead and prepared a great expedition for Makkah, boasting of their strength and military skill. There was on the other hand a wave of confident enthusiasm among the Muslims at Makkah, in which the new Muslims joined. The enemy forces numbered about 4,000 but the Muslim force reached a total of ten or twelve thousand, as every one wished to join. The battle was joined at Hunain, as described in the next note.

1275. For the first time the Muslims had at Hunain tremendous odds in their favour. But this itself constituted a danger. Many in their ranks had more enthusiasm than wisdom, more a spirit of elation than of faith and confidence in the righteousness of their cause. The enemy had the advantage of knowing the ground thoroughly. They laid an ambush in which the advance guard of the Muslim forces was caught. The country is hilly, in which the enemy concealed himself. As soon as the Muslim vanguard entered the Hunain valley, the enemy fell upon them with fury and caused havoc with their arrows from their places of concealment. In such ground the numbers of the Muslims were themselves a disadvantage. Many were slain, and many turned back in confusion and retreat. But the Prophet, as ever, was calm in his wisdom and faith. He rallied his forces and inflicted the most crushing defeat on the enemy.

1276. Sakina: calm, peace, security, tranquillity. Cf. ii. 248. The Prophet never approved of over-weening confidence, or reliance merely upon human strength, or human resources or numbers. In the hour of danger and seeming disaster, he was perfectly calm, and with cool courage relied upon the help of Allah. Whose standard he carried. His calmness inspired all around him, and stopped the rout of those who had turned their backs. It was with Allah’s help that they won, and their victory was complete. They followed it up with an energetic pursuit of the enemies, capturing their camps, their flocks and herds, and their families, whom they had boastfully brought with them in expectation of an easy victory.
On the Messenger and on the
Believers,
And sent down forces which ye
Saw not: He punished
The Unbelievers: thus doth He
Reward those without Faith.

On the Messenger and on the
Believers,
And sent down forces which ye
Saw not: He punished
The Unbelievers: thus doth He
Reward those without Faith.

27. Again will Allah, after this,\textsuperscript{1277} Turn (in mercy) to whom
He will: for Allah
Is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

28. \textit{O ye who believe! Truly}
The Pagans are unclean;\textsuperscript{1278} So let them not,
After this year of theirs,\textsuperscript{1279} Approach the Sacred Mosque.
And if ye fear poverty,\textsuperscript{1280} Soon will Allah enrich you,
If He wills, out of His bounty,
For Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

29. Fight those who believe not
In Allah nor the Last Day,
Nor hold that forbidden
Which hath been forbidden

\textsuperscript{1277} Examples of Allah’s mercy and grace in difficult circumstances in one case illustrate His grace and mercy at all times to those who have faith.

\textsuperscript{1278} Unclean: because Muslims are enjoined to be strict in cleanliness, as well as in purity of mind and heart, so that their word can be relied upon.

\textsuperscript{1279} This year of theirs: there is a two-fold meaning: (1) now that you have complete control of Makkah and are charged with the purity of worship there, shut out all impurity from this year; (2) you have seen how the Pagans have behaved this year; their year of power and misuse of that power may be called their year; it is over, and now you Muslims are responsible.

\textsuperscript{1280} The concourse in Makkah added to the profits of trade and commerce. “But fear not,” we are told: “the Pagans are a waning power, bound to disappear, and you should strengthen your own community, that they may more than counter-balance the apparent loss of custom; and Allah has other means of improving your economic position.” This actually happened. The Pagans were extinguished from Arabia, and the concourse of pilgrims from all parts of the world increased the numbers more than a hundred-fold. Here is commonsense, wisdom, and statesmanship, even if we look at it from a purely human point of view.
By Allah and His Messenger, 
Nor acknowledge the Religion  
Of Truth, from among  
The People of the Book,  
Until they pay the Jizya\textsuperscript{1281}  
With willing submission,\textsuperscript{1282}  
And feel themselves subdued. 

SECTION 5.

30. The Jews call ‘Uzair a son\textsuperscript{1283}  
Of Allah, and the Christians  
Call Christ the Son of Allah.  
That is a saying from their mouth;  
(In this) they but imitate\textsuperscript{1284}  
What the Unbelievers of old  
Used to say. Allah’s curse  
Be on them: how they are deluded

\textsuperscript{1281} Jizya: the root meaning is compensation. The derived meaning, which became the technical meaning, was a poll-tax levied from those who did not accept Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of Islam, and were thus tacitly willing to submit to its ideals being enforced in the Muslim State. There was no amount permanently fixed for it. It was an acknowledgment that those whose religion was tolerated would in their turn not interfere with the preaching and progress of Islam. Imam Shafi’i suggests one dinar per year, which would be the Arabian gold dinar of the Muslim States. The tax varied in amount, and there were exemptions for the poor, for females and children (according to Abu Hanifa), for slaves, and for monks and hermits. Being a tax on able-bodied males of military age, it was in a sense a commutation for military service. But see the next note.

\textsuperscript{1282} ‘An Yadin (literally, from the hand) has been variously interpreted. The hand being the symbol of power and authority, I accept the interpretation “in token of willing submission.” The Jizya was thus partly symbolic and partly a commutation for military service, but as the amount was insignificant and the exemptions numerous, its symbolic character predominated. See the last note.

\textsuperscript{1283} In n. 718 to v. 18, I have quoted passages from the Old Testament, showing how freely the expression “sons of Allah” was used by the Jews. A sect of them called ‘Uzair a son of Allah, according to Baidhawi. In Appendix II (Sura v.) I have shown that the constitution of Judaism dates from ‘Uzair (Ezra). The Christians still call Christ the Son of Allah.

\textsuperscript{1284} Taking men for gods or sons of Allah was not a new thing. All ancient mythologies have fables of that kind. There was less excuse for such blasphemies after the Prophets of Allah had clearly explained out true relation to Allah than in the times of primitive ignorance and superstition.
Away from the Truth!\textsuperscript{1285}

31. They take their priests\textsuperscript{1286} 
And their anchorites to be 
Their lords beside Allah.\textsuperscript{1287} 
And (they take as their Lord) 
Christ the son of Mary; 
Yet they were commanded 
To worship but One God: 
There is no god but He. 
Praise and glory to Him:\textsuperscript{1288} 
(Far is He) from having 
The partners they associate 
(With Him).

32. Fain would they extinguish 
Allah’s Light with their mouths,\textsuperscript{1289}

\begin{su_arabic}
أُذَّنُوا أَحْكَامَهُمْ وَرَهَّصُوا أَرْبَابَاهُمْ
سُبْبُعُ الْأَمِينَ وَالْإِلَهَيْنِ إِلَّهَانِ وَحِيدَانَ
لاَ إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْهُدِيْنَ الْمَلِيْكُونَ

\end{su_arabic}

\textsuperscript{1285} Cf. v. 75.

\textsuperscript{1286} Ahbār: doctors of law; priests; learned men. Cf. v. 44. where they are associated with Rabbis. Ruḥbān: monks, ascetics, anchorites, men who have renounced the world; where there is a celibate clergy, the term can be applied to them as well as to members of monastic orders. It is also permissible to apply the term to “saints”, where they are deified or credited with divine powers, or where people pray to them as they do in the Roman Catholic Church.

\textsuperscript{1287} Priest worship, and the worship of saints and ascetics is a form of superstition to which men have been prone in all ages. The growth of Jewish superstition is shown in the Talmud, and of Christian superstition in the doctrine of papal infallibility and the worship of saints. The mere idea of a separate order of priesthood to stand between Allah and man and be the exclusive repository of Allah’s secrets is derogatory to the goodness and all-pervading grace of Allah. The worship of “lords many and gods many” was not confined only to the Pagans. The deification of the son of Mary is put here in a special clause by itself, as it held (and still holds) in its thrall a large portion of civilised humanity.

\textsuperscript{1288} Cf. vi. 100.

\textsuperscript{1289} With their mouths: there is a twofold meaning: (1) the old-fashioned open oil lamps were extinguished by blowing with the mouth; the Unbelievers would like to blow out Allah’s Light as it is a cause of offence to them; (2) false teachers and preachers distort the Message of Allah by the false words of their mouth. Their wish is to put out the light of Truth for they are people of darkness; but Allah will perfect His Light, \textit{i.e.}, make it shine all the brighter in the eyes of men. His Light in itself is ever perfect, but it will penetrate the hearts of men more and more, and so become more and more perfect for them.
1290. Every religion which commends itself widely to human beings and lasts through some space of time has a glimpse of Truth in it. But Islam being the perfect light of Truth is bound to prevail. As the greater Light, through its own strength, outshines all lesser lights, so will Islam outshine all else, in spite of the displeasure of those to whom light is an offence. See also xlviii. 28, n. 4912, and lxi. 9, n. 5442.

1291. Bil-bātīli = in falsehood. i.e., by false means, pretences, or in false or vain things. This was strikingly exemplified in the history of Mediaeval Europe. Though the disease is apt to attack all peoples and organisations at all times. Priests got rich by issuing indulgences and dispensations; they made their office a stepping stone to worldly power and possessions. Even the Monastic Orders, which took vows of poverty for individuals grew rich with corporate property, until their wealth became a scandal, even among their own nations.

1292. Misuse of wealth, property, and resources is frequently condemned, and in three ways: (1) do not acquire anything wrongfully or on false pretences; (2) do not hoard or bury or amass wealth for its own sake but use it freely for good, whether for yourself or for your neighbours; and (3) be particularly careful not to waste it for idle purposes, but only so that it may fructify for the good of the people.
35. On the Day when it
Will be heated\(^{293}\) in the fire
Of Hell, and with it will be
Branded their foreheads,
Their flanks, and their backs,

"This is the (treasure) which ye
Hoarded for yourselves;\(^{294}\) taste ye,
Then, the (treasures) ye hoarded"

36. The number of months\(^{295}\)
In the sight of Allah
Is twelve (in a year)–
So ordained by Him
The day He created
The heavens and the earth;
Of them four are sacred:
That is the right religion
So wrong not yourselves\(^{296}\)

1293. Gold and silver, symbolising wealth which these people cherished even more than the good pleasure of their Lord, will not only be the cause but the instrument whereby they would receive a grievous punishment.

1294. The voice enforces the moral: "did you expect satisfaction or salvation from the treasures that you misused? Behold! they add to your torment!"

1295. This and the following verse must be read together. They condemn the arbitrary and selfish conduct of the Pagan Arabs, who, because there was a long-established custom of observing four months as those in which fighting was forbidden, changed the months about or added or deducted months when it suited them, to get an unfair advantage over the enemy. The four Prohibited Months were: Zul-qā'dah, Zul-hijjah, Muḥarram, and Rajab. If it suited them they postponed one of these months, and so a prohibited month became an ordinary month: while their opponents might hesitate to fight, they got an undue advantage. It also upset the security of the Month of Pilgrimage. This very ancient usage made for fair dealing all round, and its infraction by the Pagans is condemned.

The question of a solar astronomical year as against the lunar Islamic year does not arise here. But it may be noted that the Arab year was roughly luni solar like the Hindu year, the months being lunar and the intercalation of a month every three years brought the year nearly but not accurately up to the solar reckoning. From the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage (A.H. 10) the Islamic year was definitely fixed as a purely lunar year of roughly 354 days, the months being calculated by the actual appearance of the moon. After that, every month of the Islamic year came about 11 days earlier in the solar year, and thus the Islamic months travelled all round the seasons and the solar year.

1296. The Muslims were at a disadvantage on account of their scruples about the Prohibited Months. They are told not to wrong themselves in this. If the Pagans fought =
Therin, and fight the Pagans All together as they Fight you all together. But know that Allah Is with those who restrain Themselves.

37. Verily the transposing\(^{1297}\) (Of a prohibited month) Is an addition to Unbelief: The Unbelievers are led To wrong thereby: for they make It lawful one year, And forbidden another year, In order to agree with the number Of months forbidden by Allah And make such forbidden ones Lawful. The evil of their course Seems pleasing to them.\(^{1298}\) But Allah guideth not Those who reject Faith.

SECTION 6.

38. O ye who believe! what Is the matter with you,\(^{1299}\)

\(^{1297}\) To meddle with an old-established custom of close time for warfare during Prohibited or Sacred Months was not only a demonstration of the Unbelievers against the Muslims on account of their Faith, but was wrong and unjust in itself, as it abolished a wholesome check on unregulated warfare, and prejudiced the law-abiding side by arbitrary decisions.

\(^{1298}\) Cf. vi. 122. The lawless man thinks he is doing a great thing in getting the better of those who are careful to observe a law they believe in. But the lawless man loses the guidance of Faith he will therefore lose in the end.

\(^{1299}\) The immediate reference is to the expeditions to Tabuk (A.H. 9), for which see the Introduction to this Sūra. But the lesson is perfectly general. When a call is made on behalf of a great cause, the fortunate ones are those who have the privilege of responding to the call. The unfortunate ones are those who are so engrossed in their parochial affairs that they turn a deaf ear to the appeal. They are suffering from a spiritual disease.
That, when ye are asked
To go forth in the Cause of Allah,
Ye cling heavily to the earth?\textsuperscript{1300}
Do ye prefer the life
Of this world to the Hereafter?
But little is the comfort
Of this life, as compared
With the Hereafter.

39. Unless ye go forth,\textsuperscript{1301}
He will punish you
With a grievous penalty,
And put others in your place;
But Him ye would not harm
In the least, For Allah
Hath power over all things.

40. If ye help not (the Prophet),
(It is no matter): for Allah
Did indeed help him,\textsuperscript{1302}
When the Unbelievers

\textsuperscript{1300} The choice is between two courses: will you choose a noble adventure and the glorious privilege of following your spiritual leader, or grovel in the earth for some small worldly gain or for fear of worldly loss? The people who hesitated to follow the call of Tabuk were deterred by (1) the heat of the summer, in which the expedition was undertaken on account of the threat to the existence of the little community, and (2) the fear of losing the fruit harvest, which was ripe for gathering.

\textsuperscript{1301} Tanfiru = go forth, march onward, be ready to strive and suffer. For this is the condition of all progress in the spiritual and moral, as well as in the physical world. According to the homely English proverb, God helps those who help themselves. Inactivity and lethargy are fatal. No one can rest on his oars. Man is not necessary to Allah, but Allah is necessary to man. If a nation receives favours and fails to deserve them, it will be replaced by another: as has so often happened in history. We may take this as a special warning to Islamic nations.

\textsuperscript{1302} The Tabuk expedition was not a failure. Though some hesitated, many more joined in. But a more striking example was when the Prophet was hunted out of Makkah and performed his famous Hijrat. His enemies plotted for his life. He had already sent his followers on to Madinah. Ali had volunteered to face his enemies in his house. His single companion was Abi Bakr. They two concealed themselves in the cave of Thaur, three miles from Makkah, for three nights, with the enemy prowling around in great numbers in fruitless search of them. “We are but two,” said Abi Bakr. “Nay,” said Muhammad, “for Allah is with us.” Faith gave their minds peace, and Allah gave them safety. They reached Madinah, and a glorious chapter opened for Islam. The forces that helped them were not seen, but their power was irresistible.
Drove him out: being
The second of the two
They two were in the Cave,
And he said to his companion,
"Have no fear, for Allah
Is with us": then Allah
Sent down His peace upon him,
And strengthened him with forces
Which ye saw not, and humbled
To the depths the word
Of the Unbelievers.
But the word of Allah
Is exalted to the heights:
For Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.

41. Go ye forth, (whether equipped)
Lightly or heavily, and strive
And struggle, with your goods
And your persons, in the Cause
Of Allah. That is best
For you, if ye (but knew).

42. If there had been
Immediate gain (in sight),
And the journey easy,
They would (all) without doubt
Have followed thee, but
The distance was long,
(And weighed) on them.

1305. The superlatives in the Arabic I have rendered by the periphrasis, "humbled to the depths" and "exalted to the heights," as they accord better with the genius of the English language. The enemies of Islam had boasted that they would root it out: the result showed them up as ridiculous and despicable.
1306. Whether equipped lightly or heavily: to be taken both literally and metaphorically. All were invited, and they were to bring such resources as they had, light-armed or heavy-armed, on foot or mounted, experienced men for posts of danger, raw men for duties for which they were fit. All would and should help. Even those who were too old or feeble to go could contribute such money or resources as they had.
They would indeed swear
By Allah, “If we only could,
We should certainly
Have come out with you.”
They would destroy their
own souls,\textsuperscript{1307}
For Allah doth know
That they are certainly lying.

SECTION 7.

43. God give thee grace!\textsuperscript{1308} Why
Didst thou grant them exemption
Until those who told the truth
Were seen by thee in a clear light,
And thou hadst proved the liars?

44. Those who believe in Allah
And the Last Day ask thee
For no exemption from fighting
With their goods and persons.
And Allah knoweth well
Those who do their duty.

1307. The arts and excuses of the Hypocrites are here exposed. If there had been
booty in sight or an easy walk-over, they would have come. All their oaths are false,
and in taking the false oaths they are destroying their spiritual life. Indeed the backsliders
are jeopardising their own physical lives in hanging back. If the enemy succeeded, they
would all suffer.

1308. Literally, “Allah give thee forgiveness!” But there is no question of fault here,
and Imam Râzi understands the expression to mean an exclamation,—as one might say
in English, “God bless you!” In Shakespeare “God save you!” is a simple friendly
greeting, without any question of danger: e. g., in “Much Ado about Nothing,” iii. 2,
82. Note that in Q. iii. 152, last clause, “forgiveness” is put in juxtaposition to “grace”
as having closely allied meanings. What the Holy Prophet had done in the Tabûk
expedition was that he had been granting exemptions which may appear from a military
point of view too liberal. He was not actuated by motives of kindness as well as policy:—
kindness, because, in the urgency of the moment he did not wish any one who had a
real excuse to be refused exemption: and policy, because, if any one did not come with
hearty good-will, he would be a burden instead of a help to the army. The policy was
justified, because in fact 30,000 men or more followed him. But that did not in any way
justify the slackers, and in a review of the position, the slackers and hypocrites are justly
condemned.
45. Only those ask thee for exemption
Who believe not in Allah
And the Last Day, and
Whose hearts are in doubt,
So that they are tossed\textsuperscript{1309}
In their doubts to and fro.

46. If they had intended
To come out, they would
Certainly have made
Some preparation therefor:
But Allah was averse
To their being sent forth;
So He made them lag behind.
And they were told,
"Sit ye among those
Who sit (inactive)."

47. If they had come out
With you, they would not
Have added to your (strength)
But only (made for) disorder.
Hurrying to and fro in your midst\textsuperscript{1310}
And sowing sedition among you,
And there would have been
Some among you
Who would have listened to them.
But Allah knoweth well
Those who do wrong.

48. Indeed they had plotted
Sedition before, and upset
Matters for thee,—until
The Truth arrived, and the Decree
Of Allah became manifest,

\textsuperscript{1309}. Doubt takes away all stability of conduct, while Faith makes a man firm in action and cool and collected in mind.

\textsuperscript{1310}. Khilālat has more than one meaning, but I follow the interpretation of Rāqib and the majority of accepted Commentators, who take it to mean "in your midst".
Much to their disgust.  

49. Among them is (many) a man 
Who says: “Grant me exemption 
And draw me not into trial.” 
Have they not fallen into trial already? 
And indeed Hell surrounds 
The Unbelievers (on all sides).

50. If good befalls thee, 
It grieves them; but if 
A misfortune befalls thee, 
They say, “We took indeed 
Our precautions beforehand,” 
And they turn away rejoicing.

51. Say: “Nothing will happen to us 
Except what Allah has decreed 
For us: He is our Protector”; 
And on Allah let the Believers 
Put their trust.

52. Say: “Can you expect for us 
(Any fate) other than one 
Of two glorious things—
(Martyrdom or victory)?

1311. Evil plotters against Truth are only too glad to get an opportunity of meddling from within with affairs which they want to spoil or upset. They plot from outside, but they like to get into the inner circle, that their chances of intrigue may be all the greater. They are, however, unwilling to incur any danger or any self-sacrifice. Their whole activities are directed to mischief. Great wisdom is required in a leader to deal with such a situation, and the best of such leaders must need divine guidance, as was forthcoming in this case.

1312. *Fitna*, as explained in n. 1198, viii. 25, may mean either trial or temptation, or else tumult, turmoil, or sedition. The Commentators here take the former meaning, and explain that some Hypocrites claimed exemption from service in the Tabuk expedition in the direction of Syria on the plea that they could not withstand the charms of Syrian women and ought best to stay at home. The answer is: “But you have already fallen into temptation here by refusing service and disobeying the call. But perhaps the other meaning of “turmoil” may also be permissible as a secondary echo; in that case they object to be drawn into the turmoil of war, but they are told that they are already in a moral turmoil in advancing a disingenuous plea. In using the English word “trial” in the translation, I have also had in my mind the two shades of meaning associated with that word in English.
But we can expect for you
Either that Allah will send
His punishment from Him
Or by our hands. So wait
(Expectant); we too
Will wait with you."  

53. Say: "Spend (for the Cause)
Willingly or unwillingly:
Not from you will it be
Accepted: for ye are indeed
A people rebellious and wicked."

54. The only reasons why
Their contributions are not
Accepted are: that they reject
Allah and His Messenger;
That they come not to prayer
Save lazily and that
They offer contributions unwillingly.

55. Let not their wealth
Nor their children

1313. The waiting of the Unbelievers and that of the Believers are in different senses. The Unbelievers wish for disaster to the Believers, but the Believers will either conquer or die as martyrs in the Cause, in either case happy in the issue. The Believers expect punishment for the Unbelievers for their infidelity, either through their own instrumentality, or in some other way in Allah’s Plan, and the Unbelievers would not like it in either case. Cf. vi. 158.

1314. The Hypocrites, who secretly plotted against Islam, might sometimes (and they did) make a show of making some contribution to the Cause in order to keep up their pretence. Their contributions were not acceptable, whether they seemed to give willingly or unwillingly, because rebellion and disobedience were in their hearts. Three reasons are specifically given for their rejection, in the next verse: (1) they did not believe; (2) their prayers were not earnest, but for mere show: and (3) in reality their hearts were not behind the contributions which they offered. Nothing is acceptable to Allah which does not proceed from a pure and sincere heart.

1315. If they appeared to be prosperous, with their purses and their quivers full (metaphorically), they were not to be envied. In reality their wealth and their sons might themselves be a snare: Cf. viii. 28. On this particular occasion this was proved to the hilt. The wealth of the Pagans filled them with pride, darkened their understanding, and led to their destruction. Their sons and followers adopted the Faith which their fathers had fought against, much to the chagrin of the fathers, whose spiritual death was even worse than their discomfiture in this world.
Dazzle thee: in reality
Allah’s Wish is to punish them
With these things in this life, \(^{1316}\)
And that their souls may perish
In their (very) denial of Allah.

56. They swear by Allah
That they are indeed
Of you: but they are not
Of you: yet they are afraid
(Of you).

57. If they could find
A place to flee to,
Or caves, or a place
Of concealment, they would
Turn straightway thereto
With an obstinate rush. \(^{1317}\)

58. And among them are men
Who slander thee in the matter
Of (the distribution of) the alms. \(^{1318}\)
If they are given part thereof,
They are pleased, but if not,
Behold! they are indignant!

59. If only they had been content
With what Allah and His Messenger
Gave them, and had said,
“Sufficient unto us is Allah!
Allah and His messenger will soon
Give us of His bounty:

---

1316. Cf. iii. 176-178.

1317. *Jamahy* = to be ungovernable, to run like a runaway horse, to rush madly and obstinately.

1318. *Sadaqa* = alms, that which is given in Allah’s name, mainly to the poor and needy, and for the cognate purposes specified in the next verse but one: *Zakāt* is the regular and obligatory charity in an organised Muslim community, usually 2½ per cent, of merchandise and 10 per cent, on the fruits of the earth. There is a vast body of literature on this subject. The main points may be studied in the *Hidāya til furū‘*, of Shaiikh Burhānud-din ‘Alī. As against *zakat* the term *sadaqah* has a much wider connotation, and is inclusive of *zakat* as in the verse 60 of this Sura.
1319. Selfish men think that charitable funds are fair game for raids, but the Islamic standards on this subject are very high. The enforcement of such standards is always unpopular, and even the Holy Prophet was subjected to obloquy and slander for his strictness to principle. In doubtful cases, claimants who are disappointed should not blame the principles or those who enforce them, but put their trust in Allah, whose bounties are unbounded, and are given to all, whether rich or poor, according to their needs and their deserts. For everyone it is excellent advice to say: deserve before you desire.

1320. Alms or charitable gifts are to be given to the poor and the needy and those who are employed in their service. That is, charitable funds are not to be diverted to other uses, but the genuine expenses of administering charity are properly chargeable to such funds. Who are the needy? Besides the ordinary indigent, there are certain classes of people whose need is great and should be relieved. Those mentioned here are: (1) men who have been weaned from hostility to Truth, who would probably be persecuted by their former associates, and require assistance until they establish new connections in their new environment; (2) those in bondage, literally and figuratively: captives of war must be redeemed; slaves should be helped to freedom; those in the bondage of ignorance or superstition or unfavourable environment should be helped to freedom to develop their own gifts; (3) those who are held in the grip of debt should be helped to economic freedom; (4) those who are struggling and striving in Allah’s Cause by teaching or fighting or in duties assigned to them by the Islamic State, who are thus unable to earn their ordinary living; and (5) strangers stranded on the way. All these have a claim to charity. They should be relieved by individual or organised effort, but in a responsible way. In this verse, the word *sadaqat* refers to obligatory charity (*zakat*). See n. 1318 above.
And say, "He is (all) ear." 1321
Say, "He listens to what is best for you: he believes in Allah, has faith in the Believers, and is a Mercy to those of you who believe."
But those who molest the Prophet will have a grievous chastisement.

62. To you they swear by Allah.
In order to please you:
But it is more fitting that they should please Allah and His Messenger, if they are Believers.

63. Know they not that for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, is the Fire of Hell?--wherein they shall dwell.
That is the supreme disgrace.

64. The Hypocrites are afraid 1322
Lest a Surah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts.
Say: "Mock ye! But verily Allah will bring to light all that ye fear (should be revealed).

65. If thou dost question them, they declare (with emphasis):

1321. The assonance of the Arabic words "y-zūnā" and "uzumun" is of course lost in the Translation. But the sense remains. Detractors of the Prophet said, "O! he listens to everybody!" "Yes," is the answer, "he listens for their good: he is a mercy and a blessing to all men of Faith, but specially to you (who are addressed)." The general statement is emphasised for the particular people addressed.

1322. The dissection of the motives of the Hypocrites alarmed them. For it meant that they would fail in their policy of having the best of both worlds and undermining the loyalty of the weaker members of the Muslim community. So they turn it off as a jest. But they are sharply rebuked: "Can you make such solemn matters subjects of playful jokes? Fie upon you! You are found out, and your guile is of no effect."
"We were only talking idly
And in play." Say: "Was it
At Allah, and His Signs,
And His Messenger, that ye
Were mocking?"

66. Make ye no excuses:
Ye have rejected Faith
After ye had accepted it.
If We pardon some of you,
We will punish others amongst you,
For that they are sinners.\textsuperscript{1323}

SECTION 9.

67. The Hypocrites, men and women,
Are alike.\textsuperscript{1324}
They enjoin evil, and forbid
What is just, and tighten\textsuperscript{1325}
Their purse's strings. They have
Forgotten Allah: so He\textsuperscript{1326}
Hath forgotten them. Verily
The Hypocrites are rebellious
And perverse.

68. Allah hath promised the Hypocrites
Men and women, and the rejecters,
Of Faith, the fire of Hell:
Therein shall they dwell:
Sufficient is it for them:

\textsuperscript{1323} See last note. Hypocrisy is a half-way house, a state of indecision in the choice between good and evil. Those who definitely range themselves with good obtain forgiveness: those who pass definitely to evil suffer the penalties of evil.

\textsuperscript{1324} Literally, "the Hypocrites... are of each other". The forms of hypocrisy may vary, but they are all alike, and they understand each other's hypocrisy. They hold together.

\textsuperscript{1325} The English phrase "close-fisted" would cover only a part of the meaning. The hand is the symbol of power, help, and assistance. This may be financial, or it may be in other ways. The Hypocrites pretend a great deal, but are of no use or real help to any one.

\textsuperscript{1326} Cf. vii. 51. and n. 1029. They ignore Allah: and Allah will ignore them.
For them is the curse of Allah.\footnote{1327}
And an enduring punishment,—

69. As in the case of those
Before you: they were
Mightier than you in power,
And more flourishing in wealth
And children. They had
Their enjoyment of their portion:
And ye have of yours, as did
Those before you; and ye
Indulge in idle talk
As they did. They!—
Their works are fruitless
In this world and in the Hereafter,
And they are the Losers.

70. Hath not the story reached them
Of those before them?—
The people of Noah, and ‘Ad,\footnote{1328}
And Thamūd; the people
Of Abraham, the men\footnote{1329}
Of Midian, and the Cities
overthrown.\footnote{1330}
To them came their messengers

\footnote{1327} "Curse," here as elsewhere, is deprivation of grace and mercy, brought about by the rejection of Allah by the Unbelievers.

\footnote{1328} The story of Noah is told in vii. 59-64; of ‘Ad in vii. 65-72; and of Thamūd in vii. 73-79; of Abraham in numerous places, but see specially vi. 74-82; of Midianites in vii. 85-93; and of Lot and the Cities of the Plain overthrown for their wickedness, in vii. 80-84.

\footnote{1329} In the case of Noah and Abraham, the word I have translated as "people of..." is qawm: these prophets were messengers each to his own people or nation, as was also Hūd to the ‘Ad people and Šāliḥ to the Thamūd people. The word used for the Midianites is ʿAš-ḥāb-i-Madyan, which I have translated "men of Midian" for want of a better word. The Midianites were for the greater part of their history nomads, with pasture grounds but no settled territory or town. The town of Madyan on the Gulf of ‘Aqaba refers to much later times when the Midianites as a people had ceased to count. See n. 1053 to vii. 85.

\footnote{1330} The Cities of Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, to whom Lot preached in vain to desist from their abominations: vii. 80-84.
With Clear Signs. It is
Not Allah Who wrongs them,
But they wrong their own souls.

71. The Believers, men
And women, are protectors,
One of another: they enjoin
What is just, and forbid
What is evil: they observe
Regular prayers, pay
Zakat and obey
Allah and His Messenger.
On them will Allah pour
His mercy: for Allah
Is Exalted in power, Wise.

72. Allah hath promised to Believers,
Men and women, Gardens
Under which rivers flow,
To dwell therein,
And beautiful mansions
In Gardens of everlasting stay
But the greatest bliss
Is the Good Pleasure of Allah:
That is the supreme triumph

SECTION 10.

73. O Prophet! strive hard against
The Unbelievers and the Hypocrites,
And be firm against them.
Their abode is Hell,—
An evil refuge indeed.

74. They swear by Allah that they
Said nothing (evil), but indeed
They uttered blasphemy,
And they uttered it after accepting
Islam: and they meditated

1331. The reference is to a plot made by the Prophet's enemies to kill him when he was returning from Tabuk. The plot failed. It was all the more dastardly in that some of the conspirators were among the men of Madinah who were enriched by the general
Prosperity that followed the peace and good government established through Islam in Madinah. Trade flourished: justice was firmly administered with an even hand. And the only return that these men could make was a return of evil for good. That was their revenge because Islam aimed at suppressing selfishness, stood for the rights of the poorest and humblest, and judged worth by righteousness rather than by birth or position.

1332. If men are false to their covenants and words, the natural consequence will be hypocrisy to cover their falsehood. Such consequences will last till the Day of Judgment, when they will have to account for their deeds. They may think that they are deceiving men by their hypocrisy, but they cannot deceive Allah, to Whom all their most secret thoughts and plots and doings are known.
They broke their Covenant
With Allah, and because they
Lied (again and again).

78. Know they not that Allah
Doth know their secret (thoughts)
And their secret counsels,
And that Allah knoweth well
All things unseen?

79. Those who slander such
Of the Believers as give themselves
Freely to (deeds of) charity.
As well as those who give
According to their means.—
And throw ridicule on them.—1333
Allah will throw back
Their ridicule on them:
And they shall have
A grievous chastisement.

80. Whether thou ask
For their forgiveness,
Or not, (their sin is unforgivable):
If thou ask seventy times1334
For their forgiveness, Allah
Will not forgive them:
Because they have rejected
Allah and His Messenger: and Allah
Guideth not those
Who are perversely rebellious.

1333. When financial help is necessary for the Cause, every Muslim contributes what he can. Those who can afford large sums are proud to bring them in of their own free-will, and those who are very poor contribute their mite or their labour. Both kinds of gifts are equally precious because of the faith and good-will behind them, and only cynics will laugh at the scantiness of the one or the lavishness of the other. Sometimes they not only laugh, but attribute wrong motives to the givers. Such conduct is here reprimanded.

1334. An awful warning for those who actively oppose the Cause of Allah. The Holy Prophet was by nature full of mercy and forgiveness. He prayed for his enemies. But in such a case even his prayers are nullified by their attitude of rejecting Allah.
SECTION 11.

81. Those who were left behind
(In the Tabuk expedition)
Rejoiced in their sitting back
Behind the Messenger
Of Allah: they hated to strive
And fight, with their goods
And their persons, in the Cause
Of Allah: they said,
"Go not forth in the heat."
Say, "The fire of Hell
Is fiercer in heat," If
Only they could understand!

82. Let them laugh a little:
Much will they weep:
A recompense for the (evil)
That they do.

83. If, then, Allah bring thee back
To any of them, and they ask
Thy permission to come out
(With thee), say: "Never shall ye
Come out with me, nor fight
An enemy with me:
For ye preferred to sit
Inactive on the first occasion:
Then sit ye (now)
With those who stay behind."

84. Nor do thou ever pray
For any of them that dies,
Nor stand at his grave,

1335. The Tabuk expedition had to be undertaken hurriedly in the heat of summer, because of a threat or fear of Byzantine invasion. They marched from Madinah about the month of September or October in the solar calendar.

1336. They may sneer or ridicule or rejoice now: that will be only for a little: much will they have to weep for afterwards.

1337. On the death of a Muslim, it is the pious duty of every neighbouring Muslim who can, to assist in the simple funeral ceremonies,—the prayer for mercy before the body =
For they rejected Allah
And His Messenger, and died
In a state of perverse rebellion.

85. Nor let their wealth
Nor their children
Dazzle thee: Allah’s Wish
Is to punish them
With these things in this world,
And that their souls may depart
While they are unbelievers¹³³⁶

86. When a Sûra comes down,
Enjoining them to believe
In Allah and to strive and fight
Along with His Messenger,
Those with wealth and influence
Among them ask thee
For exemption, and say:
“Leave us (behind): we
Would be with those
Who sit (at home).”

87. They prefer to be with (the women),
Who remain behind (at home):¹³³⁹
Their hearts are sealed
And so they understand not.

¹³³⁶ is consigned to the grave, and the consignment of the body to the grave, by a simple, solemn, and dignified ritual. For those who have shown hostility to Islam, this would not be seemly and is forbidden.

¹³³⁸ Except for the omission of a single word (“life”), this verse repeats verse 55 above. But the repetition indicates the harmonious closing of the same argument in two aspects. In ix. 55 it occurred in connection with the reasons for refusing to receive the contributions of such persons to the expenses of an enterprise which though vital to Islam’s defence was secretly opposed by such persons. Here (in ix. 85) it is a question of refusing to participate in the obsequies of such persons after their death: it is natural to omit the word “life” in this case.

¹³³⁹ Khawâlif, plural of Khalîfa, those (feminine) who remain behind at home when the men go to war: women. There is a stinging taunt in this, a suggestion that such men were cowards, preferring to remain behind like women when stiff work was to be done by men in defending their homes. They were not only cowards, but fools: as they did not understand their own best interests. If the enemy got the better of their brethren, they would themselves be crushed. “Their hearts are sealed”: the habits of cowardice and hypocrisy which they have adopted have become their second nature.
88. But the Messenger, and those
Who believe with him,
Strive and fight with their wealth
And their persons: for them
Are (all) good things.\(^{1340}\)
And it is they
Who will prosper.

89. Allah hath prepared for them
Gardens under which rivers flow.
To dwell therein:
That is the supreme triumph.\(^{1341}\)

SECTION 12.

90. And there were, among
The desert Arabs (also),
Men who made excuses
And came to claim exemption:
And those who were false
To Allah and His Messenger
(Merely) sat behind:\(^{1342}\)
Soon will a grievous chastisement
Seize the Unbelievers
Among them.

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\(^{1340}\) "Good things," and "prosperity," are to be understood both in the physical and in the highest spiritual sense as the next verse makes clear.

\(^{1341}\) In this verse there is a reminiscence, but not an exact repetition, of verse 72 above. This balances the parallel repetition or reminiscence in verse 85 above. See n. 1338. The symmetry of the argument is thus completed, as regards the Hypocrites of Madinah before we pass on to consider the case of the Hypocrites among the desert Bedouins in section 12.

\(^{1342}\) Not only had the Hypocrites a nest in Madinah, but their tactics affected some of the village or desert Bedouins, who loved war and would have followed a standard of war even if no question of Faith or a sacred Cause was involved. But some of them, though professing Islam, were frightened by the hardships of the Tabuk expedition and the prospect of meeting the trained armies of the great Roman (Byzantine) Empire. They made all sorts of lying excuses, but really their want of faith made them ineligible for being enlisted in a sacred Cause, in the terms of ix. 46-47 and ix. 53-54. Some came to make excuses: others did not even come, but sat at home, ignoring the summons.
91. There is no blame\textsuperscript{1343} On those who are infirm, Or ill, or who find No resources to spend (On the Cause), if they Are sincere (in duty) to Allah And His Messenger: No ground (of complaint) Can there be against such As do right: and Allah Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

92. Nor (is there blame) On those who came to thee To be provided with mounts.\textsuperscript{1344} And when thou saidst, "I can find no mounts For you," they turned back, Their eyes streaming with tears Of grief that they had No resources wherewith To provide the expenses.

\textsuperscript{1343} Though active service in person or by contributing resources is expected in emergencies of every person who believes in the Cause, there are some who must necessarily be exempted without the least blame attaching to them. Such would be those who are weak in body on account of age, sex, infirmity, or illness. Personal service in their case is out of the question, but they could contribute towards expenses if they are able. But if they are too poor to afford even such assistance, they are excused. But in all cases the motive must be sincere, and there should be a desire to serve and do such duty as they can. With such motives people are doing good or right in whatever form they express their service: sometimes, in Milton’s words, “they also serve who only stand and wait.” In any case their purity of motive would get Allah’s grace and forgiveness, and we must not criticise even if we thought they might have done more.

\textsuperscript{1344} Hamala, yahu\textit{mi}l\textit{u}, here seems to mean: to provide means of transport, \textit{viz.}, mounts (horses, camels, etc.) for riding, and perhaps beasts of burden for carrying equipment and baggage, suitable to the rank of those concerned. It may possibly mean other facilities for getting about, such as boots and shoes, or provisions: for an army’s march depends upon all these things. Where people fight as volunteers for a cause, without an extensive war fund, those who can afford it provide such things for themselves, but those without means, yet anxious to serve, have to be left behind. Their disappointment is in proportion to their eagerness to serve.
93. The ground (of complaint)
Is only against such as claim
Exemption while they are rich.
They prefer to stay
With the (women) who remain
Behind: Allah hath sealed
Their hearts: so they know not 1345.

94. They will present their excuses
To you when ye return
To them. Say thou: “Present
No excuses: we shall not
Believe you: Allah hath already
Informed us of the true state
Of matters concerning you:
It is your actions that Allah
And His Messenger will observe:
In the end will ye
Be brought back to Him
Who knoweth what is hidden
And what is open:
Then will He show you
The truth of all
That ye did.”

95. They will swear to you by Allah,
When ye return to them,
That ye may leave them alone.
So leave them alone:
For they are an abomination,
And Hell is their dwelling-place,—
A fitting recompense
For the (evil) that they did.

96. They will swear unto you.
That ye may be pleased with them.
But if ye are pleased with them.

1345. Cf. ix. 87, where similar phrases are used for a similar shirking of duty by
towns-folk, while here we are considering the desert folk. It is not only a duty, but a
precious privilege, to serve a great Cause by personal self-sacrifice. Those who shirk such
an opportunity know not what they miss.
Allah is not pleased
With those who disobey.

97. The Bedouin Arabs
Are the worst in unbelief
And hypocrisy, and most fitted
To be in ignorance
Of the command which Allah
Hath sent down to His Messenger:
But Allah is All-Knowing,
All-Wise.

98. Some of the Bedouin Arabs
Look upon their payments\textsuperscript{1346}
As a fine, and watch
For disasters for you: on them
Be the disaster of Evil:
For Allah is He that heareth
And knoweth (all things).

99. But some of the Bedouin Arabs
Believe in Allah and the Last Day,
And look on their payments
As pious gifts bringing them
Nearer to Allah and obtaining
The prayers of the Messenger.
Aye, indeed they bring them
Nearer (to Him): soon will Allah
Admit them to His Mercy:\textsuperscript{1347}
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{1346} The payments refer to the regular Charity established by Islam—the obligatory alms. If you look upon them as a fine or a burden, their virtue is lost. If you rejoice that you have there an opportunity of helping the Community to maintain its standards of public assistance and to suppress the unseemly beggary and loathsome importunity whose relief is only governed by motives of getting rid of awkward obstacles on the way, then your outlook is entirely different. You wish for organised and effective efforts to solve the problems of human poverty and misery. In doing so, you get nearer to Allah, and you earn the good wishes and prayers of godly men, led by our holy Leader Al-Muṣṭafā.

\textsuperscript{1347} The Mercy of Allah is always present, as the sun is always shining. But when we have prepared ourselves to receive it, we come to the full enjoyment of it, as a man who was in a shade comes out by his effort into the open, and bask in sunshine.
100. The vanguard (of Islam)—

The first of those who forsook (Their homes) and of those Who gave them aid, and (also) Those who follow them In (all) good deeds,—Well-pleased is Allah with them. As are they with Him: For them hath He prepared Gardens under which rivers flow. To dwell therein for ever: That is the supreme Triumph.

101. Certain of the desert Arabs Round about you are Hypocrites. As well as among The Madinah folk: they are Obstinate in hypocrisy: thou Knowest them not: We know them: Twice shall We punish them:

1348. The vanguard of Islam—those in the first rank—are those who dare and suffer for the Cause and never flinch. The first historical examples are the Muhajirs and the Anṣār. The Muhajirs—those who forsook their homes in Makkah and migrated to Madinah, the Holy Prophet being among the last to leave the post of danger, are mentioned first. Then come the Anṣār, the Helpers, the citizens of Madinah who invited them, welcomed them, and gave them aid, and who formed the pivot of the new Community. Then are mentioned all who follow them in good deeds: not only the early heroes and ordinary men and women who had been Companions of the Prophet or had seen him, but men and women in all ages who have lived noble lives. In spite of all their sacrifice and suffering they rejoice in the precious gift of the Good Pleasure of Allah, and their Salvation is the Supreme Felicity which such Good Pleasure gives.

1349. Note the description of the final accomplishment of the destiny of man. In mathematical science it would be like a letter or formula which would sum up a long course of reasoning. In this very Sūra it occurs before in ix. 72 and ix. 89, where see n. 1341.

1350. The desert Arabs were not all simple folk. There were cunning hypocrites among them: both among certain tribes encamped round about Madinah and certain others in Madinah itself.

1351. Their punishment in this world was double, viz., not only in their discomfiture, but because in their obstinate ignorance, they failed to understand the accomplished facts, while cleverer men realised that their hostility to Islam was hopeless. In addition to their discomfiture in this life, they would have to meet the penalties to come.
And in addition shall they be
Sent to a grievous Chastisement

102. Others (there are who) have
Acknowledged their wrong-doings:
They have mixed an act
That was good with another
That was evil. Perhaps Allah
Will turn unto them (in mercy):
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

103. Of their wealth take alms.
That so thou mightest
Purify and sanctify them;
And pray on their behalf.
Verily thy prayers are a source
Of security for them:
And Allah is One
Who heareth and knoweth.

104. Know they not that Allah
Doth accept repentance from
His votaries and receives
Their gifts of charity, and that
Allah is verily He,
The Oft-Returning, Most Merciful?

105. And say: “Work (righteousness)."
Soon will Allah observe your work,
And His Messenger, and the
Believers:

1352. There were some whose will was weak and succumbed to evil, although there
was much good in them. To them is held out the promise of forgiveness if they would
repent and undertake all acts of Muslim charity, which would purify their souls, aided
by the prayers of Allah’s Messenger. Then would they get the Peace that comes from
purity and right conduct.

1353. The repentant should be encouraged, after their repentance, to amend their
conduct. The kindly interest of their brethren in them will strengthen them in virtue and
blot out their past. When they go back into Eternity, they will understand the healing
grace which saved them, just as the evil ones will then have their eyes opened to the
real truth of their spiritual degradation (ix. 94). The similar words, in verse 84 and here,
clench the contrast.
Soon will ye be brought back
To the Knower of what is
Hidden and what is open:
Then will He show you
The truth of all that ye did.”

106. There are (yet) others,
Held in suspense for the command
Of Allah, whether He will
Punish them, or turn in mercy\textsuperscript{1354}
To them: and Allah
Is All-Knowing, Wise.

107. And there are those\textsuperscript{1355}
Who put up a mosque
By way of mischief and infidelity—
To disunite the Believers—
And in preparation for one\textsuperscript{1356}
Who warred against Allah
And His Messenger aforetime.
They will indeed swear
That their intention is nothing

1354. Three categories of men are mentioned, whose faith was tested and found wanting in the Tabuk affair, but their characteristics are perfectly general, and we may here consider them in their general aspects: (1) the deep-dyed hypocrites, who when found out make excuses because otherwise they will suffer ignominy; they are unregenerate and obstinate, and there is no hope for them (ix. 101); (2) there are those who have lapsed into evil, but are not altogether evil; they repent and amend, and are accepted (ix. 102-105); and (3) there are doubtful cases, but Allah will judge them (ix. 106). A fourth category is mentioned in ix. 107, which will be discussed later.

1355. Three categories of Hypocrites having already been mentioned (n. 1354), a fourth class of insidious evil-doers is now mentioned, whose type is illustrated in the story of the Qubā‘a “Mosque of mischief (\textit{dhirār}).” Qubā‘a is a suburb of Madinah about three miles to the south-east. When the Holy Prophet arrived at Madinah for Hijrat, he rested four days in Qubā‘a before entering the town of Madinah. Here was built the first mosque, the “Mosque of Piety” to which he frequently came during his subsequent stay in Madinah. Taking advantage of these sacred associations, some Hypocrites of the Tribe of Banū Qa‘äm built an opposition mosque in Qubā‘a, pretending to advance Islam. In reality they were in league with a notorious enemy of Islam, one Abū ‘Amir, who had fought against Islam at Uhud and who was now, after the battle of Hunain (A.H. 9), in Syria: his confederates wanted a mosque for him to come to, but it would only be a source of mischief and division, and the scheme was disapproved.

1356. Abū ‘Amir, surnamed the Rāhib (Monk), as he had been in touch with Christian monks. See last note.
108. Never stand thou forth therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of thy standing forth (for prayer) therein. In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loveth those who make themselves pure.

109. Which then is best?—he that layeth his foundation on piety to Allah and His Good Pleasure—or he that layeth his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? And it doth crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guideth not people that do wrong.

110. The foundation of those who so build is never free from suspicion and shakiness.

1357. The original “Mosque of Piety” built by the Holy Prophet himself.

1358. The true Muslim must be pure in body, mind, and heart. His motives should always be sincere, and his religion without any alloy of worldly gain.

1359. A man who builds his life on piety (which includes sincerity and the purity of all motives) and his hopes on the Good Pleasure of Allah, builds on a firm foundation of rock that will never be shaken. In contrast to him is the man who builds on a shifting sand-cliff on the brink of an abyss, already undermined by forces which he does not see. The cliff and the foundations all crumble to pieces along with him, and he is plunged into the Fire of misery from which there is no escape.

1360. “Their hearts cut to pieces” i.e., they meet their death. The parable is continued further. The heart of man is the seat of his hopes and fears, the foundation of his moral and spiritual life. If that foundation is on an undermined sand-cliff already crumbling to pieces, what security or stability can he have? He is being shaken by alarms...
In their hearts, until
Their hearts are cut to pieces.
And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

SECTION 14.

111. Allah hath purchased of the the
Believers
Their persons and their goods;
For theirs (in return)
Is the Garden (of Paradise):\(^{1361}\)
They fight in His Cause,
And slay and are slain:
A promise binding on Him
In Truth, through the Torah,
The Gospel, and the Qur-an:\(^{1362}\)
And who is more faithful
To his Covenant than Allah?

\(^{1361}\) In a human bargain both sides give something and receive some advantage. In
the divine bargain of Allah with man, Allah takes man's will and soul and his wealth
and goods, and gives him in return everlasting Felicity. Man fights in Allah's Cause and
carries out His will. All that he has to give up is the ephemeral things of this world,
while he gains eternal salvation, the fulfilment of his highest spiritual hopes.-a supreme
achievement indeed.

\(^{1362}\) We offer our whole selves and our possessions to Allah, and Allah gives us
Salvation. This is the true doctrine of redemption: and we are taught that this is the
doctrine not only of the Qur-an but of the earlier Revelations,-the original Law of Moses
and the original Gospel of Jesus. Any other view of redemption is rejected by Islam,
especially that of corrupted Christianity, which thinks that some other person suffered for
our sins and we are redeemed by his blood. It is our self-surrender that counts, not other
people's merits. Our complete self-surrender may include fighting for the cause, both
spiritual and physical. As regards actual fighting with the sword there has been some
difference in theological theories at different times, but very little in the practice of those
who framed those theories. The Jewish wars were ruthless wars of extermination. The
Old Testament does not mince matters on this subject. In the New Testament St. Paul,
in commending the worthy fruits of Faith, mentions Gideon, Barak, and other warriors
of the Old Testament as his ideals, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms... waxed
valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens..." (Hebrews, xi. 32-34). The
monkish morality of the Gospels in their present form has never been followed by any
self-respecting Christian or other nation in history. Nor is it common-sense to ignore lust
of blood in unregenerate man as a form of evil which has to be combated "within the
limits, set by Allah" (Q. ix. 112).
Then rejoice in the bargain
Which ye have concluded:
That is the achievement supreme.

112. Those that turn (to Allah)\textsuperscript{1363}
In repentance; that serve Him,
And praise Him; that wander
In devotion to Cause of Allah;
That bow down and prostrate themselves
In prayer; that enjoin good
And forbid evil; and observe
The limits set by Allah,—
(These do rejoice). So proclaim
The glad tidings to the Believers.

113. It is not fitting,
For the Prophet and those
Who believe, that they should
Pray for forgiveness
For Pagans, even though
They be of kin, after it is
Clear to them that they
Are companions of the Fire.\textsuperscript{1364}

114. And Abraham prayed
For his father’s forgiveness
Only because of a promise
He had made to him.\textsuperscript{1365}

\textsuperscript{1363} We are to rejoice that by giving up such small things as ourselves and our possessions we are to be rewarded with such a great thing as the eternal life of felicity. The truly righteous, whose lives in various aspects are described in this verse, do so rejoice. The good news is to be proclaimed to all Believers, including the weakest among us, so that they may profit by that example.

\textsuperscript{1364} This is usually understood to refer to the prayer for the dead, (1) if they died unrepentant after Islam was preached to them, (2) if they actively resisted or opposed the Faith to the last.

\textsuperscript{1365} Abraham and his unbelieving father are referred to in vi. 74. Apparently when Abraham was convinced that the conditions mentioned in the last note applied to his father, he gave up praying for him, as the physical bond was cut off by the spiritual hostility. For the promise to pray for his father, see xix. 47.
Abraham was loyal and tender-hearted, and bore with much that he disapproved, being in this a prototype of Al-Mustafā, and it must have gone against his grain to cut off relations in that way. But it would obviously be wrong for a human being to entreat Allah for mercy on people who had finally rejected Allah.

Allah's clear commands are given, so that Believers may not be misled by their human frailty into unbecoming conduct.

The Muhajirs were the people who originally forsook their homes in Makkah and followed Al-Mustafā in exile to Madinah. The Ansār were the Madinah people who received them with honour and hospitality into their city. Both these groups were staunch supporters of Islam, and proved their Faith by great sacrifices. But in the difficult days of the Tabuk expedition some of them, not perversely, but out of lethargy and human weakness, had failed to follow the standard. They were forgiven, and they afterwards acquitted themselves with zeal.

Note that the "swerving from duty" was merely an inclination due to the weakness of human nature in the face of new difficulties: that it only affected a part of the men for a time: and that it was overcome even in their case by the grace of Allah.
Of them had nearly swerved (From duty); but He turned To them (also): for He is Unto them Most Kind, Most Merciful.

118. (He turned in mercy also) To the three who were left Behind; (they felt guilty)\textsuperscript{1370} To such a degree that the earth Seemed constrained to them, For all its speciousness. And their (very) Souls seemed Straitened to them,- And they perceived that There is no fleeing from Allah (And no refuge) but to Himself. Then He turned to them, That they might repent: For Allah is Oft-Returning. Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{1370} Left behind: i.e., the acceptance of their repentance was delayed. Among the Faithful, the largest number consisted of those who were perfectly staunch and ever ready to do their duty. They obtained the love and good pleasure of Allah. Next came a few who wavered because their will was weak and they were daunted by the dangers and difficulties that faced them; Allah's saving grace protected them and they conquered their weakness, and did not fail in their duty; Allah forgave them and accepted their repentance. Lastly, in the illustration taken from the Tabuk affair, there were some who actually failed in their duty, not from contumacy or ill-will, but from thoughtlessness, slackness, and human weakness: they actually failed to obey the Holy Prophet's summons, and were naturally called on to explain, and were excluded from the life of the Community. Their mental state is here described graphically. Though the earth is spacious, to them it was constrained. In their own souls they had a feeling of constraint. In worldly affluence they felt poor in spirit. They realised that they could not flee from Allah, but could only find solace and refuge in coming back to Him. They freely repented and showed it in their deeds, and Allah freely forgave them and took them to His grace. Though illustrated by the particular examples of Ka'b, Marârah and Hilal, the lesson is perfectly general and is good for all times.
SECTION 15.

119. O ye who believe! Fear Allah
And be with those
Who are truthful.

120. It was not fitting
For the people of Madinah
And the Bedouin Arabs
Of the neighbourhood, to stay
behind
Allah's Messenger,
Nor to prefer their own lives
To his: because nothing
Could they suffer or do,
But was reckoned to their credit
As a deed of righteousness,—
Whether they suffered thirst,
Or fatigue, or hunger, in the Cause
Of Allah, or trod paths
To raise the ire of the Unbelievers,
Or gain any gain\(^{1371}\)
From an enemy:
For Allah suffereth not
The reward to be lost
Of those who do good;—

121. Nor could they spend anything
(For the Cause)—small or great—
Nor cut across a valley,\(^ {1372}\)

\(^{1371}\) Again, the illustration is that of Tabuk, but the lesson is general. We must not hold our own comfort or lives dearer than that of our leader, nor desert him in the hour of danger. If we have true devotion, we shall hold our own lives or comfort cheap in comparison to his. But whatever service we render to the Cause of Allah, and whatever sufferings, hardships, or injuries we endure, or whatever resources we spend for the Cause,—all goes to raise our degree in the spiritual world. Nothing is lost. Our reward is far greater in worth than any little service we can render, or any little hardship we can suffer, or any little contributions we can make to the Cause. We “painfully attain to joy”.

\(^{1372}\) Cut across a valley: this is specially mentioned, as denoting an individual act of herosim, dash, or bravery. To march with the troops along valleys, tread paths of danger along with our Comrades, is good and praiseworthy: Notice that both the things
But the deed is inscribed  
To their credit; that Allah  
May requite them  
With the best (possible reward).

122. It is not for the Believers  
To go forth together:  
If a contingent  
From every expedition  
Go forth  
To devote themselves  
To studies in religion,  
And admonish the people  
When they return to them,—  
That thus they (may learn)\(^\text{1373}\)  
To guard themselves (against evil).

SECTION 16.

123. O ye who believe! Fight  
The Unbelievers who are near to you\(^\text{1374}\)  
And let them find harshness  
In you: and know that Allah  
Is with those who fear Him.

= mentioned in this verse,— the spending of resources and the dashing across a valley—are individual acts, while those mentioned in the last verse are collective acts, which are in some ways easier. The individual acts having been mentioned, the next verse follows naturally.

1373. Fighting may be inevitable, and where a call is made by the ruler of an Islamic State, it should be obeyed. But fighting is not to be glorified to the exclusion of all else. Even among those who are able to go forth, a party should remain behind—for purposes of study, so that when the fighters return home, their minds may be attuned again to the more normal interests of religious life, under properly instructed teachers. The students and teachers are soldiers of the Jihād in their spirit of obedience and discipline.

1374. When conflict becomes inevitable, the first thing is to clear our surroundings of all evil, for it is only evil that we can rightly fight. To evil we must put up a stout and stiff resistance. Mealy-mouthed compromises are not right for soldiers of truth and righteousness. They are often a compound of cowardice, weariness, greed, and corruptibility.
124. Whenever there cometh down A Sûra, some of them say: “Which of you has had His faith increased by it?” Yea, those who believe,— Their faith is increased, And they do rejoice.

125. But those in whose hearts Is a disease,—it will add doubt To their doubt, and they will die In a state of Unbelief.

126. See they not that they Are tried every year Once or twice? Yet they Turn not in repentance, And they take no heed.

127. Whenever there cometh down A Sûra, they look at each other, (Saying), “Doth anyone see you?” Then they turn away: Allah hath turned their hearts

1375. The incompatibility of Unfaith and Faith are contrasted in this section in respect of revelation and the divine teacher. The Unbelievers laugh at revelation, and say to each other mockingly: “Does this increase your faith?” To the Believer every new aspect of Allah’s truth as revealed increases his faith, and wonder, and gratitude. He rejoices, because he gets added strength for life and achievement.

1376. Cf. ii. 10 and several similar passages. Just as the light, which to healthy eyes gives enlightenment, causes pain to the diseased eye, which emits unclean matter, so to those spiritually diseased. Allah’s grace is unwelcome, and they put forth more doubts to cover their disease. And they die in their disease, and of their disease. Note the aptness of the metaphor.

1377. Yet, in spite of their infidelity, one or two chances are given them every year. The door is not closed to them. Yet thy deliberately turn away, and take no heed of all the warnings which their own nature and the teaching and example of good men should give them.

1378. Even the Unbelievers, in their heart and conscience, feel uncomfortable when they turn away from Faith and Truth, and therefore their turning aside is figured by furtive glances, such as we may suppose literally to have been cast by the Hypocrites in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet. Then they sink away, feeling superior in their minds. And yet, if they only knew it, their contumacy deprives them of Allah’s grace and light. They are turning Grace away, and when Allah withdraws it altogether, they perish utterly.
128. Now hath come unto you
A Messenger from amongst
Yourselves: it grieves him
That ye should suffer,
Ardently anxious is he
Over you: to the Believers
Is he most kind and merciful.1379

129. But if they turn away,
Say: "Allah sufficeth me:
There is no god but He
On Him is my trust.—
He the Lord of the Throne
Supreme!1380

1379. The tender heart of the Teacher is grieved that any among his flock should rush headlong to ruin. He watches ardently over them, and whenever any of them show signs of Faith, his kindness and mercy surround him and rejoice over him.

1380. But if the Message is rejected, he still proclaims the burning Faith of his heart, which is unquenchable. Allah is sufficient to all. To trust Him is to find the accomplishment of all spiritual desire. His grandeur is figured by a lofty Throne, supreme in glory!

Thus have we been led, through a notable incident in Al-Muṣṭafā’s earthly career, to truths of the highest spiritual import.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Yūnus, 10

Chronologically this Sūra and the five that follow (Sūras xi, xii, xiii, xiv, and xv) are closely connected, and were revealed in the late Makkān period, as the great event of the Hijrat was gradually approaching down the stream of Time. But their chronology has no particular significance.

On the other hand their arrangement in the gradation of Quranic teaching fits in with the subject-matter. S. viii. and S. ix. were mainly concerned with the first questions that arose on the formation of the new and organised Community of Islam in its conflict with those who wished to suppress or destroy it or use force to prevent its growth and the consolidation of its ideals. See Introductions to those Sūras. The present group leads us to the questions that face us when external hostility has been met, and our relations to Allah have to be considered from a higher stand-point than that of self-preservation. How does revelation work? What is the meaning of divine grace and its withdrawal? How do the Messengers of Allah deliver their Message? How should we receive it?

All these questions revolve round the revelation of the Qurān and each Sūra of this group except the 13th has the Abbreviated Letters A.L.R. attached to it. S. xiii. has the letters A.L.M.R., and we shall discuss this variation when we come to S. xiii.

Let us now consider Sūra x. alone. The central theme is that Allah's wonderful Creation must not be viewed by us as a creation of material things only, once made and finished with. Most wonderful of all is how He reveals Himself to men through Prophets and Scriptures; how prophets are rejected by men, and the Message disbelieved until it is too late for repentance; and how, as in the case of Yūnus (Jonah) and his people, even the rejection (when repentance supervenes) does not prevent Allah's grace and mercy from working, and how far that working is beyond man's comprehension.

Summary.—The wonderful working of the Creator through man by revelation seems like magic to men; yet they could find Signs and Messages from Him in the sun and the moon and the constantly varying yet regular phenomena of nature, from which man should take a lesson of constancy and Faith (x. 1-20).

All the goodness or beauty that man meets in the life around him proceeds from Allah. Yet man is blind and will not understand (x. 21-40).

As all things and beings proceed from Allah, so will they return to Him,
and He is ever true. Why then does ungrateful man make untrue phantoms for himself instead of rejoicing in the good news which He sends? (x. 41-70).

Allah revealed Himself through Noah, but Noah's people rejected him and perished. He spoke through Moses to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh was stiff necked and arrogant, and when he repented at all, it was too late (x. 71-92).

Everywhere want of faith causes people to perish. But the people of Yūnus repented, and Allah saved them by His wonderful grace. So Allah will deliver the Believers. When the Truth comes from Allah, follow it and be patient, for Allah is the most righteous of Judges (x. 93-109).
1. A. L. R. 1381
These are the Ayats 1382 Of the Book of Wisdom.

2. Is it a matter
Of wonderment to men
That We have sent
Our inspiration to a man
From among themselves?—1383
That he should warn mankind
(Of their danger), and give
The good news to the Believers
That they have before their Lord
The good actions they have
advanced 1384

(But) say the Unbelievers:
"This is indeed
An evident sorcerer!"

1381. For the Abbreviated Letters generally see Appendix I.

1382. Ṭāyūt = Signs, or Verses of the Qur-ān. Here both meanings are to be understood. Each verse is a nugget of wisdom. And in the verses immediately following, e.g., x. 3-6, examples are given of the wonders of Allah's material Creation. If the starry heavens impress us with their sublimity as signs of Allah's wisdom and power, how much more wonderful is it that He should speak to lowly man through His Messengers, in man's language, so that he can understand?

1383. Is it not still more wonderful that the inspired man should be one of ourselves? The Arabs had known Muhammad in other relations and conditions, and when the mighty Message came through his mouth—the message of Wisdom and Power, such as no man could speak as from himself, least of all a man not instructed in human learning—they could only in their wonder attribute it to magic and sorcery. They failed to understand that magic and sorcery were projections of their own mind, while here was solid, enduring Truth from Allah!

1384. Allah's Message was and is not all smooth and agreeable. The first thing is to convince us of our wrong-doing, and warn us of our danger. If we have Faith, we then learn what a high rank we obtain in the sight of Allah. According to another view the word "qadama" here refers to the fact that the acts of a person precede him to his Lord. The word sidq qualifies these acts with sincerity and genuineness.
3. Verily your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens And the earth in six Days.\(^{1385}\) Then He established Himself\(^{1386}\) On the Throne. Regulating and governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) Except after His leave (Hath been obtained). This Is Allah your Lord; Him therefore Serve ye; will yet not Receive admonition?\(^{1387}\)

4. To Him will be your return- Of all of you. The promise Of Allah is true and sure.\(^{1388}\) It is He who beginneth The process of creation,\(^{1389}\) And repeateth it, that He May reward with justice Those who believe And work righteousness; But those who reject Him

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\(^{1385}\) See note 1031 to vii. 54. 

\(^{1386}\) *Iṣtawā*, with the preposition *ʿilā* after it, means He turned to or He directed Himself by His will to as in ii.29. With the preposition *ʿalā* after it, as here and in vii. 54 and elsewhere, the meaning seems to be “to mount or ascend,” and to be firmly established, to sit firm and unshaken, beyond question. “The Throne represents many ideas: e.g., (1) that God is high above all His Creation; (2) that He regulates and governs it, as a king does, whose authority is unquestionably recognised; (3) that He is not, therefore, like the gods of Greece, and paganism, who were imagined to be in a world apart, careless of mankind, or jealous of mankind, but on the contrary. He (4) disposes of their affairs and all affairs continuously and with justice; (5) that the authority of His prophets, ministers, and messengers is derived from Him, and such intercession as they can make is by His will and permission.

\(^{1387}\) Cf. vi. 80.

\(^{1388}\) *Hā qq*: true, right, for just ends, in right proportions, sure and certain: all these ideas are implied.

\(^{1389}\) Cf. n. 120 to ii. 117. Allah’s creation is not a simple act, once done and finished with. It is continuous, and there are many stages, not the least important of which is the Hereafter, when the fruits of our life will be achieved.
Will have draughts\textsuperscript{1390} of boiling fluids,
And a Chastisement grievous,
Because they did reject Him.

5. It is He who made the sun
To be a shining glory\textsuperscript{1391}
And the moon to be a light
(Of beauty), and measured out
Stages for it, that ye might
Know the number of years
And the count (of time).
Nowise did Allah create this
But in truth and righteousness.\textsuperscript{1392}
(Thus) doth He explain His Signs
In detail, for those who know.\textsuperscript{1393}

6. Verily, in the alternation
Of the Night and the Day,
And in all that Allah
Hath created, in the heavens
And the earth, are Signs
For those who fear Him.\textsuperscript{1394}

7. Those who rest not their hope
On their meeting with Us.

\textsuperscript{1390} \textit{Hamim}: boiling fluid: it is associated as in xxxviii. 57, with \textit{gassāq}, a dark, murky, or intensely cold fluid; both indicative of the grievous penalty that results from rebellion against Allah.

\textsuperscript{1391} The fitting epithet for the sun is \textit{dhīa}, "splendour and glory of brightness", and for the moon is "a light" (of beauty), the cool light that illuminates and helps in the darkness of the night. But the sun and moon also measure time. The simplest observation can keep pace with the true lunar months and lunar years, which are all that is required by a pastoral people. For agriculture solar years are required, as they indicate the changes of the seasons, but ordinary solar years are never exact; even the solar year of 365\frac{1}{4} days requires correction by advanced astronomical calculation.

\textsuperscript{1392} Everything in Allah's creation has use and purpose, and fits into a Design. It is true in every sense of the word and it is good and just. It is not merely a matter of sport or freak (xxi. 16). Though so varied, it proclaims Allah's Unity; though a limited free-will is granted to creatures, the results of evil (which is rebellion) are neutralised and harmony is restored. \textit{Cf.} iii. 191.

\textsuperscript{1393} \textit{Cf.} ix. 11.

\textsuperscript{1394} \textit{Cf.} ii. 164.
II. If Allah were to hasten for men
     The ill (they have earned)

8. Their abode is the Fire,
     Because of the (evil)
     They earned.

9. Those who believe,
     And work righteousness,-
     Their Lord will guide them
     Because of their Faith.
     Beneath them will flow
     Rivers in Gardens of Bliss.

10. (This will be) their prayer therein:
     "Glory to Thee, O Allah!"
     And "Peace" will be their
     greeting therein
     And the end of their prayer,
     Will be: "Praise be to Allah,
     The Cherisher and Sustainer
     Of the Worlds!"

SECTION 2.

11. If Allah were to hasten for men
     The ill (they have earned)

1395. Those who fall from Grace are described by three epithets: (1) the meeting
     with Allah is not the object of their hope and earnest desire, but something else, viz.
     (2) the material good of this world, which not only attracts them but apparently gives
     them complete satisfaction, so that there is no glow of the Future in their horizon, and
     (3) they are deaf and dead to the resounding and living Message of Allah, (1) and (2)
     refer to the extinction of Faith in them, and (3) to their falling a prey to the evils
     of this world in their conduct. They are contrasted in x. 9 with the Faith and the
     Righteousness of those who accept Grace.

1396. Their Faith is the cause as well as the instrument of their Guidance,—the Kindly
     Light which leads them as well as the Joy which fills their Soul.

1397. A beautiful piece of spiritual melody! They sing and shout with joy, but their
     joy is in the Glory of Allah! The greetings they receive and the greetings they give are
     of Peace and Harmony! From first to last they realise that it is Allah Who cherished them
     and made them grow, and His rays are their Light.
1398. Those who have no hope for the Future grasp at any temporary advantage, and in their blindness even mockingly ask for immediate punishment for their sins (viii. 32), thus vainly challenging Allah, in Whom they do not believe. If the beneficent Allah were to take them at their word, they would have no chance at all. Their doom would be sealed. But even the respite they get they use badly. They merely wander about distractedly like blind men, to and fro. Cf. ii. 15.

1399. Not only do men fail to use their respite: even those who have a superficial belief in Allah call on Him in their trouble but forget Him when He has relieved their trouble. Their Faith is not strong enough to make them realise that all good proceeds from Allah. But in moments of trouble they use every position, literally and figuratively, to appeal to Him.

1400. Those without Faith are selfish, and are so wrapped up in themselves that they think every good that comes to them is due to their own merits or cleverness. That is itself a cause of their undoing. They do not see their own faults.
14. Then We made you heirs
   In the land after them,
   To see how ye would behave!\(^ \text{1401} \)

15. But when Our Clear Signs
    Are rehearsed unto them,
    Those who rest not their hope
    On their meeting with Us,
    Say: "Bring us a Qur'ân\(^ \text{1402} \)
    Other than this, or change this."
    Say: "It is not for me,
    Of my own accord,
    To change it: I follow
    Naught but what is revealed
    Unto me: if I were
    To disobey my Lord,
    I should myself fear the Chastisement
    Of a Great Day (to come)."

16. Say: "If Allah had so willed,
    I should not have rehearsed it
    To you, nor should He
    Have made it known to you.\(^ \text{1403} \)
    A whole life-time before this
    Have I tarried amongst you:

\(^ \text{1401.} \) This is addressed to the Quraish in the first instance, for they had succeeded to the 'Ad and the Thamûd heritage. But the application is universal, and was true to the 'Abbâsî Empire in the time of Hârûn-ar-Rashîd, or the Muslim Empire in Spain or the Turkish Empire in its palmiest days, and indeed, to the Muslims and non-Muslims of our own days.

\(^ \text{1402.} \) Reading: in the Arabic, the word is "Qur'ân", which may mean Reading or in the special sense, the Qur'ân. The duty of Allah's Messenger is to deliver Allah's Message as it is revealed to him, whether it please or displease those who hear it. Selfish men want to read their own desires or fancies into religious precepts, and thus they are often willing to use Religion for their own ends. Most of the corruptions of Religion are due to this cause. But Religion is not to be so prostituted.

\(^ \text{1403.} \) It is in Allah's Plan that He should reveal Himself in certain ways to His creatures, and His Messengers are the instruments that carry out His will. It is in itself gracious Mercy that He should thus make His Will known. We should be grateful for His guidance instead of carping at it.
17. Who doth more wrong
Than such as forge a lie
Against Allah, or deny
His Signs? But never
Will prosper those who sin.

18. They serve, besides Allah,
What can hurt them not
Nor profit them, and they say:
“These are our intercessors
With Allah.” Say: “Do ye
Indeed inform Allah of something
He knows not, in the heavens?
Or on earth?—Glory to Him!
And far is He above the partners
They ascribe (to Him)!”

19. Mankind was but one nation,
But differed (later). Had it not
Been for a Word

1404. Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā had lived his whole life of purity and virtue amongst his people, and they knew and acknowledged it before he received his mission. They knew he loved his nation and was loyal to it. Why should they turn against him when he had to point out under inspiration all their sins and wrong-doing? It was for their own good.

And he had to plead again and again with them: “Will you not understand, and see what a glorious privilege it is for you to receive true guidance from Allah?”

1405. When we shut our eyes to Allah’s glory and goodness, and go after false gods, we give some plausible excuse to ourselves, such as that they will intercede for us. But how can stocks and stones intercede for us? And how can men intercede for us, when they themselves have need of Allah’s Mercy? Even the best and noblest cannot intercede as of right, but only with His permission (x. 3). To pretend that there are other powers than Allah is to invent lies and to teach Allah. There is nothing in heaven or earth that He does not know, and there is no other like unto Him.

1406. Cf. ii 213. All mankind was created one, and Allah’s Message to mankind is in essence one, the Message of Unity and Truth. But as selfishness and egotism got hold of man, certain differences sprang up between individuals, races, and nations, and in His infinite Mercy He sent them messengers and messages to suit their varying mentality, to test them by His gifts, and stir them up to emulation in virtue and piety (v. 48).

1407. Cf. vi. 115. ix 40, and iv. 171. “Word” is the Decree of Allah, the expression of His Universal Will or Wisdom in a particular case. When men began to diverge from one another (see last note). Allah made their very differences subserv the higher ends by increasing their emulation in virtue and piety, and thus pointing back to the ultimate Unity and Reality.
That went forth before
From thy Lord, their differences
Would have been settled
Between them.

20. They say: “Why is not
A Sign sent down to him
From his Lord?” Say:
“The Unseen is only
For Allah (to know).
Then wait ye: I too
Will wait with you”.

SECTION 3.

21. When We make mankind
Taste of some mercy after
Adversity hath touched them,
Behold! they take to plotting
Against Our Signs! Say:
“Swifter to plan is Allah!”
Verily, Our messengers record
All the plots that ye make!”

22. He it is who enableth you
To traverse through land
And sea; till when ye even board
Ships;—they sail with them
With a favourable wind,
And they rejoice thereat;

1408. Their demand for a Sign is disingenuous. All nature and revelation furnishes them with incontestable Signs. What they want is the Book of the Unseen opened out to them like the physical leaves of a book. But they forget that a physical Book is on a wholly different plane from Allah’s Mysteries, and that their physical natures cannot apprehend the mysteries. They must wait. Truth will also wait. But the waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses. Cf. vi. 158 and ix. 52.

1409. Man turns his thoughts in adversity to Allah. But as soon as the trouble is past, he not only forgets Him but actually strives against His cause. But such people are poor ignorant creatures, not realising that the Universal Plan of Allah is swifter to stop their petty plans, and that though they fail, the record of them remains eternally against them.
Then comes a stormy wind
And the waves come to them
From all sides, and they think
They are being overwhelmed:
They pray unto Allah, sincerely
Offering (their) duty unto Him,
Saying, "If Thou dost deliver us
From this, we shall truly
Show our gratitude!" 1410

23. But when he delivereth them,
Behold! they transgress
Insolently through the earth
In defiance of right!
O mankind! your insolence 1411
Is against your own souls,—
An enjoyment of the life
Of the Present: in the end,
To Us is your return,
And We shall show you
The truth of all that ye did.

24. The likeness of the life
Of the Present is
As the rain which We
Send down from the skies: 1412
By its mingling arises
The produce of the earth—
Which provides food

1410. All the great inventions and discoveries on which man prides himself are the fruit of that genius and talent which Allah has freely given of His grace. But the spirit of man remains petty, as is illustrated by the parable from the sea. How the heart of man rejoices when the ship goes smoothly with favourable winds! How in adversity it turns, in terror and helplessness, to Allah, and makes vows for deliverance! and how those vows are disregarded as soon as the danger is past! Cf. vi. 63.

1411. In our insolence and pride we do not see how small and ephemeral is that part of us which is mortal. We shall see it at last when we appear before our Judge. In the meantime our ridiculous pretensions only hurt ourselves.

1412. Another beautiful Parable, explaining the nature of our present life. The rain comes down in drops and mingles with the earth. Through it, by Allah's matchless artistry, the womb of the earth is made fruitful. All kinds of good, useful, and beautiful grains, vegetables, and fruits are produced for men and animals. The earth is covered in its bravery of green and gold and all kinds of colours. Perhaps the "owner" takes all the credit to himself, and thinks that this will last eternally.
For men and animals:
(It grows) till the earth
Is clad with its golden
Ornaments and is decked out
(In beauty): the people to whom
It belongs think they have
All powers of disposal over it:
There reaches it Our command
By night or by day,
And We make it
Like a harvest clean-mown,
As if it had not flourished
Only the day before!
Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail
For those who reflect.

25. But Allah doth call
To the Home of Peace: 1413
He doth guide whom He pleaseth
To a Way that is straight.

26. To those who do right
Is a goodly (reward)–
Yea, more (than in measure)! 1414
No darkness nor abasement
Shall cover their faces! 1415

= frost or a volcanic eruption, comes and destroys it, or it may be even normally, that the
time of harvest comes, and the fields and orchards are stripped bare by some blight or
disease. Where is the beauty and bravery of yesterday? All that is left is dust and ashes!
What more can we get from this physical material life?

1413. In contrast with the ephemeral and uncertain pleasures of this material life,
there is a higher life to which Allah is always calling. It is called the Home of Peace.
For there is no fear, nor disappointment nor sorrow there. And all are called, and those
will be chosen who have sought, not material advantages, but the Good Pleasure of Allah.
Salām, Peace, is from the same root as ʿIslām, the Religion of Unity and Harmony.

1414. The reward of the righteous will be far more than in proportion to their merits.
For they will have the supreme bliss of being near to Allah, and “seeing His face”.

1415. The face is the symbol of the Personality, the inner and real Self, which is
the antithesis of the outer and ephemeral Self. It will be illuminated with Allah’s Light,
behind which is no shadow or darkness. All its old shortcomings will be blotted out, with
their sense of shame, for there will be Perfection, as in Allah’s sight.
1416. Note that the evil reward is for those who have “earned” evil, i.e., brought it on themselves by the deliberate choice of evil. Further, in the justice of Allah, they will be requited with evil similar to, and not greater in quantity or intensity, than the evil they had done,—unlike the good, who, in Allah’s generosity, get a reward far greater than anything they have earned or could possibly earn.

1417. Night is the negation of Light and metaphorically of joy and felicity. The intensive is indicated by “the depth of the darkness of Night.”

1418. The false gods are not real; they are only the figments of the imaginations of those who indulged in the false worship. But the prophets or great or good men whose names were vainly taken in competition with the name of Allah, and the personified Ideas or Idols treated in the same way would themselves protest against their names being used in that way, and show that the worship was paid not to them, but to the ignorance or superstition or selfish lusts of the false worshippers.
Certainly knew nothing
Of your worship of us!" 1419

30. There will every soul see
(The fruits of) the deeds
It sent before: 1420 they will
Be brought back to Allah
Their rightful Lord,
And their invented falsehoods
Will leave them in the lurch. 1421

SECTION 4.

31. Say: "Who is it that
Sustains you (in life)
From the sky and from the earth? 1422
Or who is it that
Has power over hearing 1423
And sight? And who
Is it that brings out
The living from the dead
And the dead from the living?" 1424

1419. See last note. They did not even know that they were being falsely worshipped in that way.

1420. Cf. ii. 95, where the verb used is qaddama. The verb aslafa, used here, is nearly synonymous.

1421. Instead of their false ideas helping them, they will desert them and leave them in the lurch. Cf. vi. 24.

1422. Sustenance may be understood in the sense of all the provision necessary for maintaining physical life as well as mental and spiritual development and well-being. Examples of the former are light and rain from heaven and the produce of the earth and facilities of movement on land and sea and in air. Examples of the latter are the moral and spiritual influences that come from our fellow-men, and from the great Teachers and Prophets.

1423. Just two of our ordinary faculties, hearing and sight, are mentioned, as examples of the rest. All the gifts of Allah, physical and spiritual, are enjoyed and incorporated by us by means of the faculties and capacities with which He has endowed us.

1424. Cf. iii. 27 and n. 371; vi. 95 and n. 920; and xxx. 19.
And who is it that
Rules and regulates all affairs? 1425
They will soon say, “Allah”. Say, “Will ye not then
Show piety (to Him)?”

32. Such is Allah, your true Lord:
Apart from the Truth,
What (remains) but error? 1426
How then are ye turned away?

33. Thus is the Word
Of thy Lord proved true. 1427
Against those who rebel:
Verily they will not believe.

34. Say: “Of your ‘partners’. 1428
Can any originate creation
And repeat it?” Say:
“It is Allah Who originates
Creation and repeats it:
Then how are ye deluded
Away (from the truth)?”

35. Say: “Of your ‘partners’
Is there any that

1425. This is the general summing-up of the argument. The government of the whole
Creation and its maintenance and sustenance is in the hands of Allah. How futile then
would it be to neglect His true worship and go after false gods?

1426. The wonderful handiwork and wisdom of Allah having been referred to, as the
real Truth, as against the false worship and false gods that men set up, it follows that
to disregard the Truth must lead us into woeful wrong, not only in our beliefs but in
our conduct. We shall err and stray and be lost. How then can we turn away from the
Truth?

1427. Disobedience to Allah brings its own terrible consequences on ourselves. The
Law, the Word, the Decree, of Allah must be fulfilled. If we go to false gods, our Faith
will be dimmed, and then extinguished. Our spiritual faculties will be dead.

1428. The argument is now turned in another direction. The false gods can neither
create out of nothing nor sustain the creative energy which maintains the world. Nor can
they give any guidance which can be of use for the future destiny of mankind: on the
contrary they themselves (assuming they were men who were deified) stand in need of
such guidance. Why then follow vain fancies, instead of going to the source of all
knowledge, truth, and guidance, and worship, serve, and obey Allah, the One True God?
Can give any guidance towards Truth?" Say: "It is Allah Who gives guidance towards Truth. Is then He Who gives guidance to Truth more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance (Himself) unless he is guided? What then is the matter with you? How judge ye?" 36. But most of them follow nothing but conjecture: truly conjecture can be of no avail against Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do. 37. This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than Allah; on the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book—wherein there is no doubt—from the Lord of the Worlds. 38. Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Sûra like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth!" 1429 1429. The Book: Cf. iii. 23 and n. 366. Allah's revelation throughout the ages is one. The Qur'an confirms, fulfils, completes, and further explains the one true revelation, which has been sent by the One True God in all ages. 1430. Cf. ii. 23 and n. 42.
39. Nay, they charge with falsehood
That whose knowledge they
Cannot compass, even before
The interpretation thereof\textsuperscript{1431} did reach them: thus
Did those before them
Make charges of falsehood:
But see what was the end
Of those who did error!\textsuperscript{1432}

40. Of them there are some
Who believe therein,
And some who do not:
And thy Lord knoweth best
Those who are out for mischief.

SECTION 5.

41. If they charge thee
With falsehood, say:
“My work to me,
And yours to you!”\textsuperscript{1433}
Yce are free from responsibility
For what I do, and I
For what ye do!”

\textsuperscript{1431} \textit{Taawil}: elucidation, explanation, final fulfilment, \textit{Cf.}, vii. 53. The Message of Allah not only gives us rules for our every-day conduct, but speaks of high matters of religious significance, which require elucidation in two ways: (1) by experience from the actual facts of life, and (2) by the final fulfilment of the hopes and warnings which we now take on trust through our Faith. The Unbelievers reject Allah’s Message simply because they cannot understand it and without giving it even a chance of elucidation in any of these ways.

\textsuperscript{1432} Wrong-doers always came to grief ultimately. The true course of history shows it from a broad standpoint. But they are so headstrong that they prejudge issues in their ignorance before they are decided.

\textsuperscript{1433} When the Prophet of Allah is rejected and charged with falsehood, he does not give up his work, but continues to teach and preach his Message. He can well say to those who interfere with him: “Mind your own business: supposing your charge against me is true, you incur no responsibility: I have to answer for it before Allah: and if I do my duty and deliver my Message, your rejection does not make me liable for your wrong-doing: you will have to answer before Allah.”
42. Among them are some who
(Pretend to) listen to thee:
But canst thou make the deaf
To hear,—even though
They are without understanding.\(^{1434}\)

43. And among them are some
Who look at thee:
But canst thou guide
The blind,—even though
They will not see?

44. Verily Allah will not deal
Unjustly with man in aught:
It is man that wrongs
His own soul.\(^{1435}\)

45. And on the day when He will
Gather them together:
(It will be) as if
They had tarried\(^{1436}\)
But an hour of a day:
They will recognise each other:\(^{1437}\)
Assuredly those will be lost
Who denied the meeting
With Allah and refused
To receive true guidance.

\(^{1434}\) Cf. vi. 25, 36, 39 and notes. Hypocrites go to hear and see some great Teacher, but they get no profit out of it because they are not sincerely seeking the truth. They are like the blind, or the deaf, or the imbeciles. It is impossible to guide them, because they have not the will to be guided.

\(^{1435}\) Allah cannot be blamed for man’s evil, nor will He deal unjustly with man. He has given him faculties and means of guidance. If man goes wrong, it is because he wrongs himself.

\(^{1436}\) In eternity our life on this earth will look as if it had been just a little part of our little day, and so also will appear any interval between our death and the call to Judgment.

\(^{1437}\) We shall retain some perception of our mutual relations on earth, so that the righteous judgment which will be pronounced will be intelligible to us, and we shall be convinced of its righteousness.
46. Whether We show thee
(Realised in thy life-time)
Some part of what We
Promise them,—or We
Take thy soul
(Before that),—in any case,
To Us is their return:
Ultimately Allah is witness\(^\text{1438}\)
To all that they do.

47. To every people (was sent)
A Messenger: when their
Messenger\(^\text{1439}\)
Comes (before them), the matter
Will be judged between them
With justice, and they
Will not be wronged.

48. They say: "When
Will this promise
Come to pass,—
If ye speak the truth?"

49. Say: "I have no power\(^\text{1440}\)
Over any harm or profit
To myself except as Allah

\(^{1438}\) The Prophet is assured that the end of evil is evil, just as the end of good is good. Whether this result is made plain before his very eyes in his own life-time or afterwards, makes no difference. The wicked should not rejoice if they are given rope and seem to have the upper hand for a time, nor should the righteous lose heart: for Allah’s promise is sure and must come to pass. And in any case, the scales can only be partially, if at all, adjusted in this life. There is the final and complete adjustment on the Day of Judgment. Allah is All-Knowing, and all truth will be before Him.

\(^{1439}\) Every people or generation or nation had its Message or Messenger: Allah revealed Himself to it in some way or another. If that Messenger was ignored or rejected, or his Message was twisted or misused, the Day of Reckoning will come, when perfect justice will be done and the whole Truth revealed. The Unbelievers mockingly say: "If that is true, pray tell us when that Day will come!" The answer of the Messenger is: "It will come in good time: no one can either hasten or retard it. If you want me then to save you or if you fear that I shall harm you for your treatment of me, know that this matter is in the hands of Allah alone, Who will do perfect justice. Even in regard to myself, any harm or good that befalls me is by the command and in the power of Allah".

\(^{1440}\) Cf. vii. 188.
Willeth. To every People\textsuperscript{1441} Is a term appointed: When their term is reached, Not an hour can they cause Delay, not (an hour) can they Advance (it in anticipation).

50. Say: Do ye see, If His punishment should come To you by night or by day,\textsuperscript{1442} What portion of it Would the Sinners Wish to hasten?

51. “Would ye then believe in it At last, when it actually cometh To pass? (It will then be said:) ‘Ah! now? and ye wanted (Aforetime) to hasten it on!’

52. “At length will be said To the wrong-doers: ‘Taste ye The enduring punishment!’\textsuperscript{1443}

\textsuperscript{1441} This repeats vii. 34, but the significance is different in the two contexts. Here the reply is to the Unbelievers' mocking incredulity (see n. 1439) as to whether there is such a thing as a Hereafter: they suggest to the Prophet of Allah that if his claim to inspiration from Allah is true, he should get them punished at once for rejecting him. In vii. 34 the reference is to the punishment of iniquity as described in vii. 33: sin is not necessarily punished at once: every People or generation gets a chance; when their term is fulfilled, the final adjustment is made.

\textsuperscript{1442} The mockery of Unbelievers will be turned into panic when the wrath of Allah descends on them. It may do so suddenly, by night or by day, when they least expect it. Will they then say of any bit of it: “Let it be hastened”?

\textsuperscript{1443} This will be the final doom, and they will themselves have brought it on themselves!

The psychology of the Unbelievers is here analysed and exposed. This particular argument begins at x. 47 and ends at x. 53. It begins with the general statement that every People has had due warning and explanation by means of a Prophet specially sent to them: that Prophet will be a relevant witness at the final Judgment, when the matter will be judged in perfect equity. Then follows a dialogue. The Unbelievers mock and say, “Why not bring on the Punishment now?” The reply to the Unbelievers is, “It will come in Allah's good time”. The Believers are told to watch and see how the sinners would take it if the Punishment were to come at once. Would they not think it too sudden? When it actually comes, their panic will be indescribable. “Is that true?” say the Unbelievers. “It is the very truth,” is the answer, “and nothing can ward it off”.

\textsuperscript{1441} لِكُلٍّ مَّآ أُجِلَّ إِذًا أَجِلَّهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَضِيفُونَ سَاعَةً \textsuperscript{1442} فَلَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا بِيَدٍ أَوْ نَهَارًا مَاذَا \textsuperscript{1443} وَلَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ
Ye get but the recompense
Of what ye earned!"

53. They seek to be informed
By thee: "Is that true?"
Say: "Aye! by my Lord!
It is the very truth!
And ye cannot frustrate it!"

SECTION 6.

54. Every soul that hath sinned,
If it possessed all
That is on earth,
Would fain give it in ransom:\[1444\]
They would declare (their)
repentance\[1445\]
When they see the Chastisement:
But the judgment between them
Will be with justice,
And no wrong will be done
Unto them.

55. Is it not (the case) that to Allah
Belongeth whatever is
In the heavens and on earth?
Is it not (the case) that
Allah's promise is assuredly true?
Yet most of them do not know.

56. It is He who giveth life
And who taketh it,

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1444. Cf. iii. 91.

1445. Declare their repentance: the verb in the original is asarrù, which may mean either "declare" or "reveal" or else "conceal" or "hide". The classical Commentators are divided as to the meaning to be adopted here. If the first, which I prefer, the sense would be: "When the Penalty stares the sinners in the face, they would give anything to escape it, and they would even openly declare their repentance, which would be a source of shame and ignominy to them." If the latter meaning be taken, the sense would be: "They would give anything to escape the Penalty; but the hardest thing of all for them is frankly to confess and repent, and so they conceal their sense of shame and ignominy."
And to Him shall ye
All be brought back.

57. O mankind! there hath come
To you an admonition from your Lord
And a healing for the (diseases)\textsuperscript{1446}
In your hearts,—and for those
Who believe, a Guidance
And a Mercy.

58. Say: “In the Bounty of Allah.
And in His Mercy,—in that
Let them rejoice”: that is better
Than the (wealth) they hoard.

59. Say: “See ye what things\textsuperscript{1447}
Allah hath sent down to you
For sustenance? Yet ye
Hold forbidden some things
Thereof and (some things) lawful.”
Say: “Hath Allah indeed
Permitted you, or do ye forge
(Things) to attribute to Allah?”

60. And what think those
Who forge lies against Allah,
On the Day of Judgment?\textsuperscript{1448}
Verily Allah is full of Bounty

\textsuperscript{1446} Those who do wrong have a disease in their hearts, which will cause their spiritual death. Allah in His Mercy declares His Will to them, which should direct their lives and provide a healing for their spiritual disease. If they accept Faith, the remedy acts; they find themselves in right guidance and receive Allah's forgiveness and mercy. Surely those are far better gifts than material advantages, wealth, or possessions.

\textsuperscript{1447} “Sustenance” is to be taken in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. In the literal sense, what fine and varied things Allah has provided for us on land and in sea and air, in the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms? Yet narrow minds put artificial barriers against their use. In the metaphorical sense, what enchanting fields of knowledge and spiritual endeavour are provided in our individual and social lives? And who is to say that some are lawful and others forbidden? Supposing they were so in special circumstances, it is not right to attribute artificial restrictions of that kind to Allah and falsely erect religious sanctions against them.

\textsuperscript{1448} People who lie in Religion or invent false gods, or false worship,—have they any idea of the Day of Judgment, when they will be called to account, and will have to answer for their deeds?
SECTION 7.

61. In whatever business thou mayest be, and whatever portion thou mayest be reciting from the Qur-an, and whatever deed ye (mankind) may be doing, we are Witnesses thereof when ye are deeply engrossed therein. Nor is hidden from the Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven. And not the smallest or the greatest of these things but are recorded in a clear record.

62. Behold! verily on the friends of Allah there is no fear, nor shall they grieve;

1449. Allah is most kind, and gracious, and generous with His gifts of all kinds, material and spiritual. But men do not understand, and are ungrateful in forgetting the Giver of all and setting up false objects of worship and false standards of pride.

1450. There is nothing that men can do but Allah is a witness to it. We may be deeply engrossed in some particular thing and for the time being be quite unconscious of other things. But Allah's knowledge not only comprehends all things, but has all things actively before it. Nothing is hidden from Him. And His knowledge has another quality which human knowledge has not. Human knowledge is subject to time, and is obliterated by time. Allah's knowledge is like a Record and endures for ever. And His Record has a further quality which human records have not. The most permanent human record may be quite intelligible to those who make it but may be ambiguous to others and may become unintelligible with the progress of time, as happens almost invariably to the most enduring inscriptions from very ancient times: but in Allah's "Record" or knowledge there is no ambiguity, for it is independent of time, or place, or circumstance. This is the force of Mubin ("clear") here.

1451. Allah's all-embracing knowledge and constant watchful care over all His creatures, may be a source of fear to sinners, but there is no fear for those whom He honours with His love and friendship,—neither in this world nor in the world to come.
63. Those who believe
And (constantly) guard
Against evil;—

64. For them are Glad Tidings,
In the life of the Present
And in the Hereafter:
No change can there be
In the Words of Allah.
This is indeed
The supreme Triumph

65. Let not their speech\textsuperscript{1452}
Grieve thee: for all power
And honour belong to Allah:
It is He Who heareth
And knoweth (all things).

66. Behold! verily to Allah
Belong all creatures,
In the heavens and on earth.
What do they follow
Who worship as His “partners”
Other than Allah? They follow
Nothing but conjecture, and
They do nothing but lie.\textsuperscript{1453}

67. He it is that hath
Made you the Night
That ye may rest therein,
And the Day to make
Things visible (to you).\textsuperscript{1454}
Verily in this are Signs

\textsuperscript{1452}. Sometimes the words of the unrighteous or their revilings hurt or grieve the righteous man, but there is no occasion for either anger or sorrow: they have no power and they can do no real dishonour, for all power and honour are from Allah.

\textsuperscript{1453}. All creatures are subject to Allah. If, therefore, any false worship is set up, the false gods—so called “partners”—are merely creatures of imagination or false inventions.

\textsuperscript{1454}. Our physical life—and our higher life in so far as it is linked with the physical—is sustained by the alternation of rest and activity, and the fit environment for this alternation is the succession of Nights and Days in our physical world. The Day makes the things “visible to us”—a beautiful symbol, not only of the physical work for which =
For those who listen
(To His Message).

68. They say, “Allah hath begotten
A son!”—Glory be to Him!
He is Self-Sufficient! His
Are all things in the heavens
And on earth! No warrant.
Have ye for this! Say ye
About Allah what ye know not?

69. Say: “Those who forge
A lie against Allah
Will never prosper.”

70. A little enjoyment
In this world!—
And then, to Us
Will be their return.
Then shall We make them
Taste the severest Chastisement
For their disbelief.

SECTION 8.

71. Relate to them the story
Of Noah. Behold! he said
To his People: “O my People,
= we go about by day, but of the higher activities which are fitly associated with seeing,
perception and enquiry. Intuition (insight) is a little out of that circle because that may
come by night, when our other faculties are resting.

1455. In Quranic language “prosperity” refers both to our every-day life and to the
higher life within us,—to the Present and the Future,—health and strength, opportunities
and resources, a spirit of contentment, and the power of influencing others. Here there
seems to be an extra touch of meaning. A liar not only deprives himself of prosperity
in all senses, but his “lie” itself against Allah will not succeed: it will and must be found
out.

1456. The reference to Noah’s story here is only incidental, to illustrate a special
point. The fuller story will be found in xi. 25-48, and in many other passages, e.g., vii.
59-64, xxiii 23-32, xxvi, 105-122, and xxxvii, 75-82. At each place there is a special point
in the context. The special point here is that Noah’s very life and preaching among his
wicked people was a cause of offence to them. But he feared nothing, trusted in Allah,
delivered his message, and was saved from the Flood.
1457. Firm in his sense of Truth from Allah. Noah plainly told his people to condemn him to death if they liked, openly and in concert, so that he should at least know who would listen to his Message and who would not. He wanted them to be frank and direct, for he feared nothing.

1458. The Prophet of Allah preaches for the good of his people. But he claims no reward from them, but on the contrary is reviled, persecuted, banished, and often slain.

1459. Cf. vii. 64.
They brought them Clear Signs, But they would not believe What they had already rejected Beforehand. Thus do We seal The hearts of the transgressors.

Then after them sent We Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh And his chiefs with Our Signs. But they were arrogant: They were a wicked people.

When the Truth did come To them from Us, they said: "This is indeed evident sorcery!"

Said Moses: "Say ye (this) About the Truth when It hath (actually) reached you? Is it sorcery (like) this? But sorcerers will not prosper."

They said: "Hast thou Come to us to turn us Away from the ways We found our fathers following,— In order that thou and thy brother

I understand the meaning to be that there is a sort of spiritual an influence descending from generation to generation, among the Unbelievers as among the men of Faith. In history we find the same problems in many ages,—denial of Allah's grace, defiance of Allah's law, rejection of Allah's Message. These influences cause the hearts of the contumacious to be sealed and impervious to the Truth Cf. ii. 7 and notes. What they do is to prejudge the issues even before the Prophet explains them.

The story of Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh is fully told in vii. 103-137, and there are references to it in many places in the Qur-an. The incidental reference here is to illustrate a special point, viz., that the wicked are arrogant and bound up in their sin, and prefer deception to Truth: they do not hesitate to charge the men of Allah, who work unselfishly for them, with mean motives, such as would actuate them in similar circumstances!

Sorcery is the very opposite of Truth,—being deception of plausible shows by the powers of evil. But these cannot succeed or last permanently, and Truth must ultimately prevail.
May have greatness in the land?
But not we shall believe in you!"

79. Said Pharaoh: "Bring me
Every sorcerer well versed."

80. When the sorcerers came,
Moses said to them:
"Throw ye what ye (wish)
To throw!"

81. When they had had their throw,
Moses said: "What ye
Have brought is sorcery:
Allah will surely make it
Of no effect: for Allah
Prospereth not the work
Of those who make mischief.

82. "And Allah by His Words\
Doth prove and establish
The Truth, however much
The Sinners may hate it!"

SECTION 9.

83. But none believed in Moses
Except some children of his
People.\textsuperscript{1466}

\textsuperscript{1463}. Notice how they attribute evil motives to the men of Allah, motives of ambition and lust of power, which the men of Allah had been sent expressly to put down. The same device was used against Al-Muṣṭafā.

\textsuperscript{1464}. When they threw their rods, the rods became snakes by a trick of sorcery, but Moses's miracles were greater than any tricks of sorcery, and had real Truth behind them.

\textsuperscript{1465}. Allah's Words or Commands have real power, while Sorcerers' tricks only seem wonderful by deceiving the eye.

\textsuperscript{1466}. The pronoun "his" in "his People" is taken by some Commentators to refer to Pharaoh. The majority of Pharaoh's people refused to believe at the time, but the sorcerers believed (vii. 120), and so did Pharaoh's wife (lxvi. 11), and ultimately Pharaoh himself, though too late (x. 90). If we took "his" to refer to Moses, it would mean that the Israelites were hard-hearted and grumbled (vii. 129) even when they were being delivered from Egypt, and only a few of them had any real faith in Allah's providence and the working of His Law, and they feared Pharaoh even more than they feared Allah.
Because of the fear of Pharaoh
And his chiefs, lest they
Should persecute them; and certainly
Pharaoh was mighty on the earth
And one who transgressed all bounds.

84. Moses said: "O my People!
If ye do (really) believe
In Allah, then in Him
Put your trust if ye
Submit (your will to His)."

85. They said: "In Allah
Do we put our trust.
Our Lord make us not
A trial for those
Who practise oppression;

86. "And deliver us by Thy Mercy
From those who reject (Thee)."

87. We inspired Moses and his brother
With this Message: "Provide
Dwellings for your People
In Egypt, make your dwellings
Into places of worship,
And establish regular prayers:
And give Glad Tidings
To those who believe!"

88. Moses prayed: "Our Lord!
Thou hast indeed bestowed

1467. A trial for those who practise oppression: the various meanings of *Fitnat* have been explained in n. 1198 to viii. 25. The prayer is that the righteous people, being weak, should be saved from being used as objects of oppression or punishment at the hands of powerful enemies. Weakness tempts Power to practise oppression, and is thus an occasion of trial for the oppressors.

1468. This instruction, we may suppose, was given when the sorcerers were brought to faith, and some of the Egyptians believed. Moses was for a little while to remain in Egypt, so that his Message should have time to work, before the Israelites were led out of Egypt. They were to make their houses into places of prayer (*Qibla*), as Pharaoh would not probably allow them to set up public places of prayer, and they were now to be only sojourners in Egypt. These were the glad tidings (the Gospel) of Islam, which was preached under Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and completed under Muhammad.
On Pharaoh and his Chiefs
Splendour and wealth in the life of the present, and so,
Our Lord they mislead (men)
From Thy Path. Deface Our Lord the features of their wealth,
And send hardness to their hearts,
So they will not believe Until they see
The grievous Chastisement.”

89. Allah said: “Accepted is Your prayer (O Moses and Aaron)! So stand ye straight, And follow not the path Of those who know not.”

90. We took the Children Of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them In insolence and spite.

At length, when overwhelmed With the flood, he said:

1469. Moses’s prayer, in which Aaron joined, for he was always with him, may be paraphrased thus: “O Allah! we understand that the glitter and the wealth of the Egyptians are not to be envied. They are but the ephemeral goods of this life. They are a disadvantage, in that in their pride of possessions the Egyptians mislead themselves and others. Let their pride be their undoing! Turn their wealth into bitterness and their hearts into hardness, for they reject Thee, and they will not believe until they actually see the Punishment of their sins!”

1470. A terrible curse! Let their wealth and splendour become so defaced in their features, that instead of being objects of desire, they become objects of loathing! The heart is the seat of affections and joy: let it be so hardened by their unbelief that it becomes the seat of hatred and grief! It is when they see the Penalty that they will believe!

1471. Be not dazzled by their splendour, but stand out straight for Truth, for that is your salvation! Addressed in form to Moses and Aaron, in substance it is addressed to the Israelites.

1472. Notice the swiftness of the action in the narrative. The execution of poetic justice could not have been described in fewer words.
1473. That is, in the One True God. This was death-bed repentance, and even so it was forced by the terror of the catastrophe. So it was not accepted (cf. iv. 18) in its entirety. Only the body was saved from the sea, and presumably, according to Egyptian custom, it was embalmed and the mummy was given due rites of the dead. But the story commemorated for ever Allah's working, in mercy for His people, and in just punishment of oppressors.

1474. After many wanderings the Israelites were settled in the land of Canaan, described as "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8). They had a prosperous land; and they were supplied with spiritual sustenance by men sent to deliver Allah's Message. They should have known better than to fall into disputes and schisms, but they did so. This was all the more inexcusable considering what bounties they had received from Allah. The schisms arose from selfish arrogance, and Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment.
Allah will judge between them
As to the schisms amongst them,
On the Day of Judgment.

94. If thou wert in doubt
As to what We have revealed
Unto thee, then ask those
Who have been reading
The Book from before thee. 1475
The Truth hath indeed come
To thee from thy Lord:
So be in no wise
Of those in doubt. 1476

95. Nor be of those who reject
The Signs of Allah,
Or thou shalt be of those
Who perish

96. Those against whom the Word
Of thy Lord hath been verified 1477
Would not believe—

97. Even if every Sign was brought
Unto them,—until they see
(For themselves) the Chastisement
Grievous.

98. If only there had been
A single township (among those
We warned), which believed,—

1475. Allah’s Truth is all one, and even in different forms men sincere in Religion recognise the oneness. So sincere Jews like `Abdullāh ibn Salām, and sincere Christians like Waraqa or the Nestorian monk Bahīra, were ready to recognise the mission of Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā. “The Book” in this connection is Revelation generally, including pre-Islamic revelations.

1476. Cf. iii. 60 and n. 399.

1477. Allah has given frequent warnings against Evil and want of Faith in all ages, through Signs and through inspiration,—the latter (“the Word”) being even more direct and personal than the former. Those who did not heed the warning found to their cost that it was true, and they perished. Such contumacy in the rejection of Truth only yields when the actual penalty is in sight. Belief then is induced by irresistible facts: it is not efficacious as Faith, as was proved against Pharaoh. See x. 90 and n. 1473.
So its Faith should have Profited it,—except the People of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them The Chastisement of Ignominy In the life of the Present, And permitted them to enjoy (Their life) for a while.\footnote{1479}

99. If it had been thy Lord’s Will, They would all have believed,— All who are on earth! Wilt thou then compel mankind, Against their will, to believe?\footnote{1480}

\footnote{1478. Allah in His infinite Mercy points out the contumacy of Sin as a warning, and the exceptional case of Nineveth and its Prophet Jonah is alluded to. The story of Jonah is told in xxxvii. 139-148, which would be an appropriate place for further comments. Here it is sufficient to note that Nineveth was a very ancient town which is now no longer on the map. Its site is believed to be marked by the two mounds on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the flourishing city of Mosul on the right bank, about 230 miles north-north-west of Bagdad. One of the mounds bears the name of “the Tomb of Nabi Yûnus.” Archaeologists have not yet fully explored its antiquities. But it is clear that it was a very old Sumerian town, perhaps older than 3500 B.C. It became the capital of Assyria. The first Assyrian Empire under Shalmaneser I, about 1300 B.C., became the supreme power in Western Asia. Babylon, whose tributary Assyria had formerly been, now became tributary to Assyria. The second Assyrian Empire arose about 745 B.C., and Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) beautified the town with many Public Works. It was destroyed by the Scythians (so-called Medes) in 612 B.C. If the date of Jonah were assumed to be about 800 B.C., it would be between the First and the Second Assyrian Empire; when the City was nearly destroyed for its sins, but on account of its repentance was given a new lease of glorious life in the Second Empire.

1479. The point of the allusion here may be thus explained. Nineveth was a great and glorious City. But it became, like Babylon, a city of sin. Allah sent the prophet Yûnus (Jonah) to warn it. Full of iniquities though it was, it listened to the warning, perhaps in the person of a few just men. For their sakes, the All-Merciful Allah spared it, and gave it a new lease of glorious life. According to the chronology in the last note the new lease would be for about two centuries, after which it perished completely for its sins and abominations. Note that its new lease of life was for its collective life as a City, the life of the Present, \textit{i.e.}, of this World. It does not mean that individual sinners escaped the spiritual consequences of their sin, unless they individually repented and obtained Allah’s mercy and forgiveness.

1480. If it had been Allah’s Plan or Will not to grant the limited Free-will that He has granted to man, His omnipotence could have made all mankind alike; all would then have had Faith, but that Faith would have reflected no merit on them. In the actual world as it is, man has been endowed with various faculties and capacities, so that he should strive and explore, and bring himself into harmony with Allah’s Will. Hence Faith =
becomes a moral achievement, and to resist Faith becomes a sin. As a complementary proposition, men of Faith must not be impatient or angry if they have to contend against Unfaith, and most important of all, they must guard against the temptation of forcing Faith, i.e., imposing it on others by physical compulsion. Forced faith is no faith. They should strive.

1481. To creatures endued with Will, Faith comes out of an active use of that Will. But we must not be so arrogant as to suppose that that is enough. At best man is weak, and is in need of Allah's grace and help. If we sincerely wish to understand, He will help our Faith; but if not, our doubts and difficulties will only be increased. This follows as a necessary consequence, and in Quranic language all consequences are ascribed to Allah.

1482. Rijs (from rajisa, yarjus, or rajusa, yarjusu) has various meanings: e.g., (1) filth, impurity, uncleanness, abomination, as in ix. 95; (2) hence, filthy deeds, foul conduct, crime, abomination, thus shading off into (1), as in v. 90; (3) hence punishment for crime, penalty, as in vi. 125; (4) a form of such punishment, viz., doubt, obscurity, or unsettlement of mind, anger, indignation, as in ix. 125, and here, but perhaps the idea of punishment is also implied here.

1483. If Faith results from an active exertion of our spiritual faculties or understanding, it follows that if we let these die, Allah's Signs in His Creation or in the spoken Word which comes by inspiration through the mouths of His Messengers will not reach us any more than music reaches a deaf man.

1484. Cf. x. 20 and n. 1408. The argument about Allah's revelation of Himself to man was begun in those early sections of this Sūra and is being now rounded off towards the end of this Sūra with the same formula.
103. In the end We deliver
Our messengers and those who believe:
Thus is it fitting on Our part
That We should deliver
Those who believe!

SECTION 11.

104. Say: "O ye men!
If ye are in doubt
As to my religion, (behold!) 1485
I worship not what ye Worship other than Allah!
But I worship Allah—
Who will take your souls 1486
(At death): I am commanded 1487
To be (in the ranks)
Of the Believers, 1488

105. "And further (thus): set thy face Towards Religion with true piety,
And never in any wise Be of the Unbelievers;

106. "Nor call on any,
Other than Allah:—
Such can neither profit thee
Nor hurt thee: if thou dost.

1485. Other people may hesitate, or doubt, or wonder. But the righteous man has no doubt in his own mind, and he declares his Faith clearly and unambiguously to all, as did Al-Mustafí.

1486. The worship of the One and True God is not a fancy worship, to be arrived at merely by reasoning and philosophy. It touches the vital issues of life and death—which are in His hands and His alone.

1487. Nor is the worship of One God an invention of the Prophet. It comes as a direct command through him and to all.

1488. Individual Faith is good, but it is completed and strengthened by joining or forming a Righteous Society, in which the individual can develop and expand. Islam was never a religion of monks and anchorites. It laid great stress on social duties, which in many ways test and train the individual's character.
Behold! thou shalt certainly
Be of those who do wrong.”

107. If Allah do touch thee
With hurt, there is none
Can remove it but He:
If He do design some benefit
For thee, there is none
Can keep back His favour:
He causeth it to reach
Whomsoever of His servants
He pleaseth. And He is
The Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 1489

Truth hath reached you
From your Lord! Those, who receive
Guidance, do so for the good
Of their own souls; those
Who stray, do so to their own loss:
And I am not (set) over you
To arrange your affairs.” 1490

109. Follow thou the inspiration
Sent unto thee, and be
Patient and constant, till Allah,
Do decide: for He
Is the Best to decide. 1491

1489. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Even when we suffer under trials and tribulations, it is for our good, and no one can remove them except He, when, in His Plan. He sees it to be best for all concerned. On the other hand, there is no power that can intercept His blessings and favours, and His bounty flows freely when we are worthy, and often when we are not worthy of it.

1490. The Furqān, the Criterion between right and wrong, has been sent to us from Allah. If we accept guidance, it is not as if we confer favours on those who bring us guidance. They suffer unselfishly for us, in order that we may be guided for our own good. On the other hand, if we reject it, it is our own loss. We have a certain amount of free-will, and the responsibility is ours and cannot be shifted to the Prophets sent by Allah.

1491. When, in spite of all the efforts of the Prophets of Allah, people do not accept Truth, and evil seems to flourish for a time, we must wait and be patient, but at the same time we must not give up hope or persevering effort. For thus only can we carry out our part in the Plan of Allah.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Hûd, 11

For the chronological place of this Sûra and the general argument of Sûras x. to xv. see Introduction to S. x.

In subject-matter this Sûra supplements the preceding one. In the last Sûra stress was laid on that side of Allah’s dealings with man which leans to Mercy: here stress is laid on the side which deals with justice and the punishment of Sin when all Grace is resisted.

Summary.—Allah’s revelation of mercy, His dealing with man, and His patience are contrasted with man’s ingratitude, his love of falsehood and vanity, and his crookedness (xi. 1-24).

Noah’s unselfishness and humility in teaching his people the Truth of Allah were traduced by the ungodly, and his Message ridiculed and rejected. But he built his Ark under directions from Allah, and was saved, with peace and blessings, while his rejecters perished (xi. 25-49).

The prophet Hûd preached to his people ‘Ad against false gods, and the prophet Sâlih to his people Thamûd against dishonouring the symbol of Allah’s bounty. In both cases Allah’s Signs were rejected, and the rejecters were blotted out (xi. 50-68).

Lot’s people were given to abominations: Abraham pleaded for them, and Lot was sent out to them, but they went deeper and deeper into sin and suffered the Penalty. Shu’âib’s people, the Midianites, were warned against fraud and mischief, but they reproached him with helplessness and were themselves destroyed (xi. 69-95).

It is arrogant leaders like Pharaoh who mislead men, and men bring ruin on themselves. But Allah is Just. The penalty for sin is real and abiding; therefore shun all wrong doing, and serve Allah whole-heartedly (xi. 96-123).
1. **A. I. R.**

   (This is) a Book,
   With verses fundamental
   (Of established meaning),
   Further explained in detail,—
   From One Who is Wise
   And Well-Acquainted (with all things):

2. (It teacheth) that ye should
   Worship none but Allah.
   (Say:) "Verily I am
   (Sent) unto you from Him
   To warn and to bring
   Glad tidings:

3. "(And to preach thus), 'Seek ye
   The forgiveness of your Lord,
   And turn to Him in repentance;
   That He may grant you
   Enjoyment, good (and true),
   For a term appointed,
   And bestow His abounding grace
   On all who abound in merit!"
   But if ye turn away,
   Then I fear for you
   The Chastisement of a Great Day:

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1492. For the meaning of these Letters. see App. I.

1493. See n. 347 to iii. 7. Every basic principle is included in Allah's Revelation, and it is further illustrated and explained in detail.

1494. Al-Mustafā's Message— as was the Message of all apostles— was to warn against evil, and to bring the glad tidings of Allah's Mercy and Grace to all who would receive it in Faith and trust in Allah. This double Message is preached illustratively in this Sūra.

1495. The enjoyment of all good and true things in life refers, I think, to the present life with its limited term, and the abounding Grace refers to the higher reward, which begins here but is completed in the life to come.
4. “To Allah is your return,
   And He hath power
   Over all things.”

5. Behold! they fold up\textsuperscript{1496}
   Their hearts, that they may lie
   Hid from Him! Ah! even
   When they cover themselves
   With their garments, He knoweth
   What they conceal, and what
   They reveal: for He knoweth
   Well the (inmost secrets)
   Of the hearts\textsuperscript{1497}

6. There is no moving creature
   On earth but its sustenance\textsuperscript{1498}
   Dependeth on Allah: He knoweth
   Its resting place and its
   Temporary deposit\textsuperscript{1499}
   All is in a clear Record\textsuperscript{1500}

7. He it is Who created
   The heavens and the earth
   In six Days\textsuperscript{1501}—and His Throne

---

\textsuperscript{1496} The heart (literally breast in Arabic) is already well guarded in the body; and secrets are supposed to be hidden in the heart or breast. Foolish persons might further cover up their hearts with cloaks, but even so, nothing can be hidden from Allah.

\textsuperscript{1497} Cf. iii. 119.

\textsuperscript{1498} Cf. vi. 59. Nothing happens in Creation except by the Word of Allah and with the knowledge of Allah. Not a leaf stirs but by His Will. Its maintenance in every sense is dependent on His Will.

\textsuperscript{1499} Mustaqarr = definite abode; where a thing stops or stays for some time, where it is established. Mustauda = where a thing is laid up or deposited for a little while. Referring to animals, the former denotes its life on this earth; the latter its temporary pre-natal existence in the egg or the womb and its after-death existence in the tomb or whatever state it is in until its resurrection.

\textsuperscript{1500} Cf. vi. 59 and n. 880, and x. 61 and n. 1450.

\textsuperscript{1501} See n. 1031 to vii. 54.
1502. It is scientifically correct to say that all life was evolved out of the waters, and this statement also occurs in the Qur-an, xxi. 30. Some such meaning, I think, also attaches to the Gen. i. 2. The past tense "was" refers to the time before life developed in solid forms, on land and in air.

1503. The Creation we see around us is not idle sport or play (in Hindi, Lila) or whim on the part of Allah. It is the medium through which our spiritual life is to develop, with such free-will as we have. This life is our testing time.

1504. The Unbelievers, who do not believe in a Future life, think all talk of it is like a sorcerer's talk, empty of reality. But in this they show their ignorance, and they are begging the question.

1505. As much as to say: "Oh! all this talk of punishment is nonsense. There is no such thing!"
Behold! he is in despair
And (falls into) ingratitude. \textsuperscript{1506}

10. But if We give him a taste
Of (Our) favours after
Adversity hath touched him,
He is sure to say,
"All evil has departed from me."
\textsuperscript{1507}
Behold! he falls into exultation
And pride.

11. Not so do those who show
Patience and constancy, and work
\textsuperscript{1508}
Righteousness; for them
Is forgiveness (of sins)
And a great reward.

12. Perchance thou mayest (feel)
The inclination (to give up)
A part of what is revealed
Unto thee, and thy heart
Feeleth straitened because they say,
"Why is not a treasure sent down
Unto him, or why does not
An angel come down with him?"

\begin{verse}
\textsuperscript{1506} He does not realise that some kinds of chastening are good for discipline and the training of our spiritual faculties.
\textsuperscript{1507} He takes it as a matter of course, or as due to his own merit or cleverness! He does not realise that both in good and ill fortune there is a beneficent purpose in the Plan of Allah.
\textsuperscript{1508} Their attitude is the right one: to take ill-fortune with fortitude and good fortune with humility, and in either case go on persevering in good deeds to their fellow-creatures.
\textsuperscript{1509} Every Prophet of Allah, when he not only encounters opposition, but is actually accused of falsehood and those very evils which he is protesting against, may feel inclined, in his human weakness, to ask himself the question. "Supposing I omit this little point, will Allah’s Truth then be accepted more readily? Or he may think to himself, "If I had only more money to organise my campaign, or something which will draw people’s attention, like the company of an angel, how much better can I push my Message?" He is told that truth must be delivered as it is revealed, even though portions of it may be unpalatable, and that resources and other means to draw people to him are beside the point. He must use just such resources and opportunities as he has, and leave the rest to Allah.
\end{verse}
But thou art there only to warn!
It is Allah that arrangeth
All affairs!

13. Or they may say, “He forged it.”
Say. “Bring ye then ten Sûras
Forged, like unto it, and call
(To your aid) whomsoever
Ye can, other than Allah!—
If ye speak the truth!1510

14. “If then they (your false gods)
Answer not your (call),
Know ye that this Revelation
Is sent down (replete) with the
knowledge
Of Allah, and that there is
No god but He! Will ye
Even then submit (to Islam)?”

15. Those who desire
The life of the Present
And its glitter,—to them
We shall pay (the price
Of) their deeds therein,—
Without diminution.1511

16. They are those for whom
There is nothing in the Hereafter
But the Fire: vain
Are the designs they frame therein,
And of no effect
Are the deeds that they do!

17. Can they be (like) those
Who accept a Clear (Sign)
From their Lord and followed by

1510. Cf. ii. 23 and x. 38.

1511. If worldly men desire the glitter of this world, they shall have it in full measure, but it is false glitter, and it involves the negation of that spiritual life which comes from the guidance of the inner light and from the revelation of Allah, as described in verse 17 below.
A witness from Him\textsuperscript{1512} 
And before him is the Book 
Of Moses—a guide\textsuperscript{1513} 
And a mercy? They believe 
Therein; but those of the Sects 
That reject it,--the Fire 
Will be their promised 
Meeting-place. Be not then 
In doubt thereon: for it is 
The Truth from thy Lord: 
Yet many among men 
Do not believe!

18. Who doth more wrong 
Than those who forge a lie 
Against Allah? They will be 
Brought before their Lord, 
And the witnesses 
Will say, "These are the ones 
Who lied against their Lord! 
Behold! the Curse of Allah 
Is on those who do wrong!—

19. "Those who hinder (men) 
From the path of Allah 
And wish it, 
To be crooked: these were 
They who denied the Hereafter!"\textsuperscript{1514}

20. They will not escape in earth, 
Nor have they protectors

\textsuperscript{1512}. "A witness from Himself": i.e., the Book which was given to Al-Muṣṭafā, the Holy Qur-ān, which is compared to the original Revelation given to Moses. We make no difference between one true and genuine Message and another, nor between one apostle and another,—for they all come from the One True God.

\textsuperscript{1513}. "Guide": the Arabic word here is \textit{Imām}, a leader, a guide, one that directs to the true Path. Such a direction is an instance of the Mercy and Goodness of Allah to man. The Qur-ān and the Prophet Muhammad are also called, each, a Guide and a Mercy, and so are these epithets applicable to previous Books and Prophets.

\textsuperscript{1514}. Cf. vii. 45.
Besides Allah! Their chastisement\textsuperscript{1515} will be doubled! They could not hear, nor they could see!

21. They are the ones who have lost their own souls: And the (fancies) they forged have left them in the lurch!

22. Without a doubt, these are the very ones who will lose most in the Hereafter!

23. But those who believe and work righteousness, and humble themselves before their Lord—\textsuperscript{1516} they will be Companions of the Garden, to dwell therein for aye!

24. These two kinds (of men) may be compared to the blind and deaf, and those who can see and hear well. Are they equal when compared? Will ye not then take heed?

\textsuperscript{1515} Cf. vii. 38. In this context, it is implied that they committed a two-fold wrong: (1) in inventing falsehoods against Allah, which deadened their own soul, and (2) in leading others astray or hindering them from Allah's path. Thus they lost the faculty of hearing, which they might have used to hear the Word of Allah, and they blinded the faculty of sight by shutting out Allah's light.

\textsuperscript{1516} Note that the humility is to be "before their Lord," \textit{i.e.}, in Allah's sight. There is no virtue, quite the contrary, in rubbing our noses to the ground before men. We are not to be arrogant even before men because we are humble as in Allah's sight. Nor does true humility lose self-confidence; for that self-confidence arises from confidence in the support and help of Allah.
SECTION 3.

25. We sent Noah to his People (With a mission); “I have come To you as a clear warner.


27. But the Chiefs of the Unbelievers Among his People said: “We see (in) thee nothing But a man like ourselves: Nor do we see that any Follow thee but the meanest Among us, apparently Nor do we see in you (all) Any merit above us: In fact we think ye are liars!”1518

28. He said: “O my People! See ye if (it be that) I have a Clear Sign From my Lord and that He Hath sent Mercy unto me From Him, but That the Mercy hath been

1517. Noah’s mission was to a wicked world, plunged in sin. The mission had a double character, as in the mission of all Prophets of Allah: it had to warn men against evil and call them to repentance, and it had to give them the glad tidings of Allah’s Grace in case they turned back to Allah: it was a Guidance and Mercy.

1518. The Unbelievers were impelled by three powerful human motives of evil to resist Grace: (1) jealousy of other men; they said, “Why, you are no better than ourselves,” half perceiving the Prophet’s superiority, and half ignoring it; (2), contempt of the weak and lowly, who are often better intellectually, morally, and spiritually; they said, “We cannot believe or do what these fellows, our inferiors in social rank, believe or do!”; (3) arrogance and self-sufficiency, which is a vice cognate to (2), looked at from a different angle; they said, “We are really better than the lot of you!” Now the claim made on behalf of Allah’s Message attacked all these three attitudes. And all they could say against it was to abuse it impatiently, and call it a lie.
Obscured from your sight?\textsuperscript{1519}
Shall we compel you
To accept it when ye
Are averse to it?

29. "And O my People!
I ask you for no wealth
I return: my reward
Is from none but Allah:\textsuperscript{1520}
But I will not drive away
(In contempt) those who believe:
For verily they are
To meet their Lord, and ye
I see are the ignorant ones!

30. "And O my People!
Who would help me against Allah
If I drove them away?
Will ye not then take heed?\textsuperscript{1521}

31. "I tell you not that\textsuperscript{1522}
With me are the Treasures\textsuperscript{1523}

\textsuperscript{1519} Noah's answer (like that of the Prophet of Allah who spoke in later ages in Makkah and Madinah is a pattern of humility, gentleness, firmness, persuasiveness, truth, and love for his own people. First, he meekly (not exultingly) informs them that he has got a Message from Allah. Secondly, he tells them that it is a Message of Mercy even in its warning, though in their arrogance the Mercy may be hidden from them. Thirdly, he tells them plainly that there can be no compulsion in Religion: but will they not accept with goodwill what is for their own benefit? He pleads with them as one of their own.

\textsuperscript{1520} The fourth point in Noah's address meets their accusation that he was a liar, implying that he was serving some selfish end of his own: on the contrary, he says, he seeks no reward from them but will bear any insults they heap on him, for he looks to Allah rather men. But, fifthly if they insult the poor and needy who come to him in Faith, and think that he would send them away in order to attract the great ones of the land, he tells them plainly that they are mistaken. In fact, (sixthly), he has no hesitation in telling the blunt truth that they are the ignorant ones, and not the poor who came to seek Allah's Truth!

\textsuperscript{1521} But (seventhly) again he pleads, with as much earnestness as ever, that he is one of themselves, and just doing his truest duty. Would they have him do less? Indeed, would they not themselves see the Truth and come into the goodly company of Believers?

\textsuperscript{1522} The eighth point that Noah urges is that he is not a mere vulgar soothsayer pretending to reveal secrets not worth knowing, nor an angel living in another world, with no ties to them. He is their real well-wisher, delivering a true Message from Allah.

\textsuperscript{1523} Cf. vi. 50 and n. 867.
Of Allah, nor do I know
What is hidden,
Nor claim I to be
An angel. Nor yet
Do I say, of those whom
Your eyes do despise
That Allah will not grant them
(All) that is good:
Allah knoweth best
What is in their souls:
I should, if I did,
Indeed be a wrong-doer.”

32. They said: “O Noah!
Thou hast disputed with us,
And (much) hast thou prolonged
The dispute with us: now
Bring upon us what thou
Threatenest us with, if thou
Speakest the truth!”

33. He said: “Truly, Allah
Will bring it on you
If He wills—and then,
Ye will not be able
To frustrate it!”

1524. But Noah will not close his argument without defending the men of Faith, whom the Chiefs despise because they are lacking in worldly goods. He tells them plainly that Allah perhaps sees in them something in which they, the arrogant Chiefs, are lacking. Their spiritual faculties can only be appreciated truly by Him to Whom all the secrets of the spirit are open. But he, Noah, must declare boldly his own Faith, and this is the ninth point in his argument.

1525. To Noah’s address the worldly Chiefs give a characteristic reply. In its aggressive spirit it is the very antithesis of the gentle remonstrances of Noah. Because he had gently and patiently argued with them, they impatiently accuse him of “disputing with them” and “prolonging the dispute”. They are unable to deal with his points. So they arrogantly throw out their challenge, which is a compound of hectoring insolence, unreasoning scepticism, and biting irony. “You foretell disaster to us if we don’t mend our ways! Let us see you bring it on! Now, if you please! Or shall we have to call you a liar?”

1526. To the blasphemous challenge addressed to Noah his only answer could be: “I never claimed that I could punish you. All punishment is in the hands of Allah, and He knows best when His punishment will descend. But this I can tell you! His punishment is sure if you do not repent, and when it comes, you will not be able to ward it off!”
34. "Of no profit will be
My counsel to you,
Much as I desire
To give you (good) counsel,
If it be that Allah
Willeth to leave you astray.\textsuperscript{1527}
He is your Lord!
And to Him will ye return!"

35. Or do they say,
"He has forged it"? Say:
"If I had forged it,
On me were my sin!
And I am free
Of the sins of which
Ye are guilty!\textsuperscript{1528}

\textbf{SECTION 4.}

36. It was revealed to Noah:
"None of thy People will believe\textsuperscript{1529}
Except those who have believed
Already! So grieve no longer
Over their (evil) deeds.

\textsuperscript{1527} But Noah's heart bleeds for his people. They are preparing their own undoing! All his efforts are to be vain! Obstinate as they are, Allah's grace must be withdrawn, and then who can help them, and what use is any counsel? But again he will try to remind them of their Lord, and turn their face to Him. For their ultimate return to His judgment-seat is certain, to answer for their conduct.

\textsuperscript{1528} The fine narrative of dramatic power is here interrupted by a verse which shows that the story of Noah is also a Parable for the time and the ministry of Muhammad the Prophet. The wonderful force and aptness of the story cannot be denied. The enemy therefore turns and says. "Oh! but you invented it!" The answer is, "No! but it is Allah's own truth! You may be accustomed to dealing in falsehoods, but I protest that I am free from such sins." The place of this verse here corresponds to the place of verse 49 at the end of the next Section.

While understanding this verse to refer to Al-Mustafâ, as most of the accepted Commentators understand it, it is possible also, I think, to read it into the story of Noah, for all Prophets have similar experience.

\textsuperscript{1529} The story of Noah is resumed. A point was reached, when it was clear that there was no hope of saving the sinners, who were courting their own destruction. It was to be a great Flood. So Noah was ordered to construct a great Ark or Ship, a heavy vessel to remain afloat in the Flood, so that the righteous could be saved in it.
37. “But construct an Ark
Under Our eyes and Our Inspiration, and address Me
No (further) on behalf
Of those who are in sin:
For they are about to be Overwhelmed (in the Flood).”

38. Forthwith he (starts)
Constructing the Ark:
Every time that the Chiefs Of his People passed by him,
They threw ridicule on him.
He said: “If ye ridicule Us now, we (in our turn)
Can look down on you With ridicule likewise!”

39. “But soon will ye know
Who it is on whom Will descend a Chastisement That will cover them With shame,-on whom will be Unloosed a Chastisement lasting:”

40. At length, behold!
There came Our Command,

1530. It was to be built under the special instructions of Allah, to serve the special purpose it was intended to serve.

1531. The ridicule of the sinners, from their own point of view, was natural. Here was a Prophet turned carpenter! Here was a plain man in the higher reaches of the Mesopotamian basin, drained by the majestic Tigris, over 800 to 900 miles from the sea Arabian Gulf in a straight line! Yet he talks of a flood like the Sea! All material civilisations pride themselves on their Public Works and their drainage schemes. And here was a fellow relying on Allah! But did not their narrow pride seem ridiculous also to the Prophet of Allah! Here were men steeped in sin and insolence! And they pit themselves against the power and the promise of Allah! Truly a contemptible race is man!

1532. The Arabic Aorist may be construed either by the present tense or the future tense, and both make good sense here. Following Zamakhshari, I construe in the present tense, because the future is so tragic for the sinners. For the time being the worldly ones looked down on the Believers as they always do: but the Believers relied on Allah, and pitied their critics for knowing no better!—for their arrogance was really ridiculous.
And the fountains of the earth\textsuperscript{1533} Gushed forth! We said: "Embark therein, of each kind Two, male and female.\textsuperscript{1534} And your family—except Those against whom the Word Has already gone forth,—\textsuperscript{1535} And the Believers." But only a few Believed with him.

41. So he said: “Embark ye On the Ark In the name of Allah, Whether it move Or be at rest! For my Lord is, be sure, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!”

42. So the Ark sailed With them on the waves (Towering) like mountains,\textsuperscript{1536} And Noah called out To his son, who had Separated himself (from the rest):

\textsuperscript{1533} \textit{Fār-at-tunnūr}. Two interpretations have been given: (1) the fountains or the springs on the surface of the earth bubbled over or gushed forth; or (2) the oven boiled over. The former has the weight of the best authority behind it and I prefer it. Moreover, the same phrase occurs in xxiii. 27, where it is a clause coordinated (as here) with the coming of Allah’s Command. These two passages may be compared with liv. 11-12, where it is said that water poured forth from the skies and gushed forth from the springs. This double action is familiar to any one who has seen floods on a large scale. The rain from above would saturate the great Ararat Plateau, and give great force to the springs and fountains in the valley of the Tigris below.

\textsuperscript{1534} Zaujaini: the dual number refers to the two individuals in each pair of opposite sexes. Some of the most authoritative Commentators (e.g., Imām Rāzī) construe in this sense, though others construe it to mean two pairs of each species.

\textsuperscript{1535} A disobedient and recalcitrant son (or step-son or grandson) of Noah is mentioned below (xi. 42-43, 45-56). A member of the family, who breaks away from the traditions of the family in things that matter, ceases to share in the privileges of the family.

\textsuperscript{1536} The simile of mountains applies to the waves, which were mountain high,—literally, for the peaks were being submerged.
"O my son! embark With us, and be not With the Unbelievers!"

43. The son replied: "I will Betake myself to some mountain: It will save me from The water." Noah said: "This day nothing can save, From the Command of Allah, Any but those on whom He hath mercy!"— And the waves came Between them, and the son Was among those Who were drowned.

44. Then the word went forth: "O earth! swallow up Thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)!" And the water abated, And the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Jûdî, and the word

1537. The Unbelievers refuse to believe in Allah, but have great faith in material things! This young man was going to save himself on mountain peaks, not knowing that the peaks were themselves being submerged.

1538. A wonderful passage. The whole picture is painted in just a few words. The chain of material facts are linked together, not only in their relations to each other, but also in their relation to the spiritual forces that control them, and the spiritual consequences of Sin and wrong-doing. The drowning in the material sense was the least part of the Penalty. A whole new world came into existence after the Deluge.

1539. Let us get a little idea of the geography of the place. The letters J.B. and K are philologically interchangeable, and Jûdî, Gûdî, Kûdî are sounds that can pass into each other. There is no doubt that the name is connected with the name "Kûrdî", in which the letter r is a later interpolation, for the oldest Sumerian records name a people called Kûtî or Gütû as holding the middle Tigris region not later than 2000 B.C. (see E.B., Kurdistan). That region comprises the modern Turkish district of Bohtan, in which Jabal Jûdî is situated (near the frontiers of modern Turkey, modern 'Iraq, and modern Syria), and the town of Jazîrat ibn 'Umar, (on the present Turco-Syrian frontier), and it extends into 'Iraq and Persia. The great mountain mass of the Ararat plateau dominates this district. This mountain system "is unique in the Old World in containing great sheets of =
Went forth: “Away
With those who do wrong!”

45. And Noah called upon
His Lord and said:
“O my Lord! surely
My son is of my family
And Thy promise is true,
And Thou art
The Justest of Judges!”

46. He said: “O Noah!
He is not of thy family:
For his conduct is unrighteous.
So ask not of Me
That of which thou
Hast no knowledge!
I give thee counsel, lest
Thou become one of the ignorants!”

47. Noah said: “O my Lord!
I do seek refuge with Thee,
From asking Thee for that
Of which I have no knowledge
And unless Thou forgive me
And have Mercy on me,

= water that are bitter lakes without outlets. Lake Van and Lake Urumiya being the chief” (E.B., Asia). Such would be the very region for a stupendous Deluge if the usual scanty rainfall were to be changed into a very heavy downpour. A glacier damming of Lake Van in the Ice Age would have produced the same result. The region has many local traditions connected with Noah and the Flood. The Biblical legend of Mount Ararat being the resting place of Noah’s Ark is hardly plausible, seeing that the highest peak of Ararat is over 16,000 feet high. If it means one of the lower-peaks of the Ararat system, it agrees with the Muslim tradition about Mount Judi (or Güdi), and this is in accordance with the oldest and best local traditions. These traditions are accepted by Josephus, by the Nestorian Christians, and indeed by all the Eastern Christians and Jews, and they are the best in touch with local traditions. See (Viscount) J. Bryce, “Transcaucasia and Ararat,” 4th ed., 1896. p. 216.

1540. See n. 5135 above. Like all Prophets of Allah, Noah was kind-hearted, but he is told that there can be no compromise with evil. And Noah acknowledges the reproof. There was a wife of Noah, who was also an unbelieving woman (lxvi. 10), and she suffered the fate of Unbelievers.
48. The word came: "O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) With Peace from Us, And Blessing on thee And on some of the Peoples (Who will spring) from those With thee: but (there will be Other) Peoples to whom We Shall grant their pleasures (For a time), but in the end Will a grievous Chastisement Reach them from Us." 

49. Such are some of the stories Of the Unseen, which We Have revealed unto thee: Before this, neither thou Nor thy People knew them. So persevere patiently: For the End is for those Who are righteous.

1541. Noah, in his natural affection and respect for ties of relationship, was overcome with human weakness in wishing to reverse the Decree of Allah. It was not sin but ignorance. His ignorance was corrected by divine inspiration, and he immediately saw the full Truth, acknowledged his error, and asked for Allah's forgiveness and mercy. This is the standard set for us all.

1542. Cf. ii. 126.

1543. Those who truly seek Allah's light and guidance and sincerely bend their will to His Will are freely admitted to Allah's grace. Notwithstanding any human weaknesses in them, they are advanced higher in the stage on account of their Faith, Trust, and Striving after Right. They are given Allah's Peace, which gives the soul true calmness and strength, and all the blessings that flow from spiritual life. This was given not only to Noah and his family but to all the righteous people who were saved with him. And their descendents were also promised those blessings on condition of righteousness. But some of them fell from grace, as we know in history. Allah's grace is not a social or family privilege. Each people and each individual must earnestly strive for it and earn it.

1544. Cf. n. 1528 to xi. 35. The sum of the whole matter is that the righteous, who work for Allah and their fellow-men, may be traduced, insulted, and persecuted. But they will be sustained by Allah's Mercy. They must go on working patiently, for the End will all be for them and their Cause.
SECTION 5.

50. To the ‘Ad People
(We sent) Hūd, one
Of their own brethren.
He said: “O my people!
Worship Allah! ye have
No other god but Him.¹⁵⁴⁵
You are only forgers.

51. “O my people! I ask of you
No reward for this (Message).
My reward is from none
But Him who created me:
Will ye not then understand?

52. “And O my people! Ask
Forgiveness of your Lord,
And turn to Him (in repentance):
He will send you the skies¹⁵⁴⁶
Pouring abundant rain,
And add strength
To your strength:¹⁵⁴⁷

¹⁵⁴⁵. Cf. the story of Hūd the Messenger of the ‘Ad People, in vii. 65-72. There the argument was how other Peoples treated their prophets as the Makkans were treating Al-Muṣṭafā. Here we see another point emphasized: the insolence of the ‘Ad in obstinately adhering to false gods after the true God had been preached to them, Allah’s grace to them, and finally Allah’s justice in bringing them to book while the righteous were saved.

The locality in which the ‘Ad flourished is indicated in n. 1040 to vii. 65.

¹⁵⁴⁶. The beautiful metaphor about the skies coming down with rain has been obscured unnecessarily in most translations. The country of the ‘Ad was an arid country, and rain was the greatest blessing they could receive. We can imagine this being said in a time of famine, when the people performed all sorts of superstitious rites and invocations instead of turning to the true God in faith and repentance. Further, when we remember that there were, in this tract in ancient times, dams like that at Ma‘ārib, for the storage of rain water, the effect is still further heightened in pointing to Allah’s care and mercy in His dealing with men.

¹⁵⁴⁷. Adding strength to strength may refer to increase of population, as some Commentators think. While other parts of Arabia were sparsely populated, the irrigated lands of the ‘Ad supported a comparatively dense population and added to their natural strength in the arts of peace and war. But the term used is perfectly general. They were a powerful people in their time. If they obeyed Allah and followed the law of righteousness, they would be still more powerful, for “righteousness exalteth a nation.”
So turn ye not back
In sin!’

53. They said: “O Hūd!
No Clear (Sign) hast thou
Brought us, and we are not
The ones to desert our gods
On thy word! Nor shall we
Believe in thee!”

54. “We say nothing but that
(Perhaps) some of our gods
May have seized thee
With evil.” He said:
“I call Allah to witness,
And do ye bear witness,
That I am free from the sin
Of ascribing, to Him,

55. “Other gods as partners!
So scheme (your worst) against me,
All of you, and give me
No respite.”

56. “I put my trust in Allah,
My Lord and your Lord!
There is not a moving
Creature, but He hath

1548. The argument of the Unbelievers is practically this: “We are not convinced by you: we don’t want to be convinced: we think you are a liar,—or perhaps a fool!” (See next verse).

1549. See n. 1548 above. Continuing their argument, the Unbelievers make a show of making all charitable allowances for Hūd, but in reality cut him to the quick by bringing in their false gods. “To be quite polite,” said they, “we will not say that you are exactly a liar! Perhaps you have been touched with imbecility! Ah yes! You rail against what you call our false gods! Some of them have paid you out, and made you a fool! Ha! ha!” This mockery is even worse than their other false accusations. For it sets up false gods against the One True God, even in dealing with Hūd. So Hūd replies, with spirit and indignation: “At least keep Allah’s name out of your futile talk! You know as well as I do, that I worship the One True God! You pretend that your false gods can smite a true Prophet of Allah! I accept the challenge. Scheme and plot against me as you may, all of you—you and your gods! See if you have any power! I ask for no quarter from you! My trust is in Allah!”

57. "If ye turn away,—
   I (at least) have conveyed
   The Message with which I
   Was sent to you. My Lord
   Will make another People
   To succeed you, and you
   Will not harm Him
   In the least. For my Lord
   Hath care and watch
   Over all things."

58. So when Our decree
    Issued, We saved Hûd
    And those who believed
    With him, by (special) Grace
    From Us: We saved them
    From a severe Chastisement.

59. Such were the 'Ad People:
    They rejected the Signs
    Of their Lord and Cherisher;
    Disobeyed His Messengers;

1551. Grasp of the fore-lock; an Arabic idiom, referring to a horse's fore-lock. The man who grasps it has complete power over the horse, and for the horse the fore-lock is as it were the crown of his beauty, the sum of his power of self-assertion. So Allah's power over all creatures is unlimited and no one can withstand His decree. Cf. xcvi. 15-16.

1552. That is, the standard of all virtue and righteousness is in the Will of Allah, the Universal Will that controls all things in goodness and justice. You are on a crooked Path. Allah's Path is a straight Path.

1553. Hûd was dealing with a people of pride and obstinate rebellion. He tells them that their conduct will only recoil on themselves. It can do no harm to Allah or in any way frustrate the beneficent Plan of Allah. He will only put some other people in their place to carry out His Plan. That Plan is referred to in the next sentence as "care and watch" over all his Creation.

1554. A few just men might suffer for the iniquities of the many. But Allah's Plan is perfect and eventually saves His own people by special Grace, if they have Faith and Trust in Him.
And followed the command
Of every powerful, obstinate
Transgressor. 1555

60. And they were pursued
By a Curse in this Life,—
And on the Day of Judgment.
Ah! Behold! For the ‘Ad
Rejected their Lord and Cherisher!
Away with
‘Ad the People of Hûd!

SECTION 6.

61. To the Thamûd People
(We sent) Sâlih, one
Of their own brethren 1556
He said: “O my People!
Worship Allah: ye have
No other God but Him.
It is He Who hath produced you 1557
From the earth and settled you
Therein: then ask forgiveness

1555. Instead of following the beneficent Lord who cherished them, they followed
every rebel against Allah’s Law, if he only obtained a little power to dazzle them.

1556. The story of Sâlih and the Thamûd people has been told from another point
of view in vii. 73-79. The difference in the point of view there and here is the same as
in the story of Hûd: see n. 1545 to xi. 50. Note how the story now is the same, and
yet new points and details are brought out to illustrate each new argument. Note, also,
how the besetting sin of the ‘Ad—pride and obstinacy—is distinguished from the besetting
sin of the Thamûd—the oppression of the poor, as illustrated by the test case and symbol
of the She-camel: see n. 1044 to vii. 73. All sin is in a sense pride and rebellion; yet
sins take particular hues in different circumstances, and these colours are brought out as
in a most artistically painted picture—with the greatest economy of words and the most
piercing analysis of motives. For the locality and history of the Thamûd see n. 1043
to vii. 73.

1557. For Anshaa as process of creation see n. 923 to vi. 98 and the further
references given there. As to his body, man has been produced from earth or clay, and
his settlement on earth is a fact of his material existence. Therefore we must conform
to all the laws of our physical being, in order that through our life on this earth we may
develop that higher Life which belongs to the other part of our being, our spiritual
heritage. Through the use we make of our health, of our tilth, of our pastures, of material
facts of all kinds, will develop our moral and spiritual nature.
62. They Said: "O Šāliḥ!
Thou hast been of us!—
A centre of our hopes
Hitherto! Dost thou (now)
Forbid us the worship
Of what our fathers worshipped?
But we are really
In suspicious (disquieting)
Doubt as to that to which
Thou invitest us."

63. He said: "O my people!
Do ye see?—If I have
A Clear (Sign) from my Lord
And He hath sent Mercy
Unto me from Himself,—who
Then can help me
Against Allah if I were
To disobey Him? What
Then would ye add
To my (portion) but perdition?

64. "And O my people!
This she-camel of Allah is

Of Him, and turn to Him
(In repentance): for my Lord
Is (always) near, ready
To answer."

62. 1558. Šāliḥ's life with his people has been so righteous (like that of al-Amin in later times) that he might have been chosen leader or king if he had only conformed to their superstitions and supported their sins. But he was born for a higher mission—that of a preacher of truth and righteousness and an ardent opponent of selfish privilege and a champion of the rights of humanity on Allah's free earth by the symbol of the she-camel: see n. 1044 to vii. 73.

63. 1559. "Allah has been good to me and bestowed on me His light and the inestimable privilege of carrying His mission to you. Don't you see that if I fail to carry out his mission. I shall have to answer before Him? Who can help me in that case? The only thing which you can add to may misfortunes would be total perdition in the Hereafter." Cf. xi. 28.
A sign to you:  
Leave her to feed
On Allah's (free) earth,
And inflict no harm
On her, or a swift Punishment
Will seize you!"

65. But they did ham-string her.
So he said: "Enjoy yourselves
In your homes for three days:
(Then will be your ruin):
(Behold) there a promise
Not to be belied!"

66. When Our Decree issued,
We saved Sāliḥ and those
Who believed with him,
By (special) Grace from Us—
And from the Ignominy
Of that Day. For thy Lord—
He is the Strong One, and
The Mighty.

67. The (mighty) Blast overtook
The wrong-doers, and they
Lay prostrate in their homes
Before the morning.—

1560. Sāliḥ does not merely take up a negative attitude. He puts forward the she-camel as a sign see n. 1044 to vii. 73. "Give up your selfish monopoly. Make Allah's gifts on this free earth available to all. Give the poor their rights, including grazing rights on common lands. Show your penitence and your new attitude by leaving this she-camel to graze freely. She is a Symbol, and therefore sacred to you. "But their only reply was to defy the appeal and ham-string the camel. And so they went the way of all sinners—to total perdition.

1561. Just three days' time for further thought and repentance! But they paid no heed. A terrible earthquake came by night, preceded by a mighty rumbling blast (probably volcanic), such as is well-known in earthquake areas. It came by night and buried them in their own fortress homes, which they thought such places of security! The morning found them lying on their faces hidden from the light. How the mighty were brought low!

1562. Cf. xi. 58 above and n. 1554. For 'Azīz, see n. 2818 to xxi 40.

1563. Cf. xi 78 and n. 1047,—also n. 1561 above.
68. As if they had never
Dwelt and flourished there.
Ah! Behold! For the Thamúd
Rejected their Lord and Cherisher!
So away with the Thamúd.\textsuperscript{1564}

SECTION 7.

69. There came Our Messengers
To Abraham with glad tidings.
They said, "Peace!" He answered,
"Peace!" and hastened
To entertain them
With a roasted calf.\textsuperscript{1565}

70. But when he saw
Their hands not reaching
Towards the (meal), he felt
Some mistrust of them,
And conceived a fear of them.\textsuperscript{1565-A}
They said: "Fear not:

\textsuperscript{1564} Cf. xi. 60 above.

\textsuperscript{1565} According to the sequence of Sūra vii, the next reference should be to the story of Lúṯ, and that story commences at xi. 77 below, but it is introduced by a brief reference to an episode in the life of his uncle Abraham, from whose seed sprang the peoples to whom Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafá were sent with the major Revelations. Abraham had by this time passed through the fire of persecutions in the Mesopotamian valleys: he had left behind him the ancestral idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees; he had been tried and he had triumphed over the persecution of Nimrúd: he had now taken up his residence in Canaan, from which his nephew Lot (Lúṯ) was called to preach to the wicked Cities of the Plain east of the Dead sea which is itself called Bahr Lúṯ. Thus prepared and sanctified, he was now ready to receive the Message that he was chosen to be the progenitor of a great line of Prophets, and that Message is now referred to.

Can we localise Nimrúd? If local tradition in place-names can be relied upon, this king must have ruled over the tract which includes the modern Nimrúd, on the Tigris, about twenty miles south of Mosul. This is the site of Assyrian ruins of great interest, but the rise of Assyria as an Empire was of course much later than the time of Abraham. The Assyrian city was called Kalakh (or Calah), and archaeological excavations carried out there have yielded valuable results, which are however irrelevant for our Commentary.

\textsuperscript{1565-A} Abraham received the strangers with a salutation of Peace, and immediately placed before them a sumptuous meal of roasted calf. The strangers were embarrassed. They were angels and did not eat. If hospitality is refused, it means that those who refuse =
We have been sent
Against the people of Lūṭ.  1566

71. And his wife was standing
(There), and she laughed:  1567
But We gave her
Glad tidings of Isaac,
And after him, of Jacob.

72. She said: “Alas for me!  1568
Shall I bear a child,
Seeing I am an old woman,
And my husband here
Is an old man?
That would indeed
Be a wonderful thing!”

73. They said: “Dost thou
Wonder at Allah’s decree?
The grace of Allah
And His blessings on you,
O ye people of the house!  1569
For He is indeed
Worthy of all praise,

---

it meditate no good to the would be host. Abraham therefore had a feeling of mistrust and fear in his mind, which the strangers at once set at rest by saying that their mission was in the first place to help Lūṭ as a warner to the Cities of Plain. But in the second place they had good news for Abraham: he was to be the father of great peoples!

1566. The people of Lūṭ means the people to whom Lūṭ was sent on his mission of warning, the people of the wicked Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah.

1567. The narrative is very concise, and most of the details are taken for granted. We may suppose that the angels gave the news first to Abraham, who was already, according to Gen. xxi. 5, a hundred years of age, and his wife Sarah was not far short of ninety (Gen. xvii. 7). She was probably screened. She could hardly believe the news. In her scepticism (some say in her joy) she laughed. But the news was formally communicated to her that she was to be the mother of Isaac, and through Isaac, the grandmother of Jacob. Jacob was to be a fruitul tree, with his twelve sons. But hitherto Abraham had had no son by her, and Sarah was past the age of child-bearing. “How could it be?” she thought.

1568. This is as much a sigh of past regrets as of future wistfulness!

1569. Ahl-ul-bait = people of the house, a polite form of addressing the wife and members of the family. Blessings are here invoked on the whole family.
Full of all glory!" 1570

74. When fear had passed
   From (the mind of) Abraham
   And the glad tidings 1571
   Had reached him, he
   Began to plead with Us
   For Lūt's people.

75. For Abraham was,
   Without doubt, forbearing
   (Of faults), compassionate,
   And given to penitence. 1572

76. O Abraham! Seek not this.
   The decree of thy Lord
   Hath gone forth: for them
   There cometh a Chastisement
   That cannot be turned back! 1573

77. When Our Messengers
   Came to Lūt, he was
   Grieved on their account
   And felt himself powerless
   (To protect) them. He said:

1570. This little episode of Abraham's life comes in fitly as one of the illustrations of Allah's wonderful providence in His dealings with man. Abraham had had a tussle with his father on behalf of Truth and Unity (vi. 74); he had passed through the fire unscathed (xxi. 68-69); he had travelled to far countries, and was now ready to receive his great mission as the fountain-head of prophets in his old age. Humanly speaking it seemed impossible that he should have a son at his age, and yet it came to pass and became a corner-stone of sacred history.

1571. Glad-tidings: not only that he was to have a son, but that he was to be a fountain-head of prophets. So he now begins to plead at once for the sinful people to whom Lot was sent as a Warner.

1572. Like Al-Muṣṭafā, Abraham had three qualities in a pre-eminent degree, which are here mentioned: (1) he was long-suffering with other people's faults: (2) his sympathies and compassion were very wide: and (3) for every difficulty or trouble he turned to Allah and sought Him in prayer.

1573. This is a sort of prophetic apostrophe. 'O Abraham! All your warning, O Lūt, will be unheeded! Alas! they are so deep in sin that nothing will reclaim them!' This is illustrated in verse 79 below. And now we proceed to Lūt and how he was dealt with by the wicked.
"This is a distressful day."  

78. And his people came
Rushing towards him,
And they had been long
In the habit of practising
Abominations. He said:
"O my people! Here are
My daughters: they are purer
For you (if ye marry)!"
Now fear Allah, and cover me not
With disgrace about my guests!
Is there not among you
A single right-minded man?"

79. They said: "Well dost thou
Know we have no need
Of thy daughters: indeed
Thou knowest quite well
What we want!"

80. He said: "Would that I
Had power to suppress you
Or that I could betake
Myself to some powerful support".

1574. The story of Lot, as referred to in vii. 80-84, laid emphasis on the rejection of Lot’s mission by men who practised unnatural abominations. See n. 1049 to vii. 80. Here the emphasis is laid on Allah’s dealings with men—in mercy for true spiritual service and in righteous wrath and punishment for those who defy the laws of nature established by Him;—also on men’s dealings with each other and the contrast between the righteous and the wicked who respect no laws human or divine.

1575. The Biblical narrative suggests that the daughters were married and their husbands were close by (Gen. xix. 14) and that these same daughters afterwards committed incest with their father and had children by him (Gen. xix. 31). The holy Qur-an nowhere suggests such abominations. Some Commentators suggest that “my daughters” in the mouth of a venerable man like Lût, the father of his people, may mean any young girls of those Towns. “My son” (waladit) is still a common mode of address in Arabic-speaking countries when an elderly man addresses a young man.

1576. Lot seemed helpless in the situation in which he found himself,—alone against a rabble of people inflamed with evil passions. He wished he had had the strength to suppress them himself or had had some powerful support to lean on! But the powerful support was there, though he had not realised it till then. It was the support of Allah. His guests were not ordinary men, but Angels who had come to test the people before
81. (The Messengers) said: "O Lût! We are Messengers from thy Lord! By no means shall they reach thee! Now travel with thy family while yet a part of the night remains, and let not any of you look back: but thy wife (Will remain behind): to her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed: is not the morning nigh?"

82. When Our decree issued, we turned (the cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer.—

83. Marked from thy Lord.

they inflicted the punishment. They now declared themselves, and gave him directions to get away before the morning, when the punishment would descend on the doomed Cities of the Plain.

1577. Even in Lot's household was one who detracted from the harmony of the family. She was disobedient to her husband, and he was here obeying Allah's Command. She looked back and shared the fate of the wicked inhabitants of the Cities of the Plain: see also lxvi. 10. The Biblical narrative suggests that she was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. xix. 26).

1578. Cf. vii. 84 and n. 1052.

1579. Sijjil, a Persian word Arabicised, from Sang-o-gil, or Sang-i-gil, stone and clay, or hard as baked clay, according to the Qâmûs. Sodom and Gomorrah were in a tract of hard, caky, sulphurous soil, to which this description well applies. Cf. li. 33, where the words are "stones of clay" (hijârat min țîn) in connection with the same incident. On the other hand, in ev. 4, the word sijjil is used for pellets of hard-baked clay in connection with Abraha and the Companions of the Elephant.

1580. If we take the words literally, they would mean that the showers of brimstones were marked with the destiny of the wicked as decreed by Allah.
Nor are they ever far
From those who do wrong!

SECTION 8.

84. To the Madyan people
(We sent) Shu’aib, one
Of their own brethren: he said:
"O my people! worship Allah:
Ye have no other god
But Him. And give not
Short measure or weight:
I see you in prosperity,
But I fear for you
The Chastisement of a Day
That will compass (you) all round.

85. “And O my people! give
Just measure and weight,
Nor withhold from the people
The things that are their due:
Commit not evil in the land
With intent to do mischief.

1581. They: Arabic, hiya: some Commentators take the pronoun to refer to the wicked cities so destroyed: the meaning then would be: those wicked cities were not so different from other cities that do wrong, for they would all suffer similar punishment! Perhaps it would be better to refer “they” to the stones of punishment by a metonymy for “punishment”: ‘punishment would not be far from any people that did wrong.’

1582. Cf. vii. 85-93. The location of Madyan is explained in n. 1053 to vii. 85 and the chronological place of Shu’aib in n. 1064 to vii. 93. The point of the reference here is different from that in S. vii. Here the emphasis is on Allah’s dealings with men and men’s crooked and obstinate ways: there the emphasis was rather on their treatment of their Prophet, thus throwing light on some of the sins of the Makkans in later times.

1583. The Midianites were a commercial people, and their besetting sin was commercial selfishness and fraudulent dealings in weights and measures. Their Prophet tells them that that is the surest way to cut short their “prosperity”, both in the material and the spiritual sense. When the Day of Judgment comes, it will search out their dealings through and through: “it will compass them all round,” and they will not be able to escape then, however much they may conceal their frauds in this world.

1584. Both Plato and Aristotle define justice as the virtue which gives every one his due. From this point of view Justice becomes the master virtue, and includes most other virtues. It was the lack of this that ruined the Midianites. Their selfishness was “intent on mischief,” i.e., spoiling other people’s business by not giving them their just dues.
86. ‘That which is left you
By Allah is best for you, 1585
If ye (but) believed!
But I am not set
Over you to keep watch!’

87. They said: ‘O Shu’ait!
Does thy prayer
Command thee that we
Leave off the worship which
Our fathers practised, or
That we leave off doing
What we like with our property? 1586
Truly, thou art the one
That forbeareth with faults
And is right-minded!’ 1587

88. He said: ‘O my people!
See ye whether I have
A Clear (Sign) from my Lord,
And He hath given me
Sustenance (pure and) good 1588
As from Himself? I wish not,

1585. Allah’s Law does not require that a man should deprive himself of the things that are necessary for his own well-being and development. If he follows Allah’s Law, what is left him after he renders to others their just due will be not only enough, but will be the best possible provision for his own physical and spiritual growth. Even the kindness and consideration which Allah’s Law inculcates are in the best interests of the man’s own soul. But of course the kindness and consideration must be spontaneous. It must flow from the man’s own will, and cannot be forced on him by the Prophet who come from Allah to show him the way.

1586. It is the way of selfish and material minded people (1) to scoff at spiritual things like prayer and worship and (2) to hug their own property rights as if there were not other rights even greater than those of property!

1587. They grow sarcastic against Shu’ait. In effect they say: “You are a fine man! You teach us that we must be kind and forbearing with other people’s faults, and now get at what you call our sins! You think you are the only right minded man!”

1588. Shu’ait’s answer is gentle and persuasive. First, he would ask them not to fly into a passion but satisfy themselves that he had a mission from Allah, and was working in the discharge of his mission: he was not merely finding fault with them. Secondly, though he was a poor man, he asked them to note that he was happy and comfortable: Allah had given him good sustenance, material and spiritual, as from Himself, though he
In opposition to you, to do
That which I forbid you to do.
I only desire (your) betterment
To the best of my power;
And my success (in my task)
Can only come from Allah.
In Him I trust,
And unto Him I turn.

89. “And O my people!
Let not my dissent (from you)\textsuperscript{1589}
Cause you to sin,
Lest ye suffer
A fate similar to that
Of the people of Noah
Or of Hûd or of Šâlih,
Nor are the people of Lût
Far off from you!\textsuperscript{1590}

90. “But ask forgiveness
Of your Lord, and turn
Unto Him (in repentance):
For my Lord is indeed
Full of mercy and loving-kindness.”

91. They said: “O Shu’aib!
Much of what thou sayest

\textsuperscript{1589} did not resort to the sort of tricks which they considered necessary for their prosperity. Thirdly, if he forbade them anything he wished to apply the same standards to himself. Fourthly, all the advice which he is giving them is for their own good, which he desires to advance to the utmost of his powers. Fifthly, he is humble for himself; he would not set himself up to be their teacher or guide, or expect to be obeyed; the success of any of his efforts on their behalf must come from Allah’s grace; will they not therefore turn to Allah, so that Allah’s grace can heal them?

\textsuperscript{1590} Finally, Shu’aib appeals to them as man to man. “Because I differ from you, do not think I do not love you or feel for you. Let it not drive you into obstinacy and sin. I see things that you do not. My vision takes in the fate of previous generations who sinned, and perished on account of their sins. Turn therefore to Allah in repentance.”

\textsuperscript{1590} The generation of Lût was not far off from the generation of Shu’aib chronologically if Shu’aib was only in the fourth generation from Abraham (see n. 1064 to vii. 93). Nor was its habitat geographically far from that of Shu’aib, as the Midianites wandered about from Sinai Peninsula to the Jordan valley (see n. 1053 to vii. 85).
We do not understand! 1591
In fact among us we see
That thou hast no strength!
Were it not for thy family,
We should certainly
Have stoned thee!
For thou hast among us
No great position! 1592

92. He said: “O my people!
Is then my family
Of more consideration with you
Than Allah? For ye cast Him
Away behind your backs
(With contempt). But verily
My Lord encompasseth
All that ye do! 1593

93. “And O my people
Do whatever ye can:
I will do (my part). 1594
Soon will ye know
Who it is on whom
Descends the Chastisement
Of ignominy, and who
Is a liar!
And watch ye!
For I too am watching
With you!” 1595

1591. Spiritual things are easy to understand if we bring the right mind to them. But those who are contemptuous of them deliberately shut their eyes to Allah's Signs, and then pretend in their superior arrogance that they are ‘quite beyond them’!

1592. What they do understand is brute strength. They practically say: “Don't you see that we have all the power and influence, and you, Shu'aib, are only a poor Teacher? We could stone you or imprison you or do what we like with you! Thank us for our kindness that we spare you—, for the sake of your family. It is more than you yourself deserve!”

1593. Cf. viii. 47.

1594. Cf. vi. 135 and n. 957.

1595. If the wicked will continue to blaspheme and mock, what can the godly say but this?—“Watch and wait! Allah’s Plan works without fail! I have faith, and I too will watch with you for its fulfilment.” Cf. x 102, and n. 1484.
94. When Our decree issued, We saved Shu‘aib and those Who believed with him, By (special) Mercy from Us.
But the (mighty) Blast did seize The wrong-doers, and they Lay prostrate in their homes By the morning.

95. As if they had never Dwelt and flourished there!
So away with Madyan As were Thamūd gone away.

SECTION 9.

96. And we sent Moses, With our Clear (signs) And an authority manifest,

97. Unto Pharaoh and his Chiefs: But they followed the Command Of Pharaoh, and the command Of Pharaoh was not rightly guided.

98. He will go before his people On The Day of Judgment,

1596. Cf. xi. 66 and xi. 58, n. 1554.

1597. Cf. xi. 67-68. The blast was probably the tremendous noise which accompanies volcanic eruptions.

1598. The story of Moses and Pharaoh is referred to in many places in the Qur-ān, each in connection with some special point to be illustrated. Here the point is that Allah’s dealings with man are in all things and at all times just. But man falls under false leadership by deliberate choice and perishes along with his false leaders accordingly. In exercise of the intelligence and choice given him, man should be particularly careful to understand his own responsibilities and to profit from Allah’s Signs, so as to attain to Allah’s Mercy and blessings.

1599. Pharaoh is the type of the arrogant, selfish, and false leader, who poses as a power in rivalry with that of Allah. Such an attitude seems to attract unregenerate humanity, which falls a willing victim, in spite of the teaching and warning given by the men of Allah and the many moral and spiritual forces that beckon man towards Allah’s Grace.
And lead them into the Fire\(^{1600}\)
But woeful indeed will be
The place to which they are led!

99. And they are followed
By a curse in this (life)
And on the Day of Judgment:
And woeful is the gift
Which shall be given
(Unto them)!

100. These are some of the stories
Of communities which We
Relate unto thee: of them
Some are standing,\(^{1601}\) and some
Have been mown down
(By the sickle of time).\(^{1602}\)

101. It was not We that wronged them:
They wronged their own souls:
The deities, other than Allah,
Whom they invoked, profited them
No whit when there issued
The decree of thy Lord:\(^{1603}\)
Nor did they add aught
(To their lot) but perdition!

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1600. *Awruḍa* = to lead, as cattle, down to their watering place. The metaphor is apt. The true herdsman is trusted by his normal flock, and he leads them in the heat of the day down to pleasant and cool watering places in order that they may slake their thirst and be happy. The false leader does the opposite: he takes them down to the fire of eternal misery! And yet men sin against their own intelligence, and follow the false leader like cattle without intelligence!

1601. *Some are standing*: like corn, which is ready to be reaped. Among the communities which remained was, and is, Egypt, although the Pharaoh and his wicked people have been swept away. The simile of standing corn also suggests that at no time can town or community expect permanency, except in the Law of the Lord.

1602. Nations grow and ripen and are mown down. If they disobeyed Allah, their end is evil; if they were true and godly, their harvest was good.

1603. All false and fleeting shadows must vanish before the reality and permanence of the decree of Allah. If we worshipped the false, we earned nothing but perdition.
102. Such is the chastisement
Of thy Lord when He chastises
Communities in the midst of
Their wrong: grievous, indeed,
And severe is His chastisement.

103. In that is a Sign
For those who fear
The Chastisement of the Hereafter;
That is a Day for which mankind
Will be gathered together:
That will be a Day
Of Testimony. 

104. Nor shall We delay it
But for a term appointed.

105. The day it arrives,
No soul shall speak 
Except by His leave:
Of those (gathered) some
Will be wretched and some
Will be blessed.

106. Those who are wretched
Shall be in the Fire:
There will be for them

1604. Yaumun mashhûd: To suggest the comprehensive meaning of the Arabic I have translated, "a Day of Testimony". I proceed to explain the various shades of meaning implied: (1) a Day to which all testimony points from every quarter; (2) a Day when testimony will be given before Allah's Judgment-seat, by all who are relevant witnesses, e.g., the Prophets that preached, the men or women we benefited or injured, the angels who recorded our thoughts and deeds, or our thoughts and deeds personified; (3) a Day which will be witnessed, i.e., seen by all, no matter how or where they died.

1605. Speak i.e., either in self-defence or in accusation of others or to intercede for others, or to enter into conversation or ask questions, one with another. It will be a solemn Day, before the Great Judge of all, to whom everything will be known and whose authority will be unquestioned. There will be no room for quibbling or equivocation or subterfuge of any kind, nor can any one lay the blame on another or take the responsibility of another. Personal responsibility will be enforced strictly.

1606. Shaqi (wretched) and Sa'id (blessed) have become almost technical theological terms. They are explained in the four following verses.
1607. The first word, Zafir, translated "sighs", is applied to one part in the process of the braying of an ass, when he emits a deep breath. The second, Shahiq, translated "sobs", is the other process in the braying of an ass, when he draws in a long breath. This suggestion of an animal proverbial for his folly implies that the wicked, in spite of their arrogance and insolence in this world below, will at last realise that they have been fools after all, throwing away their own chances whenever they got them. In lxvii. 7 the word Shahiq is applied to the tremendous roaring in-take or devouring of Hell-fire.

1608. Khālidin: This is the word which is usually translated "dwell for ever" or "dwell for aye". Here it is definitely connected with two conditions, viz: (1) as long as the heavens and the earth endure, and (2) except as Allah wills. Some Muslim theologians deduce from this the conclusion that the penalties referred to are not eternal, because the heavens and the earth as we see them are not eternal, and the punishments for the deeds of a life that will end should not be such as will never end. The majority of Muslim theologians reject this view. They hold that the heavens and the earth here referred to are not those we see now, but others that will be eternal. They agree that Allah’s Will is unlimited in scope and power, but that It has willed that the rewards and punishments of the Day of Judgment will be eternal.

1609. Exactly the same arguments apply as in the last note.

1610. The felicity will be uninterrupted, unlike any joy or happiness which we can imagine in this life and which is subject to chances and changes, as our daily experience shows.
Worship. They worship nothing\textsuperscript{1611} But what their fathers worshipped Before (them): but verily We shall pay them back (In full) their portion\textsuperscript{1612} Without (the least) abatement.

SECTION 10.

110. We certainly gave the Book To Moses, but differences Arose therein: had it not been That a Word had gone forth Before from thy Lord the matter Would have been decided\textsuperscript{1613} Between them: but they Are in suspicious doubt Concerning it.\textsuperscript{1614}

111. And, of a surety, to all Will your Lord pay back (In full the recompense) Of their deeds: for He Knoweth well all that they do.\textsuperscript{1615}

\textsuperscript{1611} Their worship is not based on any spiritual attitude of mind. They merely follow the ways of their fathers.

\textsuperscript{1612} Allah will take fully into account all their motives in such mummery as they call worship, and they will have their full spiritual consequences in the future.

\textsuperscript{1613} Cf. x. 19. Previous revelations are not to be denied or dishonourred because those who nominally go by them have corrupted and deprived them of spiritual value by their vain controversies and disputes. It was possible to settle such disputes under the flag, as it were, of the old Revelations, but Allah’s Plan was to revive and rejuvenate His Message through Islam, amongst a newer and younger people, unhindered by the burden of age long prejudices.

\textsuperscript{1614} Cf. xi. 62. There is always in human affairs the conflict between the old and the new,—the worn-out system of our ancestors, and the fresh living spring of Allah’s inspiration fitting in with new times and new surroundings. The advocates of the former look upon this latter not only with intellectual doubt but with moral suspicion, as did the People of the Book upon Islam, with its fresh outlook and vigorous realistic way of looking at things.

\textsuperscript{1615} Cf. xi. 109 above, with which the argument is now connected up by recalling the characteristic word (“pay back”) and leading to the exhortation (in the verses following) to stand firm in the right path freshly revealed.
112. Therefore stand firm (in the straight Path) as thou art commanded. Thou and those who with thee Turn (unto Allah); and transgress not (From the Path): for He seeth Well all that ye do.

113. And incline not to those Who do wrong, or the Fire Will touch you; and ye have No protectors other than Allah, Nor shall ye be helped.

114. And establish regular prayers At the two ends of the day And at the approaches of the night: For those things that are good Remove those that are evil. That is a reminder For the mindful

1616. The two ends of the day: Morning and afternoon. The morning prayer is the Fajr, after the light is up but before sunrise: we thus get up betimes and begin the day with the remembrance of Allah and of our duty to Him. The early afternoon prayer, Zuhr, is immediately after noon: we are in the midst of our daily life, and again we remember Allah. There is no disagreement among scholars regarding which prayer is meant by one of these two ends of the day. They agree that it is Fajr prayer which may be performed from dawn until a little before sunrise. There is disagreement, however, regarding the prayer which ought to be performed at the other end of the day. It is said variously that the reference is to Asr or Maghrib prayer.

1617. Approaches of the night: Zulafun, plural of Zulfatun, an approach, something near at hand. As Arabic has, like Greek, a dual number distinct from the plural, and the plural number is used here, and not the dual, it is reasonable to argue that at least three “approaches of the night” are meant. The late afternoon prayer, Asr, can be one of these three, and the evening prayer, Magrib, just after sunset, can be the second. The early night prayer, Ishâ, at supper time when the glow of sunset is disappearing, would be the third of the “approaches of the night”, when we commit ourselves to Allah before sleep. These are the five canonical prayers of Islam.

1618. “Those things that are good”: in this context the words refer primarily to prayers, but they include all good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. It is by them that we keep away everything that is evil, whether referring to the past, the present, or the future.
115. And be steadfast in patience; 
For verily Allah will not suffer 
The reward of the righteous 
To perish.

116. If only there had been 
Of the generations before you, 
Men of righteousness\[1619\] 
Who prohibited men 
From mischief in the earth 
(But there were none) 
Except a few among them 
Whom We saved (from harm)\[1620\] 
But the wrong-doers pursued 
The enjoyment of the good things 
Of life which were given them, 
And persisted in sin.

117. Nor would thy Lord be 
The One to destroy 
The towns unjustly\[1621\] 
While their people are 
Righteous.

1619. Baqiya: some virtue or faculty that stands assault and is lasting; balanced good sense that stands firm to virtue and is not dazzled by the lusts and pleasures of this world, and is not deterred by fear from boldly condemning wrong if it was fashionable or customary. It is leaders possessed of such character that can save a nation from disaster or perdition. The scarcity of such leaders—and the rejection of the few who stood out—brought ruin among the nations whose example has already been set out to us as a warning.

In xi. 86 the word has a more literal meaning.

1620. The exceptional men of firm virtue would have been destroyed by the wicked to whom they were an offence, had they not been saved by the grace and mercy of Allah. Or perhaps, but for such grace, they might themselves have succumbed to the evil around them, or been overwhelmed in the general calamity.

1621. There are different shades of interpretation for this verse. According to Baidhawi, zulmin here means “a single wrong”. He thinks that the wrong referred to is shirk.
118. If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind One People: but they Will not cease to differ,  
119. Except those on whom thy Lord Hath bestowed His Mercy: And for this did He create Them: and the Word Of thy Lord shall be fulfilled: "I will fill Hell with jinns And men all together."  
120. All that we relate to thee Of the stories of the messengers,— With it We make firm Thy heart: in them there cometh To thee the Truth, as well as An exhortation and a message Of remembrance to those who believe.  

1622. Cf. x. 19. All mankind might have been one. But in Allah’s Plan man was to have a certain measure of free-will, and this made difference inevitable. This would not have mattered if all had honestly sought Allah. But selfishness and moral wrong came in, and people’s disputations became mixed up with hatred, jealousy, and sin, except in the case of those who accepted Allah’s grace, which saved them. The object of their creation was to raise them up spiritually by Allah’s grace. But if they will choose the path of evil and fall into sin, Allah’s decree must be fulfilled, and His justice will take its course. In the course of that justice Hell will be filled with men and jinns, such is the number of those who go astray.  
1623. Cf. vii. 18 and vii. 179. If Satan and his evil soldiers tempt men from the path of rectitude, the responsibility of the tempted, who choose the path of evil, is no less than that of the tempters, and they will both be involved in punishment together.  
1624. The stories of the Prophets in the Qur-an are not mere narratives or histories: they involve three things: (1) they teach the highest spiritual Truth; (2) they give advice, direction, and warning, as to how we should govern our lives, and (3) they awaken our conscience and recall to us the working of Allah’s Law in human affairs. The story of Joseph in the next Sûra is an illustration in point.
121. Say to those who do not believe: “Do whatever ye can: We shall do our part;¹⁶²⁴-A

122. “And wait ye! We too shall wait.”¹⁶²⁵

123. To Allah do belong The unseen (secrets) Of the heavens and the earth, And to Him goeth back Every affair (for decision).¹⁶²⁶ So worship Him, And put thy trust in Him: And thy Lord is not Unmindful of aught That ye do.

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¹⁶²⁴-A. Cf. xi. 93 and vi. 135, n. 957. The worst that ye can will not defeat Allah’s Plan: and as for us who believe, our obvious duty is to do our part as taught to us by Allah’s revelation.

¹⁶²⁵. Cf. xi. 93, n. 1595, and x. 102, n. 1484. If the wicked only wait, they will see how Allah’s Plan unfolds itself. As for those who believe, they are glad to wait in perfect confidence, because they know that Allah is good and merciful, as well as just and true.

¹⁶²⁶. Cf. ii. 210. There is nothing, secret or open, in our world or in Creation, which does not depend ultimately on Allah’s Will and Plan. Every affair goes back to Him for decision. Therefore we must worship Him and trust Him. Worship implies many things: e.g., (1) trying to understand His nature and His Will: (2) realising His goodness and glory, and His working in us; as a means to this end, (3) keeping Him in constant remembrance and celebrating His praise, to whom all praise is due; and (4) completely identifying our will with His, which means obedience to His Law, and service to Him and His creatures in all sincerity.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Yūsuf, 12

For the chronological place of this Sūra and the general argument of Sūras x. to xv. see Introduction to Sūra x.

In subject-matter this Sūra is entirely taken up with the story (recapitulated rather than told) of Joseph, the youngest (but one) of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob. The story is called the most beautiful of stories (xii. 3) for many reasons: (1) it is the most detailed of any in the Qur-ān; (2) it is full of human vicissitudes, and has therefore deservedly appealed to men and women of all classes; (3) it paints in vivid colours, with their spiritual implications, the most varied aspects of life—the patriarch’s old age and the confidence between him and his little best-beloved son, the elder brothers’ jealousy of this little son, their plot and their father’s grief, the sale of the father’s darling into slavery for a miserable little price, carnal love contrasted with purity and chastity, false charges, prison, the interpretation of dreams, low life and high life. Innocence raised to honour, the sweet “revenge” of Forgiveness and Benevolence, high matters of state and administration, humility in exaltation, filial love, and the beauty of Piety and Truth.

The story is similar to but not identical with the Biblical story; but the atmosphere is wholly different. The Biblical story is like a folk-tale in which morality has no place. Its tendency is to exalt the clever and financially-minded Jew against the Egyptian, and to explain certain ethnic and tribal peculiarities in later Jewish history. Joseph is shown as buying up all the cattle and the land of the poor Egyptians for the State under the stress of famine conditions, and making the Israelites “rulers” over Pharaoh’s cattle. The Quranic story, on the other hand, is less a narrative than a highly spiritual sermon or allegory explaining the seeming contradictions in life, the enduring nature of virtue in a world full of flux and change, and the marvellous working of Allah’s eternal purpose in His Plan as unfolded to us on the wide canvas of history. This aspect of the matter has been a favourite with Muslim exegetists.

Summary.—Life is a dream and a vision, to be explained by stories and parables, as in the perspicuous Arabic Qur-ān. The truth, which Joseph the Prophet of Allah saw in his vision, was unpalatable to his ten half-brothers, who plotted against him and sold him into slavery to a merchant for a few pieces of silver. (xii. 1-20).

Joseph was taken by the merchant into Egypt, was bought by a great Egyptian court dignitary (‘Azīz), who adopted him. The dignitary’s wife sought,
but in vain, to attract Joseph to the delights of earthly love. His resistance brought him disgrace and imprisonment, but he taught the truth even in prison and was known for his kindness. One of his fellow prisoners, to whom he had interpreted a dream, was released and received into favour as the King's cup-bearer. (xii. 21-42).

The King had a vision, which Joseph (through the cup-bearer) got an opportunity of explaining. Joseph insisted that all the scandal that had been raised about him should be publicly cleared. He was received into favour, and was appointed wazir by the King. His half-brothers (driven by famine) came to Egypt and were treated kindly by Joseph without their knowing his identity. He asks them to bring his full brother, the youngest son, Benjamin. (xii. 43-68).

Joseph detains Benjamin and by a stratagem convicts his half-brothers of their hatred and crime against himself, forgives them, and sends them to bring Jacob and the whole family from Canaan to Egypt. (xii. 69-93).

Israel (Jacob) comes, is comforted, and settles in Egypt. The name of Allah is glorified. The truth of Allah endures for ever, and Allah's purpose is fully revealed in the Hereafter. (xii. 94-111).
Yūsuf, or Joseph.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A. L. R. 1627 These are The Verses1628 Of the Perspicuous Book.1629

2. We have sent it down As an Arabic Qurān,1630 In order that ye may Learn wisdom.

3. We do relate unto thee The most beautiful of1631 stories, In that We reveal to thee This (portion of the) Qurān: Before this, thou too Was among those Who knew it not.

4. Behold, Joseph said To his father: “O my father!”1632

1627. For the meaning of these letters, see App. 1.

1628. Āyat: Signs and verses of the Qurān. The whole of Joseph’s story is a Sign or a Miracle,—a wonder-working exposition of the Plan and Purpose of Allah.

1629. Cf. v. 15, n. 716. The predominant meaning of Mubin here is: one that explains or makes things clear.

1630. Qurān means: something (1) to be read, or (2) recited, or (3) proclaimed. It may apply to a verse, or a Sūra, or to the whole Book of Revelation.

1631. Most beautiful of stories: see Introduction to this Sūra. Eloquence consists in conveying by a word or hint many meanings for those who can understand and wish to learn wisdom. Not only is Joseph’s story “beautiful” in that sense, Joseph himself was renowned for manly beauty; the women of Egypt, called him a noble angel (xii. 31), and the beauty of his exterior form was a symbol of the beauty of his soul.

1632. For the Parable all that is necessary to know about Joseph is that he was one of the Chosen Ones of Allah. For the story it is necessary to set down a few more details. His father was Jacob, also called Israel the son of Isaac, the younger son of Abraham, (the elder son having been Ismā‘īl, whose story is told in ii. 124–129. Abraham may be called the Father of the line of Semitic prophecy. Jacob had four wives. From three of them =
I did see eleven stars
And the sun and the moon:
I saw them prostrate themselves
To me!1633

5. Said (the father):
“My (dear) little son!
Relate not thy vision
To thy brothers, lest they
Concoct a plot against thee:1634
For Satan is to man
An avowed enemy!1635

6. “Thus will thy Lord
Choose thee and teach thee
The interpretation of stories1636
(and events)
An perfect His favour

= he had ten sons. In his old age he had from Rachel (Arabic Rahil) a very beautiful woman, two sons Joseph and Benjamin (the youngest). The place where Jacob and his family and his flocks were located was in Canaan, and is shown by tradition near modern Nablus (ancient Shechem), some thirty miles north of Jerusalem. The traditional site of the well into which Joseph was thrown by his brothers is still shown in the neighbourhood.

1633. Joseph was a mere lad. But he was true and frank and righteous; he was a type of manly beauty and rectitude. His father loved him dearly. His half-brothers were jealous of him and hated him. His destiny was pre-figured in the vision. He was to be exalted in rank above his eleven brothers (stars) and his father and mother (sun and moon), but as the subsequent story shows, he never lost his head, but always honoured his parents and repaid his brothers’ craft and hatred with forgiveness and kindness.

1634. The young lad Yusuf was innocent and did not even know of his brothers’ guile and hatred, but the father knew and warned him.

1635. The story is brought up at once to its spiritual bearing. These wicked brothers were puppets in the hands of Evil. They allowed their manhood to be subjugated by Evil, not remembering that Evil was the declared opposite or enemy of the true nature and instincts of manhood.

1636. If Joseph was to be of the elect, he must understand and interpret Signs and events aright. The imagination of the pure sees truths, which those not so endowed cannot understand. The dreams of the righteous pre-figure great events, while the dreams of the futile are mere idle futilities. Even things that happen to us are often like dreams. The righteous man received disasters and reverses, not with blasphemies against Allah, but with humble devotion, seeking to ascertain His Will. Nor does he receive good fortune with arrogance, but as an opportunity for doing good, to friends and foes alike. His attitude to histories and stories is the same: he seeks the edifying material which leads to Allah.
1639. The ten brothers envied and hated their innocent younger brothers Joseph and Benjamin. Jacob had the wisdom to see that his young and innocent sons wanted protection and to perceive Joseph’s spiritual greatness. But his wisdom, to them, was folly or madness of imbecility, because it touched their self-love, as truth often does. And they relied on the brute strength of numbers—the ten hefty brethren against old Jacob, the lad Joseph, and the boy Benjamin!

SECTION 2.

7. Verily in Joseph and his brethren Are Signs For Seekers (after Truth)

8. They said: “Truly Joseph And his brother are loved More by our father than we: But we are a goodly body! Really our father is obviously In error!

9. “Slay ye Joseph or cast him out To some (unknown) land, That so the favour Of your father may be Given to you alone:

1637. Whatever happens is the result of Allah’s Will and Plan. And He is good and wise, and He knows all things. Therefore we must trust Him. In Joseph’s case he could look back to his fathers, and to Abraham, the True, the Righteous, who through all adversities kept his Faith pure and undefiled and won through.

1638. In Joseph’s story we have good and evil contrasted in so many different ways. Those in search of true spiritual knowledge can see it embodied in concrete events in this story of many facets, matching the colours of Joseph’s many-coloured coat.

1639. The ten brothers envied and hated their innocent younger brothers Joseph and Benjamin. Jacob had the wisdom to see that his young and innocent sons wanted protection and to perceive Joseph’s spiritual greatness. But his wisdom, to them, was folly or madness of imbecility, because it touched their self-love, as truth often does. And they relied on the brute strength of numbers—the ten hefty brethren against old Jacob, the lad Joseph, and the boy Benjamin!
10. Said one of them: “Slay not Joseph, but if ye must Do something, throw him down To the bottom of the well: He will be picked up By some caravan of travellers.”

11. They said: “O our father! Why dost thou not Trust us with Joseph,— Seeing we are indeed His sincere well-wishers?”

12. “Send him with us to-morrow To enjoy himself and play,

(There will be time enough) For you to be righteous after that!”

1640. There seems to be some irony here, consistent with the cynical nature of these callous, worldly-wise brethren. The goodness of Joseph was a reproach to their own wickedness. Perhaps the grieved father contrasted Joseph against them, and sometimes spoke of it: “Why don’t you be good like Joseph?” This was gall and wormwood to them. Real goodness was to them nothing but a name. Perhaps it only suggested hypocrisy to them. So they plotted to get rid of Joseph. In their mean hearts they thought that would bring back their father’s love whole to them. But they valued that love only for what material good they could get out of it. On the other hand their father was neither foolish nor unjustly partial. He only knew the difference between gold and dross. They say in irony, “Let us first get rid of Joseph. It will be time enough then to pretend to be ‘good’ like him, or to repent of our crime after we have had all its benefits in material things”!

1641. One of the brethren, perhaps less cruel by nature, or perhaps more worldly-wise, said: “Why undertake the risk of blood-guiltiness? Throw him into the well you see there! Some travellers passing by will pick him up and remove him to a far country. If not, at least we shall not have killed him.” This was false casuistry, but such casuistry appeals to sinners of a certain kind of temperament. The well was apparently a dry well, deep enough to prevent his coming out, but with no water in which he could be drowned. It was Allah’s Plan to save him alive, but not to make Joseph indebted to any of his brethren for his life!

1642. The plot having been formed, the brethren proceed to put it into execution. Jacob, knowing the situation, did not ordinarily trust his beloved Joseph with the brethren. The latter therefore remonstrate and feign brotherly affection.
And we shall take
Every care of him.\textsuperscript{1643}

13. (Jacob) said: "Really
It saddens me that ye
Should take him away:
I fear lest the wolf
Should devour him
While ye attend not\textsuperscript{1644}
To him."

14. They said: "If the wolf
Were to devour him
While we are (so large) a party,
Then should we be the losers!"

15. So they did take him away,
And they all agreed
To throw him down
To the bottom of the well:
And We put into his heart\textsuperscript{1646}

\textsuperscript{1643} They did not expect their protestations to be believed in. But they added an argument that might appeal both to Jacob and Joseph. "They were going to give their young brother a good time. Why not let him come out with them and play and enjoy himself to his heart's content?"

\textsuperscript{1644} Jacob did not know the precise plot, but he had strong misgivings. But how could he put off these brethren? If they were driven to open hostility, they would be certain to cause him harm. He must deal with the brethren wisely and cautiously. He pleaded that he was an old man, and would miss Joseph and be sad without him. And after all, Joseph was not of an age to play with them. They would be attending to their own affairs, and a wolf might come and attack and kill Joseph. In saying this he was really unwittingly giving a cue to the wicked ones, for they use that very excuse in verse 17 below. Thus the wicked plot thickens, but there is a counter-plan also, which is drawing a noose of lies round the wicked ones, so that they are eventually driven into a corner, and have to confess their own guilt in verse 91 below, and through repentance obtain forgiveness.

\textsuperscript{1645} Jacob's objections as stated could be easily rebutted, and the brethren did so. They would be eleven in the party, and the ten strong and grown-up men would have to perish before the wolf could touch the young lad Joseph! So they prevailed, as verbal arguments are apt to prevail, when events are weaving their web on quite another Plan, which has nothing to do with verbal arguments. Presumably Benjamin was too young to go with them.

\textsuperscript{1646} Allah was with Joseph in all his difficulties, sorrows, and sufferings, as He is with all His servants who put their trust in Him. The poor lad was betrayed by his brothers, and left, perhaps to die or to be sold into slavery. But his heart was undaunted. \textsuperscript{=}
His courage never failed him. On the contrary he had an inkl...fulfil that need, and would do it gladly, putting them to shame for their present plotting and betrayal of him.

1647. This situation actually occurred when Joseph later on became the governor of Egypt and his brothers stood before him suing for his assistance although they did not know that he was their betrayed brother; see xii. 89 below; also xii. 58.

1648. The plotters were ready with their false tale for their father, but in order to make it appear plausible, they came some time after sundown, to show that they had made an effort to search for their brother and save him.

1649. They wanted to make out that they were not negligent of Joseph. They were naturally having games and exercise, while the boy was left with their belongings. It was the racing that prevented them from seeing the wolf. And Jacob's fears about the wolf (xii. 13 above) made them imagine that he would swallow the wolf story readily.

1650. They were surprised that Jacob received the story about the wolf with cold incredulity. So they grew petulant, put on an air of injured innocence, and bring out the blood-stained garment described in the next verse.

1651. Joseph wore a garment of many colours, which was a special garment peculiar to him. If the brethren could produce it blood-stained before their father, they thought he would be convinced that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. But the stain on the garment was a stain of "false blood", not the blood of Joseph, but the blood of a...
“Nay, but your minds
Have made up a tale
(That may pass) with you,\(^{1652}\)
(For me) patience is most fitting:
Against that which ye assert,
It is Allah (alone)
Whose help can be sought”...

19. Then there came a caravan\(^{1653}\)
Of travellers: they sent
Their water-carrier (for water),
And he let down his bucket
(Into the well)... He said:
“Ah there! Good news!\(^{1654}\)
Here is a (fine) young man!”
So they concealed him\(^{1655}\)
As a treasure! But Allah

= goat which the brethren had killed expressly for this purpose. Their device, however, was not quite convincing because, as some Commentators have pointed out the garment was intact which is unconceivable if a wolf had indeed devoured Joseph.

1652. Jacob saw that there had been some foul play, and he did not hesitate to say so. In effect he said “Ah me! the tale you tell may be good enough for you, who invented it! But what about me, your aged father? What is there left in life for me now, with my beloved son gone? And yet what can I do but hold my heart in patience and implore Allah’s assistance? I have faith, and I know that all that He does is for the best!”

1653. Then comes the caravan of unknown travellers–Midianite or Arab merchants travelling to Egypt with merchandise, such as the balm of Gilead in Trans-Jordania. In accordance with custom the caravan was preceded by advance parties to search out water and pitch a camp near. They naturally went to the well and let down their bucket.

1654. The water carrier is surprised and taken aback, when he finds a youth of comely appearance, innocent like an angel, with a face as bright as the sun! What is he to make of it? Anyhow, to see him is a delight! And he shouts it out as a piece of good news. Some Commentators think that “Bushrā”, the Arabic world for “Good news”, is a proper noun, the name of the companion to whom he shouted.

1655. It was a caravan of merchants, and they think of everything in terms of the money to be made out of it! Here was an unknown, unclaimed youth, of surpassing beauty, with apparently a mind as refined as was his external beauty. If he could be sold in the opulent slave markets of Memphis or whatever was the capital of the Hyksos Dynasty then ruling in Egypt, what a price he would fetch! They had indeed lighted upon a treasure! And they wanted to conceal him lest he was another’s slave and had run away from his master who might come and claim him! The circumstances were peculiar and the merchants were cautious. \textit{Bidhā’at} = stock-in-trade; capital; money; wealth; treasure.
Knoweth well all that they do!  

20. The (Brethren) sold him  
For a miserable price,—  
For a few dirhams<sup>1657</sup> counted out:  
In such low estimation  
Did they hold him<sup>1658</sup>  

SECTION 3.  

21. The man in Egypt<sup>1659</sup>  
Who bought him, said  
To his wife: “Make his stay  
(Among us) honourable:<sup>1660</sup>  
May be he will bring us  
Much good, or we shall  
Adopt him as a son.”

1656. To different mind the situation appeared different. Joseph must have felt keenly the edge of his brethren’s treason. His father Jacob was lost in the sorrow of the loss of his best-beloved son. The brethren were exulting in their plan of getting rid of one whom they hated. The merchants were gloating over their gains. But the horizon of all was limited. Allah knew their deeds and their feelings and motives, and He was working out His own Plan. Neither the best of us nor the worst of us know whither our Destiny is leading us—how evil plots are defeated and goodness comes to its own in marvellous ways!.

1657. Dirham: from Greek, drachma, a small silver coin, which varied in weight and value at different times and in different States.

1658. There was mutual deceit on both sides. The Brethren had evidently been watching to see what happened to Joseph: when they saw the merchants take him up and hide him, they came to claim his price as a run away slave, but dared not haggle over the price, lest their object, to get rid of him, should be defeated. The merchants were shrewd enough to doubt the claim in their own minds; but they dared not haggle lest they should lose a very valuable acquisition. And so the most precious of human lives in that age was sold into slavery for a few silver pieces!

1659. Joseph is now clear of his jealous brethren in the land of Canaan. The merchants take him to Egypt. In the city of Memphis (or whatever was the Egyptian capital then) he was exposed for sale by the merchants. The merchants had not miscalculated. There was a ready market for him; his handsome presence, his winning ways, his purity and innocence, his intelligence and integrity, combined with his courtesy and noble manliness, attracted all eyes to him. There was the keenest competition to purchase him, and in the highest Court circles. Every competitor was outbid by a high court official, who is called in verse 30 below “the ‘Azīz” (the Exalted in rank).

1660. See last note. The ‘Azīz’s motive was perhaps worldly. Such a handsome, attractive, intelligent son would get him more honour, dignity, power and wealth.
1661. How unerringly Allah's plan works! To teach Joseph wisdom and power, he had to be tested and proved in righteousness, and advanced and established in Egypt, and the way prepared for Israel and his posterity to proclaim Allah's truth to the world and to make possible the subsequent missions of Moses.

1662. Ahādīth might be stories, things imagined or related, things that happened, in life or in true dreams. To suppose that phenomenal events are the only reality is a mark of one-sided materialism. As Hamlet said to Horatio, "there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." External events have their own limited reality, but there are bigger realities behind them, that sometimes appear darkly in the visions of ordinary men, but more clearly in the visions of poets, seers, sages and prophets. Joseph had to be trained in seeing the realities behind events and visions. He was hated by his brothers and sold by them into slavery; they were sending him into the land of Egypt, where he was to rule men. He loved his father dearly and was separated from him, and his mother had died early; but his affection was not blunted, but drawn to a keener edge when his benevolent work benefited millions in Egypt, and in the world. His own visions of stars, sun, and moon prostrating themselves before him, was no idle dream of a selfish fool, but the prefigurement of a power, which, used rightly, was to make his own honour an instrument of service to millions he had not seen, through men and women whose own power and dignity were sanctified through him. He was to understand the hidden meaning of what seemed futilities, blunderings, snares, evil-plottings, love gone wrong, and power used tyrannically. He was to interpret truth to those who would never have reached it otherwise.

1663. Cf.: "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will." Only, in Shakespeare, (Hamlet, V. 2), we have a vague and distant ideal, an irresolute striving, an unsuccessful attempt at getting beyond "this too, too solid flesh:" In Joseph we have the Prophet of Allah, sure in faith, above all carnal motives, and advancing the destiny of mankind with a conscious purpose, as the scroll of knowledge, wisdom, and power, unfolds itself before him by the grace of Allah, All-Good and All-Powerful.

1664. When Joseph left Canaan, he was a young and immature lad, but his nature was innocent and good. Through the vicissitudes of his fortune in Egypt, he grew in knowledge, judgment, and power.

1665. Muḥṣinin: those who do right, those who do good. Both ideas are implied. In following right conduct, you are necessarily doing good to yourself and to others.
1666. The 'Aziz had treated Joseph with honour; he was more his guest and son than his slave. In trying to seduce Joseph in these circumstances, his wife was guilty of a crime against Joseph's own honour and dignity. And there was a third fault in her earthly love. True love blots Self out: it thinks more of the loved one than of the Self. The 'Aziz's wife was seeking the satisfaction of her own selfish passion, and was in treason against Joseph's pure soul and his high destiny. It was inevitable that Joseph should repel the advances made by the wife of the courtier.

1667. Joseph's plea in rejecting her advances is threefold: ' (1) I owe a duty, and so do you, to your husband, the 'Aziz; (2) the kindness, courtesy, and honour, with which he has treated me entailed him to more than mere gratitude from me; (3) in any case, do you not see that you are harbouring a guilty passion, and that no good can come out of guilt? We must all obey laws, human and divine.'

1668. She was blinded with passion, and his plea had no effect on her. He was human after all, and her passionate love and her beauty placed a great temptation in his path. But he had a sure refuge,—his faith in Allah. His spiritual eyes saw something that her eyes, blinded by passion, did not see. She thought no one saw when the doors were closed. He knew that Allah was there. That made him strong and proof against temptation.

1669. The credit of our being saved from sin is due, not to our weak earthly nature, but to Allah. We can only try, like Joseph, to be true and sincere; Allah will purify us and save us from all that is wrong. Tempted but true, we rise above ourselves.
25. So they both raced each other To the door, and she Tore his shirt from the back. They both found her lord Near the door. She said: “What is the (fitting) punishment For one who formed An evil design against Thy wife, but prison Or a grievous chastisement?”

26. He said: “It was she That sought to seduce me— From my (true) self.” And one Of her household saw (this) And bore witness, (thus):— “If it be that his shirt Is rent from the front, then

1670. With his master’s wife in her mad passion, the situation became intolerable, and Joseph made for the door. She ran after him to detain him. She tugged at his garment to detain him. As he was retreating, she could only catch hold of the back of his shirt, and in the struggle she tore it. He was determined to open the door and leave the place, as it was useless to argue with her in her mad passion. When the door was opened, it so happened, that the ‘Aziz was not far off. We need not assume that he was spying, or had any suspicions either of his wife or Joseph. In his narrow limited way he was a just man. We can imagine his wife’s consternation. One guilt leads to another. She had to resort to a lie, not only to justify herself but also to have her revenge on the man who had scorned her love. Slighted love (of the physical kind) made her ferocious, and she lost all sense of right and wrong.

1671. Her lie and her accusation were plausible. Joseph was found with his dress disarranged. She wanted the inference to be drawn that he had assaulted her and she had resisted. For one in his position it was a dreadful crime. Should he not be consigned to a dungeon or at least scourged? Perhaps she hoped that in either case he would be more pliable to her designs in the future.

1672. Joseph bore himself with dignity. He was too great and noble to indulge in angry recrimination. But he had to tell the truth. And he did it with quiet simplicity. ‘The love game was hers, not his, and it went too far in seeking to assault his person.’

1673. In the nature of things there was no eye-witness to what had happened between them. But as there was a scene and the whole household collected, wisdom came through one who was not immediately concerned. They say it was a child. If so, it illustrates the truth that the most obvious things are not noticed by people who are excited, but are plain to simple people who remain calm. Wisdom comes often through babes and sucklings.
30. Ladies said in the City:
   “The wife of the (great) ‘Aziz
   And he is a liar!

27. “But if it be that his shirt
   Is torn from the back,
   Then is she the liar,
   And he is telling the truth!”

28. So when he saw his shirt,
   That it was torn at the back,
   (Her husband) said: “Behold!
   It is a snare of you women!”
   Truly, mighty is your snare!

29. “O Joseph, pass this over!
   (O wife), ask forgiveness
   For thy sin, for truly
   Thou hast been at fault!”

SECTION 4.

30. Ladies said in the City:
   “The wife of the (great) ‘Aziz

1674. If Joseph's shirt was torn at the back, he must obviously have been retreating, and the wife of the ‘Aziz must have been tugging from behind. No one could doubt who was the guilty party. Everybody saw it, and the ‘Aziz was convinced.

1675. When the real fact became clear to every one, the ‘Aziz as head of the household had to decide what to do. His own position was difficult, and it was made ridiculous. He was a high officer of state, say Grand Chamberlain. Was he going to proclaim to the world that his wife was running after a slave? He was probably fond of her, and he saw the innocence, loyalty, and sterling merit of Joseph. He must treat the whole affair as a woman’s prank,—the madness of sex-love, and the tricks and snares connected with sex-love. He must take no further action but to rate his wife and do justice.

1676. As was only fair, he apologised to Joseph and begged him to give no further thought to the injury that had been done to him, first by the love-snare of his wife, secondly, by the utterly false charge made against him, and thirdly, by the scene, which must have been painful to a man of such spotless character as Joseph. That was not enough. He must ask his wife humbly to beg Joseph’s pardon for the wrong that she had done him. And he must further ask her to consider her unbecoming conduct in itself, apart from any wrong done to Joseph.

1677. ‘Aziz: title of a nobleman or officer of Court, of high rank. Considering all the circumstances, the office of Grand Chamberlain or minister may be indicated. But “Aziz” I think is a title, not an office. I have not translated the title but left it as it is. “Excellency” or “Highness” would have specialised modern associations which I want to avoid.
Is seeking to seduce her slave
Truly hath he inspired her
With violent love: we see
She is evidently going astray.”

31. When she heard
Of their malicious talk,
She sent for them
And prepared a banquet.
For them: she gave
Each of them a knife:
And she said (to Joseph),
“Come out before them.”
When they saw him,
They did extol him,
And (in their amazement)
Cut their hands: they said,
“Allah preserve us! no mortal
Is this! This is none other
Than a noble angel!”

32. She said: “There before you
Is the man about whom
Ye did blame me!
I did seek to seduce him from
His (true) self but he did

1678. The ‘Aziz’s just, wise, and discreet conduct would have closed the particular episode of his wife’s guilty conduct if only Mrs. Grundy had left her alone and she had not foolishly thought of justifying her conduct to Mrs. Grundy. The ‘Aziz had reproved her, and he had the right and authority so to do. He also probably understood her. Joseph by his behaviour had upheld the highest standard both for himself and for her.

1679. When her reputation began to be pulled to pieces, the wife of ‘Aziz invited all ladies in society to a grand banquet. We can imagine them reclining at ease after the manner of fashionable banquets. When dessert was reached and the talk flowed freely about the gossip and scandal which made their hostess interesting, they were just about to cut the fruit with their knives, when, behold! Joseph was brought into their midst. Imagine the consternation which his beauty caused, and the havoc it played with their hearts! “Ah!” thought the wife of ‘Aziz “now is your hypocrisy self-exposed! What about your reproaches to me? You have yourselves so lost your self-control that you have cut your fingers!”
Firmly save himself guiltless!...\(^{1680}\)
And now, if he doth not
My bidding, he shall certainly
Be cast into prison,
And (what is more)
Be of the company of the vilest!"

33. He said: “O my Lord!
The prison is dearer
To my liking than that
To which they invite me.\(^{1681}\)
Unless Thou turn away
Their snare from me,
I should
Feel inclined towards them
And join the ranks of the
ignorant.”\(^{1682}\)

34. So his Lord hearkened to him
(In his prayer) and turned

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1680. Her speech is subtle, and shows that any repentance or compunction she may have felt is blotted out by the collective crowd mentality into which she has deliberately invited herself to fall. Her speech falls into two parts, with a hiatus between, which I have marked by the punctuation mark (...) . In the first part there is a note of triumph, as much as to say, “Now you see! mine was no vulgar passion! you are just as susceptible! you would have done the same thing!” Finding encouragement from their passion and their fellow-feeling, she openly avows as a woman amongst women what she would have been ashamed to acknowledge to others before. She falls a step lower and boasts of it. A step lower still, and she sneers at Joseph’s innocence, his firmness in saving himself guiltless! There is a pause. The tide of passion rises still higher, and the dreadful second part of her speech begins. It is a sort of joint consultation, though she speaks in monologue. The women all agree that no man has a right to resist their solicitations. Beauty spurned is the highest crime. And so now She rises to the height of tragic guilt and threatens Joseph. She forgets all her finer feelings, and is overpowered by brute passion. After all, he is a slave and must obey his mistress! Or, there is prison, and the company of the vilest. Poor, deluded, fallen creature! She sank lower than herself, in seeking the support of the crowd around her! What pain and suffering and sorrow can expiate the depth of this crime?

1681. "To which they invite me." Notice it is now “they” not “she”. Where there was the snare of one woman before, it is now the collective snare of many women.

1682. Joseph’s speech is characteristic. Like a true Prophet of Allah, he takes refuge in Allah. He knows the weakness of human nature. He would not pit his own strength against the whole assault of evil. He will rely on Allah to turn evil away from him, and praise Him alone for any success he achieves in his fight. It is only the ignorant who do not know man’s weakness and Allah’s strength!
Away from him their snare.\(^{1683}\) Verily He heareth and knoweth (All things).

35. Then it occurred to them\(^{1684}\) After they had seen the Signs, (That it was best) To imprison him For a time.

**SECTION 5.**

36. Now with him there came Into the prison two young men.\(^{1685}\) Said one of them; “I see Myself (in a dream) Pressing wine,” Said the other: “I see myself (in a dream) Carrying bread on my head,

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1683. Joseph was saved from the wiles of the women, which would have degraded him. But more, his truth and character were completely vindicated in the eyes of all concerned by the avowal of the wife of the ‘Aziz.

1684. When Joseph’s character was completely vindicated, there was no disgrace to him in being sent to prison after that. On the contrary the blame now would attach to those who for their own selfish motives restricted his liberty for a time. As a matter of fact various motives on the part of the many actors in this drama converged towards that end. For Joseph prison was better than the importunities of the women, and now, not one woman, but all society women were after him. To the women themselves it looked as if that was a lever which they could use to force his compliance. Vain, deluded creatures, to think that a man of God could be forced from the path of rectitude by threats or bribes. To the ‘Aziz it appears as if it might be in his wife’s best interests that he should disappear from her view in prison. The decisive factor was the view of the men generally, who were alarmed at the consternation he had caused among the women. They knew that Joseph was righteous: they had seen the Signs of Allah in his wonderful personality and his calm and confident fortitude. But, it was argued, it was better that one man (even if righteous) should suffer in prison rather than that many should suffer from the extraordinary disturbance he was unwillingly causing in their social life. Not for the first nor for the last time did the righteous suffer plausibly for the guilt of the guilty. And so Joseph went to prison—for a time.

1685. Now opens another chapter in Joseph’s life. The Plan of Allah develops. The wicked might plot; the weak might be swayed by specious arguments; but everything is used by the Universal Plan for its own beneficent purposes. Joseph must get into touch with the Pharaoh, in order to work out the salvation of Egypt, and yet it must be through no obligation to smaller men. And he must diffuse his personality and teach the truth to men of all sorts in prison.
And birds are eating thereof."  
"Tell us" (they said) "the truth  
And meaning thereof: for we  
See thou art one  
That doth good (to all)."  

37. He said: "Before any food  
Comes (in due course)  
To feed either of you  
I will surely reveal  
To you the truth  
And meaning of this  
Ere it befall you  
That is part of the (Duty)  
Which my Lord hath taught me  
I have (I assure you)  
Abandoned the ways  
Of a people that believe not  

1686. Two men came to the prison about the same time as Joseph. They were both apparently officers of the king (the Pharaoh), who had incurred his wrath. One was a cup-bearer (or butler or chief steward) whose duty was to prepare the king's wines and drinks. The other was the king's baker, whose duty was to prepare the king's bread. They were both in disgrace. The former dreamed that he was again carrying on his duties and pressing wine; the latter that he was carrying bread, but it did not reach his master, for the birds ate of it.  

1687. Both these men saw the Signs of Allah about Joseph. They felt not only that he had wisdom, but that he was kind and benevolent, and would give of his wisdom even to strangers like themselves. They therefore told him their dreams and asked him to interpret them.  

1688. The dream of one foreboded good to him, and of the other, evil to him. It was good that each should prepare for his fate. But Joseph's mission was far higher than that of merely foretelling events. He must teach the truth of Allah and the faith in the Hereafter to both men. He does that first before he talks of the events of their phenomenal life. And yet he does it so tenderly. He does not tantalise them. In effect he says. "You shall learn everything before our next meal, but let me first teach you Faith!"  

1689. Joseph does not preach a pompous sermon, or claim any credit to himself for placing himself at their service. He is just doing his duty, and the highest good he can do to them is to teach them Faith.
38. "And I follow the ways\(^ {1691}\) Of my fathers,—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and never Could we attribute any partners Whatever to Allah: that (comes) Of the grace of Allah to us And to mankind: yet Most men are not grateful.

39. "O my two companions,\(^ {1692}\) Of the prison! (I ask you): Are many lords differing Among themselves better, Or Allah the One, Supreme and Irresistible?

40. Whatever ye worship Apart from Him is nothing But names which ye have named,\(^ {1693}\)

1690. These men were Egyptians, perhaps steeped in materialism, idolatry, and polytheism. He must teach them the Gospel of Unity. And he does it simply, by appealing to his own experience. I have found the Lord good: in prosperity and adversity I have been supported by Faith; in life no man can live by error or evil; perhaps one of you had done some wrong for which you find yourself here; perhaps one of you is innocent in either case, will you not accept Faith and live for ever?

1691. Again the same note of personal modesty. 'You may think I am as young as you, or younger. Yes, but I have the heritage of great men renowned for wisdom and truth, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Surely what they knew is worthy of respect. Never did they swerve a hair's breadth from the Gospel of Unity. It is not that we boast. It was Allah's grace that taught us and Allah's grace is teaching all mankind. But men show their ingratitude by inventing other so-called gods'.

1692. Note the personal touch again. 'Are we not also companions in misfortune? And may I not speak to you on terms of perfect equality,—as one prisoner to another? Well then, do you really think a conflict of heterogeneous gods is better than Allah, the One (and Only), Whose power is supreme and irresistible?'

1693. 'If you name other gods, they are nothing but your inventions,—names which you and your fathers put forward without any reality behind them. Who gave you authority to do any such thing? The only reality is Allah. Authority can come from Him alone. It is only for Him to command. And He has distinctly commanded you to worship none other than Him. That is the only religion that is right,—that has stood and will stand and endure for ever. He has revealed it at all times by His Messengers and by His Signs. If men fail to understand, it is their own fault.'
Ye and your fathers,—
For which Allah hath sent down
No authority: the Command
Is for none but Allah: He
Hath commanded that ye worship
None but Him: that is
The right religion, but
Most men understand not...

41. “O my two companions”
Of the prison! As to one
Of you, he will pour out
The wine for his lord to drink,
As for the other, he will
Hang from the cross, and the birds
Will eat from off his head.
(So) hath been decreed
That matter whereof
Ye twain do enquire”...

1694. Having fulfilled his great duty, that touching the things of the spirit, Joseph now passes on, and comes to the things in which they were immediately interested,—the questions which they had asked him about their dreams and what they prognosticated of their immediate future. Notice how Joseph again puts himself into sympathy with them by repeating the phrase of camaraderie. “my two companions of the prison!” For one he has good news, and for the other, bad news. He does not mince matters or waste words. He just barely tells the truth, hoping that the higher spiritual truths of which he has spoken will appear in their eyes, too, as of more importance than mere earthly triumphs or disasters,—(in Kipling’s words) “both impostors all the same.”

1695. The cup-bearer had perhaps been proved innocent of the crime which had been charged against him, and was to be restored to the favour of the Pharaoh. He was to carry the cup and be the king’s confidante again. How much more good he could do now, after the spiritual influence he had imbibed from Joseph the man of God! He was more fortunate in having had Joseph’s company than in being restored to his intimate position with the king! Yet he was not a perfect man, as we shall see presently.

1696. For the baker, alas! he had bad news, and he tells it directly without tantalizing him. Perhaps he had been found guilty—perhaps he had been really guilty—of some act of embezzlement or of joining in some palace intrigue, and he was to die a malefactor’s death on the cross, following by exposure to birds of the air—vultures pecking away at his eyes and cheeks, and all that had been his face and head! Poor man! If he was guilty, Joseph had taught him repentance, and we should like to think that he lost in this life but gained in the next. If he was innocent, the cruel death did not affect him. Joseph had shown him a higher and more lasting hope in the Hereafter.
42. And of the two,
   To that one whom he considered
   About to be saved, he said:
   “Mention me to thy lord,” 1697
   But Satan made him forget 1698
   To mention him to his lord:
And (Joseph) lingered in prison
A few (more) years 1699

SECTION 6

43. The king (of Egypt) said: 1700
   “I do see (in a vision)
   Seven fat kine, whom seven
   Lean ones devour,—and seven
   Green ears of corn, and seven
   (others)
Withered. O ye chiefs!
   Expound to me my vision
   If it be that ye can
   Interpret visions.”

1697. Joseph never mentioned himself in interpreting the dream, nor ever thought of himself in his kindness to his fellow-sufferers in prison. It was afterwards, when the cup-bearer’s dream came true, and he was being released on being restored to favour, that we can imagine him taking an affectionate leave of Joseph, and even asking him in his elation if he could do anything for Joseph. Joseph had no need of earthly favours,—least of all, from kings or their favourites. The divine grace was enough for him. But he had great work to do, which he could not do in prison—work for Egypt and her king, and the world at large. If the cup-bearer could mention him to the king, not by way of recommendation, but because the king’s own justice was being violated in keeping an innocent man in prison, perhaps that might help to advance the cause of the king and of Egypt. And so he said, “Mention me to Pharaoh.”

1698. The eternal Plan does not put Allah’s Prophets under obligations to men commanding mere worldly favour or earthly power. If they are given a chance, the obligation is on the worldly men, however highly placed... In this case, the poor cup-bearer was but human. When he was in the midst of the Court, he forgot the poor fellow-prisoner languishing in prison. In this he yielded to the lower part of his nature, which is guided by Satan.

1699. A few (more) years: bidh’ in Arabic signifies a small indefinite number, say up to 3, 5, 7 or 9 years.

1700. The Pharaoh is holding a Council. His confidential adviser the cup-bearer is present. The Pharaoh relates his double dream,—of seven fat kine being devoured by seven lean ones, and of seven fine full green ears of corn (presumably being devoured) by seven dry withered ears.
44. They said: “A confused medley
   Of dreams: and we are not
   Skilled in the interpretation
   Of dreams.”

45. But the man who had been
   Released, one of the two
   (Who had been in prison)
   And who now remembered him
   After (so long) a space of time,
   Said: “I will tell you
   The truth of its interpretation:
   Send ye me (therefore) ...

46. “O Joseph!” (he said)
   “O man of truth! Expound
   To us (the dream)
   Of seven fat kine
   Whom seven lean ones
   Devour, and of seven
   Green ears of corn
   And (seven) others withered:
   That I may return
   To the people, and that
   They may know.”

1701. No one in the Council apparently wanted to take the responsibility either of
interpreting the dream, or of carrying out any measures consequent on the interpretation.

1702. At length the cup-bearer’s conscience was awakened. He thought of Joseph.
He (Joseph) was a truthful man, and the cup-bearer knew by personal experience how
skillful he was in the interpretation of dreams. Perhaps he could get him released at this
juncture by getting him to interpret the king’s dream. If he had been frank, straight, and
direct, he would have mentioned Joseph at once, and presented him to Pharaoh. But he
had worldly subtlety. He wanted some credit for himself, at the same time that he fulfilled
an old obligation. His petty conscience would be satisfied if he got Joseph’s release, but
meanwhile he wanted to see how much attention he could draw to himself in the court. So
he just asked permission to withdraw in order to find the interpretation. He went straight
to the prison, and addressed himself to Joseph, as in the following verse.

1703. The speech must have been longer, to explain the circumstances. We are just
given the points. From Joseph he conceals nothing. He knows that Joseph knows more
than himself. He tells Joseph that if he got the meaning, he would go and tell the
Council. It would be impertinent for the cup-bearer to hold out to Joseph, the Prophet
of Allah, the bribe of the hope of his release. Notice how blandly he avoids referring
to his own lapse in having forgotten Joseph so long, and how the magnanimous Joseph
has not a word of reproach, but gets straight on with the interpretation.
1704. Joseph not only shows what will happen, but, unasked, suggests the measures to be taken for dealing with the calamity when it comes. There will be seven years of abundant harvest. With diligent cultivation they should get bumper crops. Of them they should take a little for their sustenance and store the rest in the ear, the better to preserve it from the pests that attack corn-heaps when they have passed through the threshing floor.

1705. There will follow seven years of dreadful famine, which will devour all the stores which they will have laid by in the good years. They must be careful, even during the famine, not to consume all the grain; they must by special arrangement save a little for seed, lest they should be helpless even when the Nile brought down abundant waters from the rains at its sources.

1706. This is a symbol of a very abundant year, following the seven years of drought. The Nile must have brought abundant fertilising waters and silt from its upper reaches, and there was probably some rain also in Lower Egypt. The vine and the olive trees, which must have suffered in the drought, now revived, and yielded their juice and their oil, among the annuals, also, the oil seeds such as linseed, sesameum, and the castor oil plant, must have been grown, as there was irrigated land and to spare from the abundant grain crops. And the people's spirits revived, to enjoy the finer products of the earth, when their absolute necessities had been more than met in their grain crops.
SECTION 7.

50. So the king said:
   "Bring ye him unto me."
   But when the messenger
   Came to him, (Joseph) said:
   "Go thou back to thy lord,
   And ask him, 'What was
   The matter with
   The ladies
   Who cut their hands'?"
   For my Lord is
   Certainly well aware
   Of their snare."

51. (The king) said (to the ladies):
   "What was your affair
   When ye did seek to seduce
   Joseph?"
   The ladies said: "Allah
   Preserve us! no evil
   Know we against him!"
   Said the 'Aziz's wife:
   "Now is the truth manifest
   (To all): it was I
   Who sought to seduce him
   He is indeed of those
   Who are (ever) true (and
   virtuous)."

1707. The cup-bearer must have reported Joseph’s interpretation to the king, and the
   king naturally wanted to see Joseph himself. He sent a messenger to fetch him.

1708. The king’s messenger must have expected that a prisoner would be only too
   overjoyed at the summons of the king. But Joseph, sure of himself, wanted some
   assurance that he would be safe from the sort of nagging and persecution to which he
   had been subjected by the ladies. We saw in verse 33 above that he preferred prison to
   their solicitations. He must therefore know what was in the mind of the women now.

1709. If the king ("thy Lord") did not know of all the snares which had been laid
   for Joseph by the ladies. Allah ("my Lord") knew all their secret motives and plots.

1710. Joseph’s message was conveyed by the messenger to the king, who sent for the
   ladies concerned. Among them came The wife of the ’Aziz. "What was this affair?" said
   the king: "tell me the whole truth,".

1711. The wife of the ‘Aziz stood by, while the other ladies answered. Their answer —
52. 'This (say I), in order that
   He may know that I
   Have never been false
   To him in his absence,
   And that Allah will never
   Guide the snare of the false ones.  

53. "Yet I do not absolve myself
   (Of blame): the (human) soul
   Certainly incites evil,
   Unless my Lord do bestow
   His Mercy: but surely
   My Lord is Oft-Forgiving,
   Most Merciful."  

54. So the king said:
   "Bring him unto me;
   I will take him specially
   To serve about my own person."

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= acknowledged the truth of Joseph's innocence and high principles. When they had done,
  she began. She did not mince matters. She acknowledged her own guilt, freely and
  frankly.

1712. I construe verses 52 and 53 to be a continuation of the speech of the 'Aziz's
  wife and have translated accordingly. There is both good reason and authority (e.g., Ibn
  Kathir) for this. But the majority of Commentators construe verses 52-53 to be spoken
  by Joseph, in which case they would mean that Joseph was referring to his fidelity to
  the 'Aziz, that he had never taken advantage of his absence to play false with his wife,
  although he (Joseph) was human and liable to err. In my view the 'Aziz's wife while fully
  reprobating her own guilty conduct, claims that she has at least been constant, and that
  she hopes for mercy, forgiveness, and the capacity to understand at last what true love
  is. Whatever false charge she made, she made it
  (never in cold blood, or behind his back).

Guide the snare of the false ones, i.e. allow such snare to attain its goal.

1712-A. Ammāra: prone, impelling, headstrong, passionate. See n. 5810 to lxxv. 2.

1713. See n. 1712. I construe this verse to be a continuation of the speech of the
  wife of the 'Aziz. It is more appropriate to her than to Joseph.

1714. Joseph had not yet appeared before the king. The king's order in the same
  terms in verse 50 above had led to a message from Joseph and the subsequent public
  proceedings with the ladies. Now that Joseph's innocence, wisdom, truth, and
  trustworthiness had been proved, and confirmed by the splendid tribute of the courtier's
  wife, and Joseph's own manly bearing before the king, the king was much impressed,
  and
Therefore when he had spoken
To him, he said:
“Be assured this day,
Thou art of high standing
With us,
Invested with all trust.”1715

55. (Joseph) said: “Set me
Over the store-houses1716
Of the land: I am a good keeper,
Knowledgeable.”

56. Thus did we give
Established power to Joseph
In the land, to take possession1717
Therein as, when, or where
He pleased. We bestow
Of Our mercy on whom

= took him specially to serve about his own person as his trusty and confidential Wazir. If, as is probable, the ‘Aziz had by this time died (for he is never mentioned again) Joseph succeeded to his office, and he is addressed as ‘Aziz in verse 78 below. But Joseph got more than his rank and powers, as specially selected to carry out a great emergency policy to meet the very difficult times of depression that were foretold. He was given plenary powers and the fullest confidence that a king could give to his most trusted and best-proved Wazir or Prime Minister, with special access to his Person, like a Grand Chamberlain.

1715. Who was this Pharaoh, and what approximate date could we assign to him? He was probably a king of the Hyksos Dynasty, somewhere between the 19th and the 17th century B.C.

1716. Joseph had been given plenary authority by the king. He could have enjoyed his dignity, drawn his emoluments, put the hard and perhaps unpopular work on the shoulders of others, and kept to himself the glitter and the kudos. But that was not his way, nor can it indeed be the way of any one who wants to do real service. He undertook the hardest and most unpopular task himself. Such a task was that of organising reserves in times of plenty, against the lean years to come. He deliberately asked to be put in charge of the granaries and store-houses, and the drudgery of establishing them and guarding them, for the simple reason that he understood that need better than any one else, and was prepared to take upon himself rather than throw on to another the obloquy of restricting supplies in times of plenty.

1717. What a wonderful example of the working of divine Providence! The boy whom his jealous brothers got rid of by selling him into slavery for a miserable price becomes the most trusted dignitary in a foreign land, chief minister in one of the greatest empires of the world of that day. And this not for himself only, but for his family, and for that noble example of righteousness and strenuous service, which he was to set for all time. According to tradition, Joseph’s age was barely 30 at that time!
We please, and We suffer not,
To be lost, the reward
Of those who do good.

57. But verily the reward
Of the Hereafter
Is the best, for those
Who believe, and are constant
In righteousness.\textsuperscript{1718}

SECTION 8.

58. Then came Joseph’s brethren:\textsuperscript{1719}
They entered his presence,
And he knew them,
But they knew him not.

59. And when he had furnished
Them forth with provisions
(Suitable) for them, he said:
“Bring unto me a brother

\textsuperscript{641}\textsuperscript{as when, or where he pleased: haihu refers to manner, time, or place. He had almost absolute powers, but as his fidelity was fully proved (xii. 53) these powers were for service rather than for self.}

1718. To the righteous, whatever rewards (if any) that come in this world are welcome for the opportunities of service which they open out. But the true and best reward is in the Hereafter.

1719. Years pass; the times of prosperity go by: famine holds the land in its grip; and it extends to neighbouring countries. Joseph’s preparations are complete. His reserves are ample to meet the calamity. Not only does Egypt bless him, but neighbouring countries send to Egypt to purchase corn. All are received with hospitality, and corn is sold to them according to judicious measure.

Now there has been one sorrow gnawing at Joseph’s heart. His poor father Jacob! How he must have wept, as indeed he did, at the loss of his beloved Joseph! And Joseph’s little brother Benjamin, born of the same mother as himself; would the other ten brothers, not by the same mother, have any affection for him, or would they treat him, as they treated Joseph? How would the whole family be in these hard times? A sort of answer came when the ten selfish brothers, driven by famine, came from Canaan to buy corn. Joseph, though so great a man, kept the details of the famine department in his own hands, otherwise there might have been waste. But to the public he was a mighty Egyptian administrator, probably in Egyptian dress, and with all the paraphernalia of his rank about him. When his brothers came, he knew them, but they did not know he was Joseph. In their thoughts was probably some menial slave in a remote household, perhaps already starved to death in these hard times!
1720. Joseph treated his brothers liberally. Perhaps he condescended to enter into conversation with these strangers, and enquired about their family. The ten brothers had come. Had they left a father behind them? What sort of a person was he? Very aged? Well, of course he could not come. Had they any other brothers? Doubtless the ten brothers said nothing about their lost Joseph, or told some lie about him. But perhaps their host's kindly insistence brought Benjamin into the conversation. How old was he? Why had they not brought him? Would they bring him next time? Indeed they must, or they would get no more com, and he—the great Egyptian Wazir—would not even see them.

60. “Now if ye bring him not to me, ye shall have no measure (of corn) from me, nor shall ye (even) come near me.”

61. They said: “We shall try to win him from his father: indeed we shall do it.”

62. And (Joseph) told his servants to put their stock-in-trade into their saddle-bags, so they should know it only when they returned to their people.

1721. The brothers said: “Certainly, we shall try to beg him of our father, and bring him away with us; we shall certainly comply with your desire.” In reality they probably loved Benjamin no more than they loved Joseph. But they must get food when the present supply was exhausted, and they must humour the great Egyptian Wazir. Note that they do not call Jacob “our father” but “his father”; how little they loved their aged father, whom they identified with Joseph and Benjamin! Their trial and their instruction in their duties is now being undertaken by Joseph.

1722. Bidhā'at: stock in trade; capital with which business is carried on; money when it is used as capital for trade. It is better here to suppose that they were bartering goods for grain. Cf. xii. 19.
In order that they
Might come back^{1723}

63. Now when they returned
To their father, they said:
"O our father! No more
Measure of grain shall we get
(Unless we take our brother):
So send our brother with us,
That we may get our measure;
And we will indeed
Take every care of him."^{1724}

64. He said: "Shall I trust you
With him with any result
Other than when I trusted you
With his brother aforetime?
But Allah is the best
To take care (of him),
And He is the Most Merciful
Of those who show mercy!^{1725}

65. Then when they opened
Their baggage, they found
Their stock-in-trade had been
Returned to them. They said:
"O our father! What (more)
Can we desire? This our

1723. It was most important for Joseph’s plan that they should come back. If they
came back at all, they could not come without Benjamin after what he had told them.
As an additional incentive to their coming back, he returns the price of the grain in such
a way that they should find it in their saddle-bags when they reach home.

1724. On their return they no doubt told Jacob all that had transpired. But to beg
Benjamin of him was no easy matter, as Jacob did not trust them and had no cause to
trust them after their treatment of Joseph. So they use the argument of urgent necessity
for all it is worth.

1725. I construe Jacob’s answer to be a flat refusal to let Benjamin go with them.
It would be like the former occasion when he trusted Joseph with them and they lost
him. Did they talk of taking care of him? The only protection that he trusted was that
of Allah. He at least showed mercy to old and young alike. Did man show such mercy?
Witness his sad old age and his lost little Joseph! Would they bring down “his grey hairs
with sorrow to the grave?”
Stock-in-trade has been returned\textsuperscript{1726}
To us: so we shall get
(More) food for our family;
We shall take care of our brother;
And add (at the same time)
A full camel's load (of grain
to our provisions).
This is but a small quantity.\textsuperscript{1727}

66. (Jacob) said: "Never will I
Send him with you until
Ye swear a solemn oath to me,
In Allah's name, that ye
Will be sure to bring him back
To me unless ye are yourselves
Hemmed in (and made
powerless).\textsuperscript{1728}

And when they had sworn
Their solemn oath,
He said: "Over all
That we say, be Allah
The Witness and Guardian!"\textsuperscript{1729}

\textsuperscript{1726}. The ten brothers did not take their father's refusal as final. They opened their saddle-bags, and found that the price they had paid for their provisions had been returned to them. They had got the grain free! What more could they desire? The spell which Joseph had woven now worked. If they only went back, this kind Wazir would give more grain if they pleased him. And the only way to please him was to take back their younger brother with them. It would cost them nothing. Judging by past experience they would get a whole camel's load of grain now. And so they stated their case to the aged father.

\textsuperscript{1727}. Two meanings are possible,—either or perhaps both. 'What we have brought now is nothing compared to what we shall get if we humour the whim of the Egyptian Wazir. And, moreover, Egypt seems to have plenty of grain stored up. What is a camel-load to her Wazir to give away?'

\textsuperscript{1728}. The appeal to the family's needs in the time of famine at length made Jacob relent, but he exacted a solemn promise from the brothers, under the most religious sanctions, that they would bring Benjamin back to him, unless they were themselves prevented, as the Insurance Policies say "by an act of God," so that they became really powerless. To that promise Jacob called Allah to witness.

\textsuperscript{1729}. This is more than a formula. Allah is invoked as present and witnessing the bargain, and to Him both parties make over the affair to arrange and fulfil.
Further he said:

"O my sons! enter not by one gate: enter ye by different gates. Not that I can profit you aught against Allah (with my advice): None can command except Allah: On Him do I put my trust: And let all that trust put their trust on Him."

And when they entered in the manner their father had enjoined, it did not profit them in the least against (the Plan of) Allah: It served only to satisfy Jacob's heartfelt desire.

1730. The Commentators refer to a Jewish or Eastern custom or superstition which forbade members of a numerous family to go together in a mass for fear of "the evil eye". But apart from East or West, or custom or superstition, it would be ridiculous for any large family of ten or eleven to parade together in a procession among strangers. But there was even a better reason in this particular case, which made Jacob's advice sound, and Jacob was, as stated in the next verse, a man of knowledge and experience. Here were eleven strangers dressed alike, in a dress not of the country, talking a strange language, coming in a time of stress, on an errand for which they had no credentials. Would they not attract undue attention and suspicion if they went together? Would they not be taken for spies—or for men bent on some mischief, theft, or organised crime? Such a suspicion is referred to in verse 73 below. By entering separately they would attract little attention. Jacob very wisely tells them to take all human precautions. But like a Prophet of Allah he warns them that human precautions would be no good if they neglect or run counter to far weightier matters—Allah's Will and Law. Above all, they must try to understand and obey this, and their trust should be on Allah rather than on human usages, institutions, or precautions, however good and reasonable these might be.

1731. See the last verse and n. 1730. Though they scrupulously observed their father's injunctions to the letter, their hearts were not yet pure, and they got into trouble, as the later story will show. They had the hardihood to cast aspersions on Joseph, not knowing that they were in Joseph's power. And Joseph took a noble revenge by planning a reunion of the whole family and shaming the ten brothers into repentance. He was the instrument for the fulfilment of Allah's Plan.

1732. It is a necessity of a Prophet's soul that he should speak out and teach all that he knows, to the worthy and unworthy alike. This, Jacob did to his unworthy sons, as well as to his worthy sons whom he loved best. It was not for him as Prophet to
For he was,
By Our instruction, full
Of knowledge (and experience):
But most men know not.\textsuperscript{1733}

\textbf{SECTION 9.}

69. Now when they came
Into Joseph's presence,\textsuperscript{1734}
He received his (full) brother\textsuperscript{1735}
To stay with him. He said
(To him): "Behold! I am thy (own)
Brother; so grieve not
At aught of their doings."\textsuperscript{1736}

\textsuperscript{1733} The Prophets of Allah are full of knowledge,—not as men, but as taught by the grace of Allah. For men, as such, are (Carlyle said) mostly fools,—devoid of knowledge and understanding.

\textsuperscript{1734} The ten brothers, with Benjamin, arrived in Egypt, and waited on the great Wazir. Joseph again received them hospitably, even more so than before, as they had complied with his request to bring Benjamin. No doubt many shrewd and probing questions were asked by Joseph, and no doubt it was clear that Benjamin was one apart from the other ten. Baithawi fills up the picture of the great feast for us. The guests were seated two by two. Baithawi was the odd one, and Joseph courteously took him to his own table.

\textsuperscript{1735} After the feast the question of lodgings arose. They were to be accommodated two by two. Again Benjamin was the odd one. What more natural than that the Wazir should take him to himself? He thus got a chance of privacy with him. He disclosed his identity to him, charging him to keep it a secret, and to take no notice of any strange doings that might occur. He must have learnt from Benjamin about his father and about the inner doings of the family. He must get them all together into Egypt under his own eye. He had a plan, and he proceeded to put it into execution.

\textsuperscript{1736} The past tense of \textit{Kānū}, combined with the aorist of \textit{Ya'malān}, signifies that the reference is to their brothers' doings, past, present, and future. Benjamin was not to mind what wrongs they had done in the past, or how they behaved in the present or the immediate future. Joseph had a plan that required Benjamin's silence in strange circumstances.
70. At length when he had furnished them forth with provisions (Suitable) for them, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then shouted out a Crier: "O ye (in) the Caravan! Behold! ye are thieves, Without doubt!"

71. They said, turning towards them: "What is it that ye miss?"

72. They said: "We miss the great beaker of the king; For him who produces it. Is (the reward of) a camel load; I Will be bound by it."

73. (The brothers) said: "By Allah! Well ye know that we Came not to make mischief In the land, and we are No thieves!"

74. (The Egyptians) said: "What then Shall be the penalty of this, If ye are (proved) to have lied?"

1737. Joseph's plan was to play a practical joke on them, which would achieve two objects. Immediately it would put them into some consternation, but nothing comparable to what he had suffered at their hands. When the plan was unravelled, it would make them thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and dramatically bring home their guilt to them. Secondly, it would give him an excuse to detain Benjamin and bring their aged father into Egypt. He contrived that a valuable drinking cup should be concealed in Benjamin's saddle-bag. When it was found after an ostentatious search, he would detain the supposed culprit, and attain his object, as the story relates further on.

1738. As strangers in a strange land, they were liable to be suspected as spies or men who meditated some unlawful design, or some crime, such as theft, which would be common in a season of scarcity. The brothers protested against the absurdity of such a suspicion after they had been entertained so royally by the Wazir.

1739. "That might be all very well," said the Egyptians, "but what if it is found by a search that you have in fact abused the Wazir's hospitality by stealing a valuable cup?"
75. They said: “The penalty should be that he in whose saddle-bag it is found, should be held (as bondman) to atone for the (crime). Thus it is we punish the wrong-doers!”

76. So he began (the search) with their baggage, before (he came to) the baggage of his brother; at length he brought it out of his

1740. We must try to picture to ourselves the mentality of the ten. They understood each other perfectly, in their sins as well as in other things. For themselves, the search held out no fears. Besides they had had no opportunity of stealing. But what of that young fellow Benjamin? They were ready to believe anything against him, the more so as the Wazir’s partiality for him had lent a keen edge to their jealousy. Judging by their own standards, they would not be surprised if he had stolen, seeing that he had had such opportunities—sitting at the High Table and staying with the Wazir. They felt very self-righteous at the same time that they indulged in the luxury of accusing in their thoughts the most innocent of men! Supposing he had stolen, here would be a fine opportunity of getting rid of him. What about their solemn oath to their father? Oh! that was covered by the exception. He had done for himself. They had done all they could to protect him, but they were powerless. The old man could come and see for himself.

1741. This was their family custom. It was of course long anterior to the Mosaic Law, which laid down full restitution for theft, and if the culprit had nothing, he was to be sold for his theft (Exod. xxii. 3). But here the crime was more than theft. It was theft, lying, and the grossest abuse of confidence and hospitality. While the ten felt a secret satisfaction in suggesting the penalty, they were unconsciously carrying out Joseph’s plan. Thus the vilest motives often help in carrying out the most beneficent plans.

1742. The pronoun “he” can only refer to Joseph. He may have been present all the time, or he may just have come up, as the supposed theft of the king’s own cup (xii. 72 above) was a very serious and important affair, and the investigation required his personal supervision. All that his officers did by his orders was his own act. As the lawyers say: Qui facti per alium, factit per se (whoever does anything through another, does it himself).

1743. The Arabic word here used is wa’im, plural an’iya, which includes bags, lockers, boxes, or any receptacles in which things are stored. Notice the appropriateness of the words used. The cup was concealed in a saddle-bag (raḥl), verse 70 above. When it comes to searching, they must search all the baggage of every description if the search was to be convincing and effective.

1744. It refers to the drinking cup, the siqāyat, which is a feminine noun: hence the feminine pronoun (ḥā) in Arabic.
Brother’s baggage. Thus did We Plan for Joseph. He could not Take his brother by the law Of the king except that Allah\textsuperscript{1745} Willed it (so). We raise To degrees (of wisdom) whom\textsuperscript{1746} We please: but over all Endued with knowledge is One, The All-Knowing.

77. They said: “If he steals, There was a brother of his Who did steal before (him).”\textsuperscript{1747} But these things did Joseph Keep locked in his heart, Revealing not the secrets to them\textsuperscript{1748}

\textsuperscript{1745.} Let no one suppose that it was a vulgar or wicked trick, such as we sometimes hear of in police courts, when property is planted on innocent men to get them into trouble. On the contrary it was a device or stratagem whose purpose was to show up wickedness in its true colours, to give it a chance of repentance, to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation, to give solace to the aged father who had suffered so much. Joseph was a Prophet of Allah, but he could not have carried out his plan or taken the first step, of detaining his brother, except with the will and permission of Allah, Whose Plan is universal and for all His creatures.

\textsuperscript{1746.} If we examine this world’s affairs, there are all sorts of plans, and all degrees of folly and wisdom. The wicked ones plan; the foolish ones plan; the simple ones plan; then there are men who think themselves wise and are perhaps thought to be wise, but who are foolish, and they have their plans; and there are degrees of real and beneficent wisdom among men. Allah, is above all. Anything good in our wisdom is but a reflection of His wisdom, and His wisdom can even turn folly and wickedness to good.

\textsuperscript{1747.} The hatred of the Ten for Joseph and Benjamin comes out again. They are not only ready to believe evil of Benjamin, but they carry their thoughts back to Joseph and call him a thief as well. They had injured Joseph; and by a false charge of this kind they salve their conscience. Little did they suspect that Joseph was before them under another guise, and their falsehood and treachery, would soon be exposed.

\textsuperscript{1748.} There were many secrets: (1) that he was Joseph himself; (2) that his brother Benjamin knew him; (3) that there was no guilt in Benjamin, but the whole practical joke was in furtherance of a great plan (see n. 1745, above); (4) that they were giving themselves away, and were unconsciously facilitating the plan, though their motives were not above-board.
He (simply) said (to himself):
"Ye are the worse situated;\textsuperscript{1749} And Allah knoweth best
The truth of what ye assert!"

78. They said: "O exalted one!\textsuperscript{1750} Behold! he has a father, Aged and venerable, (who will Grieve for him); so take One of us in his place; For we see that thou art (Gracious) in doing good."

79. He said: "Allah forbid That we take other than him With whom we found Our property: indeed (If we did so), we should Be acting wrongfully.\textsuperscript{1751}

SECTION 10.

80. Now when they saw No hope of his (yielding), They held a conference in private. The leader among them said;\textsuperscript{1752} "Know ye not that your father

1749. "Ah!" thought Joseph, "you think that Benjamin is safely out of the way, and that Joseph was got rid of long since! Would you be surprised to know that you have given yourselves away, that you are now in the power of Joseph, and that Joseph is the very instrument of your exposure and (let us hope) of your repentance?"

1750. I have translated the title of 'Aziz here as "the exalted one" when addressed to Joseph in order not to cause confusion with the other man, the 'Aziz the Courtier, who had bought Joseph on arrival in Egypt. See xii. 30 above, and notes 1677 and 1714.

1751. There is a little sparring now between the Ten and Joseph. They are afraid of meeting their father's wrath, and he holds them strictly to the bargain which they had themselves suggested.

1752. Kabir may mean the eldest. But in xii. 78 above, Kabir is distinguished from Shaikh, and I have translated the one as "venerable" and the other as "aged". In xx. 71 Kabir obviously means "leader" or "chief", and has no reference to age. I therefore translate here by the word "leader", that brother among them who took the most active part in these transactions. His name is not given in the Qur-an. The eldest brother was =
Did take an oath from you  
In Allah's name, and how  
Before this, ye did fail  
In your duty with Joseph?  
Therefore will I not leave  
This land until my father  
Permits me, or Allah  
Judges for me; and He  
Is the best to judge.

81. “Turn ye back to your father,  
And say, ‘O our father!  
Behold! thy son committed theft!  
We bear witness only to what  
We know, and we could not  
Well guard against the unseen!”

82. “Ask at the town where  
We have been and the caravan  
In which we returned,  
And (you will find) we are  
Indeed telling the truth.”

83. Jacob said: “Nay, but ye  
Have yourselves contrived

= Reuben. But according to the biblical story the brother who had taken the most active part in this transaction was Judah, one of the elder brothers, being the fourth son, after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, and of the same mother as these. It was Judah who stood surety to Jacob for Benjamin (Gen. xliii. 9). It is therefore natural that Judah should, as here, offer to stay behind.

1753. The pledge he had given was to his father, and in Allah's name. Therefore he was bound both to his father, and to Allah. He must await his father's orders and remain here as pledged, unless Allah opened out some other way. For example the Egyptian Wazir might relent; if so, he could go back with Benjamin to his father, and his pledge would be satisfied.

1754. ‘He stole in secret and without our knowledge. How could we in the circumstances prevent it? This may have been a good statement for the other nine brothers, but Judah was himself personally and specially pledged.

1755. To vouch for the truth of the story, the nine brothers are asked by Judah to appeal to their father to enquire at the place where they stayed and the caravan with which they came, and he would find that the facts were as they stated them. The nine brothers came back and told their father as they had been instructed by Judah.
A story (good enough) for you. The old father's grief is indescribable. Yet with what master-strokes it is described here! One sorrow brings up the memory of another and a greater one. 'Benjamin is now gone! Oh but Joseph! his pretty dream of boyhood! his greatness foretold! and now how dark was the world! If he could but weep! Tears might give relief, and his red and swollen eyes might yet regain their light!' But his grief was too deep for tears. His eyes lost their colour, and became a dull white. The light became a mere blur, a white glimmer. Darkness seemed to cover everything. So it was in the outside world. So was it in his mind. His grief was unshared, unexpressed, and uncomplaining. Who could share it? Who could understand it? He bore his sorrow in silence. Yet his faith was undimmed, and he trimmed the lamp of patience, that sovereign virtue for those who have faith.
1759. A speech full of jealousy, taunting malice, and lack of understanding, one that would have driven mad any one less endowed with patience and wisdom than was Jacob, the Prophet of Allah. It shows that the sons were still unregenerate, though the time of their repentance and reclamation was drawing nigh. The cruel heartlessness of their words is particularly out of place, as Jacob bore his sorrow in silence and complained to no mortal, but poured out his distraction and grief only to Allah, as stated in the next verse.

1760. Jacob's plaint to Allah is about himself, not about Allah's doings. He bewails the distraction of his mind and his occasional breaking out of those bounds of patience which he had set for himself.

1761. He knew of Allah's merciful and beneficent dealings with man in a way his shallow sons did not. And his perfect faith in Allah also told him that all would be well. He never gave up hope for Joseph, as his directions in the next verse show. They may be supposed to have been spoken after a little silence of grief and thought. That silence I have indicated in punctuation by three dots.

1762. The word is ṭauḥ, not ṭāḥ, as some translators have mistakenly construed it. Ṭauḥ includes the idea of a Mercy that stills or calms our distracted state, and is particularly appropriate here in the mouth of Jacob.

1763. Jacob ignores and forgives the sting and malice in the speech of his sons, and like a true Prophet of Allah, still wishes them well, gives them sound advice, and sends them on an errand which is to open their eyes to the wonderful ways of Providence as much as it will bring consolation to his own distressed soul. He asks them to go again in search of Joseph and Benjamin. Perhaps by now he had an idea that they might be together in Egypt. In any case their stock of grain is again low, and they must seek its replenishment in Egypt.
88. Then, when they came (Back) into (Joseph's) presence They said: “O exalted one! Distress has seized us And our family: we have (Now) brought but scanty capital: So pay us full measure, (We pray thee), and treat it As charity to us; for Allah Doth reward the charitable.”

89. He said: “Know ye How ye dealt with Joseph And his brother, not knowing (What ye were doing)?”

90. They said: “Art thou indeed Joseph?” He said, “I am Joseph, and this is my brother: Allah has indeed been gracious

1764. The nine brothers come back to Egypt according to their father's direction. Their first care is to see the Wazir. They must tell him of all their father's distress and excite his pity, if perchance he might release Benjamin. They would describe the father's special mental distress as well as the distress which was the common lot of all in famine time. They had spent a great part of their capital and stock-in-trade. They would appeal to his charity. It might please so great a man, the absolute governor of a wealthy state. And they did so. Perhaps they mentioned their father's touching faith, and that brought Joseph out of his shell, as in the next verse.

1765. Joseph now wants to reveal himself and touch their conscience. He had but to remind them of the true facts as to their treatment of their brother Joseph, whom they pretended to have lost. He had by now also learnt from Benjamin what slights and injustice he too had suffered at their hands after Joseph's protection had been removed from him in their home. Had not Joseph himself seen them but too prone to believe the worst of Benjamin and to say the worst of Joseph? But Joseph would be charitable,—not only in the sense which they meant when they asked for a charitable grant of grain, but in a far higher sense. He would forgive them and put the most charitable construction on what they did,—that they knew not what they were doing!

1766. Their father's words, the way events were shaping themselves. Joseph's questionings, perhaps Benjamin's manner now,—not a slave kept in subjection but one in perfect love and understanding with this great Wazir,—perhaps also a recollection of Joseph's boyish dream,—all these things had prepared their minds and they ask the direct question, “Art thou Joseph?” They get the direct reply, “Yes, I am Joseph; and if you have still any doubt of my identity, here is Benjamin: ask him. We have suffered much, but patience and right conduct are at last rewarded by Allah!”
To us (all): behold, he that is
Righteous and patient,—never
Will Allah suffer the reward
To be lost, of those
Who do right.”

91. They said: “By Allah! Indeed
Has Allah preferred thee
Above us, and we certainly
Have been guilty of sin!”

92. He said: “This day
Let no reproach be (cast)
On you: Allah will forgive you,
And He is the Most Merciful
Of those who show mercy!

93. “Go with this my shirt,
And cast it over the face
Of my father: he will
Come to see (clearly). Then come
Ye (here) to me together
With all your family.”

1767. The scales fall from the eyes of the brothers. We may suppose that they had joined Judah at this interview, and perhaps what Judah had seen when he was alone helped in the process of their enlightenment. They are convicted of sin out of their own mouths, and now there is no arrière pensée, no reserve thought, in their minds. They freely confess their wrong-doing, and the justice of Joseph’s preferment.

1768. Joseph is most generous. He is glad that they have at last seen the significance of what happened. But he will not allow them at this great moment of reconciliation to dwell on their conduct with reproaches against themselves. There is more urgent work to do. An aged and beloved father is eating out his heart in far Canaan in love and longing for his Joseph, and he must be told all immediately, and “comforted in body, mind, and estate,” and so he tells the brothers to hurry back immediately with his shirt as a sign of recognition, as a proof of these wonderful happenings.

1769. It will be remembered that they had covered their crime by taking his shirt, putting on the stains of blood, and pretending that he had been killed by a wolf: see above, xii. 17-18. Now that they have confessed their crime and been forgiven, and they have joyful news to tell Jacob about Joseph. Joseph gives them another shirt of his to prove the truth of their story. It is rich shirt, befitting a ruler of Egypt, to prove his good fortune, and yet perhaps in design and many colours (xii. 18, n. 1651) were reminiscent of the lost Joseph. The first shirt plunged Jacob into grief. This one will now restore him. See the verses following.
SECTION 11.

94. When the Caravan left (Egypt),
Their father said: “I do indeed
Scent the presence of Joseph; 1770
Nay, think me not a dotard.”

95. They 1771 said: “By Allah!
Truly thou art in
Thine old wandering illusion.”

96. Then when the bearer 1772
Of the good news came,
He cast (the shirt)
Over his face, and he
Forthwith 1773 regained clear sight. 1774
He said: “Did I not say

1770. Literally, I feel the scent, or the air, or the atmosphere or the breath of Joseph; for *rih* has all these significations. Or we might translate, ‘I feel the presence of Joseph in the air’. When a long-lost friend is about to be found or heard of, many people have a sort of presentiment of it, which they call telepathy. In Jacob’s case it was more definite. He had always had faith that Joseph was living and that his dream would be realised. Now that faith was proved true by his own sons; they had been undutiful, and hard, and ignorant; and circumstances had converged to prove it to them by ocular demonstration. Jacob’s soul was more sensitive. No wonder he knew already before the news was actually brought to him.

1771. “They” must be the people around him, before the brothers actually arrived. These same brothers had sedulously cultivated the calumny that their father was an old dotard, and everybody around believed it, even after its authors had to give it up. Thus lies die hard, once they get a start.

1772. We may suppose this to have been Judah (see notes 1752 and 1753 above) who was pledged to his father for Benjamin, and who could now announce the good news not only of Benjamin but of Joseph. We can imagine him hurrying forward, to be the first to tell the news, though the plural pronoun for those whom Jacob addresses in this verse, and for those who reply in the next verse, shows that all the brothers practically arrived together.

1773. The particle *fa* (“then”) has here the force of “forthwith”.

1774. Jacob’s sight had grown dim; his eyes had become white with much sorrow for Joseph (see xii. 84 above). Both his physical and mental vision now became clear and bright as before.
97. They said: “O our father! Ask for us forgiveness For our sins, for we Were truly at fault.”

98. He said: “Soon will I Ask my Lord for forgiveness For you: for He is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

99. Then when they entered The presence of Joseph, He provided a home For his parents with himself, And said: “Enter ye Egypt (all) in safety If it please Allah.”

100. And he raised his parents High on the throne And they fell down in prostration.

1775. He had said this (xii. 86) when everything was against him, and his sons were scoffers. Now they themselves have come to say that his faith was justified and his vision was true.

1776. He fully intended to do this, but the most injured party was Joseph, and it was only fair that Joseph should be consulted. In fact Joseph had already forgiven his brothers all their past, and his father could confidently look forward to Joseph joining in the wish of the whole family to turn to Allah through their aged father Jacob in his prophetic office.

1777. At length the whole family arrived in Egypt and were re-united with Joseph. They were all entertained and provided with homes. But the parents were treated with special honour, as was becoming both to Joseph’s character and ordinary family ethics. His mother Rachel had long been dead, but he had been brought up by his mother’s sister Leah, whom his father had also married. Leah was now his mother. They were lodged with Joseph himself.

1778. This is in Arabic in the plural, not in the dual number. The welcome is for all to Egypt, and under the auspices of the Wazir or Egypt. They came, therefore, under Allah’s will, to a double sense of security: Egypt was secure from the famine unlike the neighbouring countries; and they were to be cared for by the highest in the land.

1779. Certainly metaphorically: probably also literally. By Eastern custom the place of honour at a ceremonial reception is on a seat on a dais, with a special cushion of honour, such as is assigned to a bridegroom at his reception. To show his high respect =
for his parents, Joseph made them sit on a throne of dignity. On the other hand, his parents and his brothers,—all performed the ceremony of prostration before Joseph in recognition of his supreme rank in Egypt under the Pharaoh. And thus was fulfilled the dream or vision of his youth (xii. 4 above and n. 1633).

1779-A. The ceremony of prostration for paying respect might have been allowed at the time of previous prophets, but with the advent of the complete and final revelation prostration before anyone other than Allah is a grave sin strictly prohibited.

1780. Note how modest Joseph is throughout. The first things he thinks of among Allah’s gracious favours to him are: (1) that he was brought out of prison and publicly proclaimed to be honest and virtuous; and (2) that his dear father was restored to him, as well as the brothers who had persecuted him all his life. He will say nothing against them personally. In his husn-i-yunn (habit of interpreting everyone and everything in the most favourable and charitable light), he looks upon them as having been misled. It was Satan that set them against him. But now all is rectified by the grace of Allah, to Whom he renders due praise.

Latif: see n. 2844 to xxii. 63; the fourth meaning mentioned there applies here, with echoes of the other meanings.
Something of the interpretation\textsuperscript{1781} Of dreams.—O thou Creator of the heavens\textsuperscript{1782} And the earth! Thou art My Protector in this world And in the Hereafter. Take Thou my soul (at death) As one submitting to Thy Will (As a Muslim), and unite me With the righteous.\textsuperscript{1783}

102. Such is one of the stories Of what happened unseen,\textsuperscript{1784} Which We reveal by inspiration

\textsuperscript{1781} Then he turns to Allah in prayer, and again his modesty is predominant. He held supreme power under the king, but he calls it "some power" or authority. His reading of events and dreams had saved millions of lives in the great Egyptian famine; yet he refers to it as "something of the interpretation of dreams and events". And he takes no credit to himself. "All this," he says, "was Thy gift, O Allah! For such things can only come from the Creator of the heavens and earth."

\textsuperscript{1782} Power in the doing of things as well as power in intelligent forecasts and plans,—both must look to Allah: otherwise the deed and the plan would be futile.

\textsuperscript{1783} Joseph’s prayer may be analysed thus: (1) I am nothing; all power and knowledge are Thine; (2) such things can only come from Thee, for Thou art the Creator of all; (3) none can protect me from danger and wrong, but only Thou; (4) Thy protection I need both in this world and the next; (5) may I till death remain constant to Thee; (6) may I yield up my soul to Thee in cheerful submission to Thy will; (7) in this moment of union with my family after many partings let me think of the final union with the great family of the righteous. How marvellously apt to the occasion!

\textsuperscript{1784} The story is finished. But is it a story? It is rather a recital of forces and motives, thoughts and feelings, complications and results, ordinarily not seen by men. However much they concert their plans and unite their forces, whatever dark plots they back with all their resources,—the plan of Allah works irresistibly, and sweeps away all their machinations. The good win through in the end, but not always as they planned: the evil are foiled, and often their very plots help the good. What did the brothers desire in trying to get rid of Joseph, and what actually happened? How the Courtier’s wife, encouraged by the corrupt women of her acquaintance, tried and failed to seduce Joseph and how Allah listened to his prayer and saved him from her vile designs? How wrong was it of the cup-bearer to forget Joseph, and yet how his very forgetfulness kept Joseph safe and undisturbed in prison until the day came when he should tackle the great problems of Pharaoh’s kingdom? With every character in the story there are problems, and the whole is a beautifully balanced picture of the working of Allah’s providence in man’s chequered destiny.
Unto thee: nor wast thou\textsuperscript{1785} (Present) with them when they concerted their plans together in the process of weaving their plots.

103. Yet no faith will
The greater part of mankind have, however ardently
Thou dost desire it.\textsuperscript{1786}

104. And no reward dost thou ask
Of them for this: it is
No less than a Message for all creatures.\textsuperscript{1787}

\textbf{SECTION 12.}

105. And how many Signs
In the heavens and the earth
Do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them!\textsuperscript{1788}

1785. The holy Prophet was no actor in those scenes; yet by inspiration he was able to expound them in the divine light, as they had never been expounded before, whether in the Pentateuch or by any Seer before him. And allegorically they figured his own story,—how his own brethren sought to betray and kill him how by Allah's providence he was not only saved but he won through.

1786. In spite of such an exposition and such a convincing illustration, how few men really have true faith,—such a faith as Jacob had in the old story, or Muḥammad the Chosen One had, in the story which was actually unfolding itself on the world's stage when his Sūra was revealed, shortly before the Hijrat? Al-Muṣṭafā's ardent wish and faith was to save his people and all mankind from the graceless condition of want of faith. But his efforts were flouted, and he had to leave his home and suffer all kinds of persecution, but like Joseph, and more than Joseph, he was marked out for great work, which he finally achieved.

1787. The divine Message was priceless; it was not for the Messenger's personal profit, nor did he ask of men any reward for bringing it for their benefit. It was for all creatures,—literally, for all the worlds, as explained in i. 2, n. 20.

1788. Not only can we learn through Scripture of the working of Allah's providence in human history and the history of individual souls. His Signs are scattered literally throughout nature—throughout Creation—for all who have eyes to see. And yet man is so arrogant that he turns away his very eyes from them!
106. And most of them
Believe not in Allah
Without associating (others
As partners) with Him\textsuperscript{1789}

107. Do they then feel secure
From the coming against them
Of the covering veil\textsuperscript{1790}
Of the wrath of Allah.—
Or of the coming against them
Of the (final) Hour
All of a sudden\textsuperscript{1791}
While they perceive not?

108. Say thou: "This is my Way;
I do invite unto Allah,—
With a certain knowledge\textsuperscript{1792}
I and whoever follows me.
Glory to Allah! and never
Will I join gods with Allah!"

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1789. Even if people profess a nominal faith in Allah, they corrupt it by believing in other things as if they were Allah’s partners, or had some share in the shaping of the world’s destinies! In some circles, it is idolatry, the worship of stocks and stones. In others, it is Christolatry and Mariolatry, or the deification of heroes and men of renown. In others it is the powers of Nature or of Life, or of the human intellect personified in Science or Art or invention, and this is the more common form of modern idolatry. Others again worship mystery, or imaginary powers of good or even evil: greed and fear are mixed up with these forms of worship. Islam calls us to worship Allah, the One True God, and Him only.

1790. \textit{Gāshiyyat=} covering veil, pall; used for the Judgment to come, which will be so dark and appalling as to hide up all other and petty things, and be the one great reality for the souls that were slaves to evil.

1791. The metaphor is changed, from intensity of darkness to suddenness of time. It will come before they are aware of it. Let them not feel any sense of safety in sin.

1792. Islam holds fast to the one central fact in the spiritual world,—the unity of God, and all Reality springing from Him and Him alone. There can be no one and nothing in competition with that one and only Reality. It is the essence of Truth. All other ideas or existences, including our perception of Self, are merely relative,—mere projections from the wonderful faculties which He has given to us. This is not, to us, mere hypothesis. It is in our inmost experience. In the physical world, they say that seeing is believing. In our inner world this sense of Allah is as clear as sight in the physical world. Therefore, Al-Muṣṭafā and those who really follow him in the truest sense of the world, call all the world to see this Truth, feel this experience, follow this Way. They will never be =
109. Nor did We send before thee (As Messengers) any but men, Whom We did inspire, (Men) from the peoples of The towns. Do they not travel Through the earth, and see What was the end Of those before them? But the home of the Hereafter Is best, for those who do right. Will ye not then understand?

110. (Respite will be granted) Until, when the messengers Give up hope (of their people) And (come to) think that they Were treated as liars, There reaches them Our help,

= distracted by metaphysical speculations, whose validity will always be doubtful, nor be deluded with phantoms which lead men astray.

1793. It was men that Allah sent as His Messengers to explain Him to men. He did not send angels or gods. Into His chosen men He breathed His inspiration, so that they could see truer than other men. But they were men living with men,-in men’s habitations in town or country; not recluses or cenobites, who had no personal experience of men’s affairs and could not be teachers of men in the fullest sense. Their deeds tell their own tale.

1794. The righteous, the men of Allah, had, as in Joseph’s history, some evidence of Allah’s providence in this very world with all its imperfections as reflecting our imperfections. But this world is of no real consequence to them. Their home is in the Hereafter. Joseph’s earthly home was in Canaan; but he attained his glory elsewhere; and his spiritual Home is in the great Society of the Righteous (iii. 39).

1795. Žannu (come to think): I construe the nominative of this verb to be “the messengers” in agreement with the best authorities. Kuẓībū is the usual reading, though Kuẓzībū, the alternative reading, also rests on good authority. I construe the meaning to be: that Allah gives plenty of rope to the wicked (as in Joseph’s story) until His own Messengers feel almost that it will be hopeless to preach to them and come to consider themselves branded as liars by an unbelieving world; that the breaking point is then reached: that Allah’s help then comes swiftly to His men, and they are delivered from persecution and danger, while the wrath of Allah overtakes sinners, and nothing can then ward it off. This interpretation has good authority behind it, though there are differences of opinion.
And those whom We will
Are delivered into safety.
But never will be warded off
Our punishment from those
Who are in sin.

111. There is, in their stories, 1796
Instruction for men endowed
With understanding. It is not
A tale invented, but a confirmation
Of what went before it. 1797
A detailed exposition
Of all things, and a Guide
And a Mercy to any such
As believe.

1796. Their stories, i.e., the stories of Prophets or of the wicked; for the two threads inter-twine, as in Joseph’s story.

1797. A story like that of Joseph is not a purely imaginary fable. The People of the Book have it in their sacred literature. It is confirmed here in its main outline, but here there is a detailed spiritual exposition that will be found nowhere in earlier literature. The exposition covers all sides of human life. If properly understood it gives valuable lessons to guide our conduct—an instance of Allah’s grace and mercy to people who will go to Him in faith and put their affairs in His hands.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-R‘ad, 13

The chronological place of this Sūra and the general argument of Sūras x. to xv. has been described in the Introduction to S. x.

The special argument of this Sūra deals with that aspect of Allah's revelation of Himself to man and His dealings with him, which is concerned with certain contrasts which are here pointed out. There is the revelation of the Prophets, which comes in spoken words adapted to the language of the various men and groups of men to whom it comes; and there is the parallel revelation or Signs in the constant laws of external nature, on this earth and in the visible heavens. There is the contrast between recurring life and death already in the external world: why should men disbelieve in the life after death? They mock at the idea of punishment because it is deferred; but can they not see Allah's power and glory in thunder and the forces of nature? All creation praises Him: it is the good that endures and the evil that is swept away like froth or scum. Not only in miracles but in the normal working of the world, are shown Allah's power and mercy. Even here there are Signs of the working of His law: plot or plan as men will, it is Allah's Will that must prevail. This is illustrated in Joseph's story in the preceding Sūra.

Summary.—The Book of Revelation is true, and is confirmed by the Signs to be seen in visible nature. Allah Who created such mighty forces in outer nature can raise up man again after death. Allah's knowledge is all-compassing: so are His power and goodness (xiii. 1-18).

The righteous seek the pleasure of Allah and find Peace; the evil ones break His Law, cavil and dispute, and reject faith; the wrath of Allah will take them unawares, but in His Own good time (xiii. 19-31).

So was it with Prophets before: they were mocked, but the mockers were destroyed, while the righteous rejoiced and were established (xiii. 32-43).
Al-Ra'd, or Thunder

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. A.L.M.R. 1798 These are
The verses 1799
Of the Book: that which
Hath been revealed unto thee
From thy Lord is the Truth;
But most men believe not.

2. Allah is He Who raised
The heavens without any pillars 1800
That ye can see;
Then He established Himself
On the Throne. 1801
He has subjected the sun
And the moon!
Each one runs (its course)
For a term appointed.
He doth regulate all affairs, 1802
Explaining the Signs in detail,

1798. For abbreviated Letters generally see Appendix I.
1799. Cf. x. 1, n. 1382.
1800. Should we construe the clause “that ye can see” to refer to “pillars” or “to the heavens”? Either is admissible, but I prefer the former. The heavens are supported on no pillars that we can see. What we see is the blue vault of heaven, but there are invisible forces or conditions created by Allah, which should impress us with His power and glory.
1801. Cf. x. 3, and n. 1386. We must not think that anything came into being by itself or carries out its functions by itself. Allah is the Creator from Whom everything has its life and being and through Whom everything is maintained and supported, even though fixed laws are established for its regulation and government. The “term appointed” limits the duration of their functioning; its ultimate return is to Allah, as its beginning proceeded from Allah.
1802. Cf. x. 31, n. 1425. Where the laws of nature are fixed, and everything runs according to its appointed course, the government and regulation behind it is still that of Allah. Where there is limited free will as in man, yet the ultimate source of man’s faculties is Allah. Allah cares for His creatures. He does not, as in the idea of polytheistic Greece, sit apart on Olympus, careless of His creatures.
That ye may believe with certainty
In the meeting with your Lord.\textsuperscript{1803}

3. And it is He Who spread out
The earth, and set thereon
Mountains standing firm,
And (flowing) rivers: and fruit
Of every kind He made
In pairs, two and two:\textsuperscript{1804}
He draweth the Night as a veil\textsuperscript{1805}
O'er the Day. Behold, verily
In these things there are Signs
For those who consider!

4. And in the earth are tracts
(Diverse though) neighbouring,
And gardens of vines
And fields sown with corn,
And palm trees—growing\textsuperscript{1806}

\textsuperscript{1803}. One manifestation of His caring for His creatures, even where a limited amount of free-will is granted for their development, is that He is careful to explain His Signs both in nature and in express and detailed revelation through His Messengers, lest man should have any doubts whether he has to return ultimately to His Lord and account for all his actions during the "term appointed," when he was given some initiative by way of trial and preparation. If man attends carefully to the Signs, he should have no doubt whatever.

\textsuperscript{1804}. I think that this refers to sex in plants, and I see M.P. has translated accordingly. Plants like animals have their reproductive apparatus,—male stamens and female pistils. In most cases the same flower combines both stamens and pistils, but in some cases these organs are specialised in separate flowers, and in some cases, even in separate trees. The date-palm of Arabia and the Papaiya of India, are instances of fruit trees which are uni-sexual.

\textsuperscript{1805}. Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1032. The whole passage there may be compared with the whole passage here. Both their similarity and their variation show how closely reasoned each argument is, with expressions exactly appropriate to each occasion.

\textsuperscript{1806}. Does "growing out of single roots or otherwise" qualify "palm trees" or "vines" and "corn" as well? The former construction is adopted by the classical Commentators: in which case the reference is to the fact either that two or more palm trees occasionally grow out of a single root, or that palm trees grow sometimes as odd trees and sometimes in great thick clusters. If the latter construction is adopted, the reference would be to the fact that date-palm (and palms generally) and some other plants arise out of a single tap-root, while the majority of trees arise out of a net-work of roots that spread out extensively. Here is adaptation to soil and water conditions,—another Sign or wonder of Creation.
Out of single roots or otherwise: Watered with the same water, Yet some of them We make More excellent than others to eat. 1807

Behold, verily in these things There are Signs for those Who understand!

5. If thou dost marvel (At their want of faith), Strange is their saying: “When we are (actually) dust, 1808 Shall we indeed then be In a creation renewed?” They are Those who deny their Lord! They Are those round whose necks Will be yokes (of servitude): 1809 They will be Companions Of the Fire, to dwell therein (For aye)!

6. They ask thee to hasten on The evil in preference to the good 1810

1807. The date-palm, the crops of food-grains, and the grape-vine are all fed by the same kind of water, yet how different the harvests which they yield! And that applies to all vegetation. The fruit or eatable produce may vary in shape, size, colour, flavour, etc., in endless variety.

1808. After seeing the Signs in nature and the Signs in revelation, it is indeed strange that people should deny their Creator. But if they admit the Signs of the Creator, Who works marvels before their very eyes every day, why should they doubt that when they are reduced to dust, they can be raised up again? If one creation is possible, what difficulty can there be in accepting a renewed creation? It becomes then a question of an obstinate and rebellious will, for which the punishment is described.

1809. ُعَبَّرَةٌ (yokes (of servitude)): Cf. vii. 157 and n. 1128. The punishment may be conceived of in two stages: immediately, yokes of servitude to superstition, falsehood, etc., as against the freedom in Faith; and finally, the Fire which burns the very soul.

1810. The Unbelievers by way of a taunt say: “If there is a punishment, let us see it come down now.” The answer to it is threefold. (1) Why do you want to see the punishment rather than the mercy of Allah? Which is better? (2) Have you not heard in history of terrible punishments for evil? And have you not before your very eyes seen examples of wickedness brought to book? (3) Allah works not only in justice and punishment, but also in mercy and forgiveness, and mercy and forgiveness come first.
8. Allah doth know what
   Every female (womb) doth bear,
   By how much the wombs
   Fall short (of their time
   Or number) or do exceed.
   Every single thing
   Is (also) strict in punishment.

7. And the Unbelievers say:
   "Why is not a Sign sent down
   To him from his Lord?" 1811
   But thou art truly
   A warner, and to every people
   A guide. 1812

SECTION 2.

8. Allah doth know what
   Every female (womb) doth bear, 1813
   By how much the wombs
   Fall short (of their time
   Or number) or do exceed.
   Every single thing is with Him
   In (due) proportion.

9. He knoweth the Unseen
   And that which is open:

1811. After all the Signs that have just been mentioned it is mere fractiousness to say, “Bring down a Sign.” Al-Mustafā brought Signs and credentials as other Prophets did, and like them, refused to satisfy mere idle curiosity.

1812. The last sentence of this verse has usually been interpreted to mean that the Prophet’s function was merely to warn, and that guidance was sent by Allah to every nation through its Prophets. I think the following interpretation is equally possible: ‘it is itself a Sign that Al-Mustafā should warn and preach and produce the Qurān, and the guidance which he brings is universal guidance, as from Allah.

1813. The female womb is just an example, a type, of extreme secrecy. Not even the female herself knows what is in the womb,—whether it is a male young or a female young, whether it is one or more, whether it is to be born short of the standard time or to exceed the standard time. But the most hidden and apparently unknowable things are clear to Allah’s knowledge: there is no mere chance; all things are regulated by Allah in just measure and proportion. The general proposition comes in the last sentence: “every single thing is with Him in (due) proportion.”
He is the Great,
The most High.  

10. It is the same (to Him)
Whether any of you
Conceal his speech or
Declare it openly;
Whether he lie hid by night
Or walk forth freely by day.  

11. For each (such person)  
There are (angels) in succession,
Before and behind him;
They guard him by command
Of Allah. Verily never
Will Allah change the condition
Of a people until they
Change what is in themselves  
But when (once) Allah willeth
A people’s punishment,
There can be no
Turning it back, nor
Will they find, besides Him,
Any to protect

1814. A verse of matchless rhythm in Arabic.

1815. Our most hidden thoughts and motives are known to Him at all times.

1816. See last verse. Every person, whether he conceals or reveals his thoughts,
whether he skulks in darkness or goes about by day—all are under Allah’s watch and
ward. His grace encompasses everyone, and again and again protects him, if he will only
take the protection, from harm and evil. If in his folly he thinks he can secretly take
some pleasure or profit, he is wrong, for recording angels record all his thoughts and
deeds.

1817. Allah is not intent on punishment. He created man virtuous and pure; he gave
him intelligence and knowledge; he surrounded him with all sorts of instruments of His
grace and mercy. If, in spite of all this, man distorts his own will and goes against Allah’s
Will, yet is Allah’s forgiveness open to him if he will take it. It is only when he has
made his own sight blind and changed his own nature or soul away from the beautiful
mould in which Allah formed it, that Allah’s Wrath will descend on him and the
favourable position in which Allah placed him will be changed. When once the
punishment comes, there is no turning it back. None of the things which he relied upon—
other than Allah—can possibly protect him.
12. It is He Who doth show you
The lightning, by way
Both of fear and of hope:\nIt is He Who doth raise up
The clouds, heavy
With (fertilising) rain!

13. Nay, thunder repeateth His praises,\nAnd so do the angels, with awe:\nHe flingeth the loud-voiced
Thunder-bolts, and therewith
He striketh whomsoever He will...
Yet these (are the men)
The while they are
Disputing about Allah
He is Mighty in Power.\n
14. To Him is due the true prayer\nAny others that they
Call upon besides Him hear them
No more than if they were
To stretch forth their hands
For water to reach their mouths
But it reaches them not:

1818. Here then is the climax to the answer of the sarcastic challenge of the Unbelievers for punishment, in language of great sublimity. Why look to evil rather than to good?—to punishment rather than to mercy?—to the fear in the force and fire of the lightning rather than to the hope of good and abundant crops in the rain which will come behind the lightning clouds?

1819. Nay, thunder itself, which may frighten you, is but a tame and beneficent force before Him, declaring His praises, like the rest of creation. THUNDER thus aptly gives the name to this Sūra of contrasts, where what we may think terrible is shown to be really a submissive instrument of good in Allāh’s hands.

1820. And the angels, whom we think to be beautiful creatures of power and glory nearest to Allāh, yet feel reverence and awe even as they praise His holy name.

1821. Who is puny man, to call Allāh in question? Cf. some variations on this theme in the Book of Job, e.g. chapters 38 to 41.

1822. Ḥaqq=truth; right; what is due, befitting, proper. All these meanings are to be understood here. If we worship anything other than Allāh (whether it is idols, stars, powers of nature, spirits, or deified men, or Self, or Power, or Wealth, Science or Art, Talent or Intellect), our worship is both foolish and futile.
For the prayer of those Without Faith is nothing But vain prayer. 1823

15. Whatever beings there are In the heavens and the earth Do prostrate themselves to Allah — with good-will Or in spite of themselves: So do their shadows In the mornings and evenings.

16. Say: “Who is the Lord and Sustainer Of the heavens and the earth?” Say: “(It is) Allah.” Say: “Do ye then take (For worship) protectors other

1823. Without Faith, it is obvious that prayer or worship has no meaning whatever. It is but an aberration of the mind. But there is a deeper meaning. You may have false faith, as in superstitions or in worshipping things other than Allah, as explained in the last note. In that case, too, you are pursuing mere phantoms of the mind. When you come to examine it, it is mere imbecility or futility. Worship and prayer are justified only to Allah, the One True God.

1824. Notice that the original of what I have translated “whatever being” is the personal pronoun man, not mā. This then refers to beings with a personality, e.g., angels, spirits, human beings, and possibly other things of objective (not necessarily material) existence, as contrasted with their Shadows or Simulacra or Appearances, or Phantasms, mentioned at the end of the verse. Both these Beings and their Shadows are subject to the Will of Allah. See notes 1825 and 1827.

1825. “Prostrate themselves”: the posture means that they recognise their subjection to Allah’s Will and Law, whether they wish it or not.

1826. “In spite of themselves”: Satan and Evil. They would like to get away from the control of the All-good Allah, but they cannot, and they have to acknowledge His supremacy and lordship over them.

1827. Even the Shadows—creations of the Imagination, or projections from other things and dependent on the other things for their existence, as shadows are to substance—even such shadows are subject to Allah’s Laws and Will, and cannot arise or have any effect on our minds except by His permission. The Shadows are longest and therefore most prominent when the sun is level, and tend to disappear as the sun approaches the zenith. But even when they are longest and most prominent, they are still subject to Allah’s Will and Law.

1828. The meaning of “Rabb” is explained in n. 20, to i. 2.
Than Him, such as have
No power either for good
Or for harm to themselves?"\textsuperscript{1829}
Say: "Are the blind equal
With those who see?
Or the depths of darkness
Equal with Light?"
Or do they assign to Allah\textsuperscript{1830}
Partners who have created
(Anything) as He has created,
So that the creation seemed
To them similar?
Say: "Allah is the Creator
Of all things: He is
The One, the Supreme and
Irresistible."

17. He sends down water\textsuperscript{1831}
From the skies, and the channels
Flow, each according to its measure:

\begin{itemize}
\item[1829.] Cf. v. 76.
\item[1830.] This verse may be analysed into six parts, each two parts going together like question and answer. Each except the fifth part is introduced by the word "Say", which is equivalent in old Arabic to inverted commas. The fifth part, "or do they assign....similar?" is not introduced by "Say", because it is in the indirect form.
\item[1831.] This verse is full of parables. (1) It is Allah Who sends rain and sends it to all. See how it flows in different channels according to their capacities. Some are sluggish; some have a swift current. Some form great rivers and irrigate wide tracts of country; some are clear crystal streams, perhaps in hilly tracts, with beds of clean pebbles which you can see through the water. Some produce delicious edible fish; and some are infested by crocodiles or injurious monsters. And there are degrees and degrees among brooks, streams, lakes, rivers, and seas. So with the rain of Allah's mercy and the knowledge and wisdom and guidance which He sends. All can receive it. Different ones will respond according to their capacities. (2) In the physical world, water is pure and beneficial. But froth and scum will gather according to local conditions. As the floods will carry off the scum and purify the water, so will the flood of Allah's spiritual mercy carry away our spiritual scum and purify the water. (3) The froth may make a greater show on the surface, but it will not last. So will there be frothy knowledge, which will disappear, but Allah's Truth will endure.
\end{itemize}
But the torrent bears away
The foam that mounts up
To the surface. Even so,
From that (ore) which they heat
In the fire, to make ornaments
Or utensils therewith,
There is a scum likewise.
Thus doth Allah (by parables)
Show forth Truth and falsehood.
For the scum disappears
Like froth cast out;
While that which is for the good
Of mankind remains
On the earth. Thus doth Allah
Set forth parables.

18. For those who respond
To their Lord, are (all)
Good things. But those
Who respond not to Him,—
Even if they had all
That is in the heavens
And on earth, and as much more.
(In vain) would they offer it
For ransom. For them
Will the reckoning be terrible:
Their abode will be Hell,—
What a bed of misery!

SECTION 3.

19. Is then one who doth know
That that which hath been
Revealed unto thee
From thy Lord is the Truth,

1832. In continuation of the last note, the fourth parable is that of metal ores: (4) the ore is full of baser admixture, but the fire will separate the gold from the dross for ornaments, or (5) some metal of household utility, with which you make every-day utensils, which the fire will separate from admixtures which you do not want. So the fire of Allah's test, either by adversity or by affluence, will search out the true metal in us and reject the dross. it will show us what is valuable or what is useful, all sorts of scum and vanity which we collect and miscall knowledge.

1833. Cf. iii 91 and x. 54.
Like one who is blind?  
It is those who are  
Endued with understanding  
That receive admonition;—

20. Those who fulfil the Covenant  
Of Allah and fail not  
In their plighted word;

21. Those who join together  
Those things which Allah  
Hath commanded to be joined,  
Hold their Lord in awe,  
And fear the terrible reckoning;

22. Those who patiently persevere,  
Seeking the countenance of their  
Lord;  
Establish regular prayers; spend,  
Out of (the gifts) We have bestowed  
For their sustenance, secretly  
And openly; and turn off Evil  
With good: for such there is  
The final attainment  
Of the (Eternal) Home,—

23. Gardens of perpetual bliss:  
They shall enter there,  
As well as the righteous  
Among their fathers, their spouses  
And their offspring.

1834. In this section the contrast between Faith and Righteousness on the one hand  
and Infidelity and Evil on the other is set out. The righteous man is known as one who  
(1) receives admonition; (2) is true to his covenants; (3) follows the universal Religion  
of Faith and Practice joined together; (4) is patient and persevering in seeking Allah; and  
in practical matters he is known to be; (5) regular in prayer; (6) generous in true charity,  
whether open or secret; and (7) not revengeful, but anxious to turn off evil with good,  
thus breaking the chain of evil which tends to perpetuate itself.

1835. That is, join faith with practice, love of God with love of man, and respect  
for all Prophets alike, i.e., follow the right Religion, and not odd bits of it.

1836. Their journey in this life was at best a sojourn. The Heaven is their eternal  
Home, which is further prefigured in the two following verses.

1837. The relationships of this life are temporal, but love in righteousness is eternal.
And angels shall enter unto them  
From every gate  
(with the salutation)

24. “Peace unto you for that ye  
Persevered in patience! Now  
How excellent is the final Home!”

25. But those who break  
The Covenant of Allah, after  
Having plighted their word thereto,  
And cut asunder those things  
Which Allah has commanded  
To be joined, and work mischief  
In the land; - on them  
Is the Curse; for them  
Is the terrible Home!  

26. Allah doth enlarge, or grant  
By (strict) measure, the  
Sustenance (Which He giveth) to whomsoever He pleaseth. (The worldly) rejoice  
In the life of this world;  
But the life of this world  
Is but little comfort  
Compared to the Hereafter.  

SECTION 4.

27. The Unbelievers say: “Why  

1838. This is the opposite of the things explained in xiii. 21 above, n. 1835.

1839. This is in contrast to the state of the blessed, described in xiii. 22-24 above.  
The Curse is the opposite of the Bliss, and the Terrible Home is the opposite of the Eternal Home, the Gardens of perpetual bliss.

1840. Allah, the Sustainer and Cherisher of all His creatures, gives sustenance to all. To some He grants it in abundance; to others He gives it in strict measure. No one can question Him, for His Will is supreme, and it is the measure of all good.

1841. Cf. ix. 38. The meaning here may also be: This present life is just a furniture, a convenience, a stepping stone, a probation, for the life to come. In itself it is less important than the Hereafter.
Is not a Sign sent down
To him from his Lord?" 1842
Say: "Truly Allah leaveth,
To stray, whom He will;
But He guideth to Himself
Those who turn to Him
In penitence,—

28. "Those who believe, and whose
hearts
Find satisfaction in the remembrance
Of Allah: for without doubt
In the remembrance of Allah
Do hearts find satisfaction. 1843

29. "For those who believe
And work righteousness,
Is (every) blessedness, 1844
And a beautiful place
Of (final) return."

30. Thus have We sent thee
Amongst a People before whom
(Long since) have (other) Peoples
(Gone and) passed away; 1845

1842. The question is repeated from xiii, 7 above; for the line of reasoning there
suggested in answer is now completed, and another line of reasoning is now taken up.
Allah provides every guidance for those who turn to Him in penitence, but He will leave
those to wander astray who deliberately close their eyes and their hearts to His grace
and the comfort that comes from remembering Him and celebrating His praises.

1843. The Sign or Miracle is not something external: it is something internal,
something in your mind, heart, and soul. It depends on your inner spiritual experience.
If you turn to Allah, that light, that experience, will come. If you do not, Allah will
not force you.

1844. "Blessedness": Tuba: an internal state of satisfaction, an inward joy which is
difficult to describe in words, but which reflects itself in the life of the good man, through
good and ill fortune, through good report and evil. And then, there is always the final
goal to which his eyes are turned, the beautiful Home of rest in the Hereafter, after this
life's struggles are over. That goal is Allah Himself.

1845. Our Prophet came later in time than other Prophets, to complete their Message
and universalise Religion. And certainly it is after his age that the process of the
unification of the world began. That process is not complete yet, but is proceeding apace.
In order that thou mightest
Rehearse unto them what We
Send down unto thee by inspiration;
Yet do they reject (Him),
The Most Gracious!
Say: "He is my Lord!
There is no god but He!
On Him is my trust,
And to Him do I turn!"

31. If there were a Qur’an
With which mountains were moved,
Or the earth were cloven asunder,
Or the dead were made to speak,
(This would be the one!)
But, truly, the Command is
With Allah in all things!
Do not the Believers know,
That, had Allah (so) willed,
He could have guided
All mankind (to the Right)?
But the Unbelievers,—never
Will disaster cease to seize
Them for their (ill) deeds,
Or to settle close to their homes,
Until the promise of Allah
Come to pass, for, verily,
Allah will not fail
In His promise.

1846. Faith tells us that no amount of opposition from Unbelievers can ever stop Allah’s Plan.

1847. Everything is possible and in Allah’s power. His Plan is beneficent and all-embracing. But it is not for His creatures to dictate to Him, or demand what He should do, or how He should do it. The Command is with Allah in all things. The Believers know His omnipotence, and they also know that He will order His world for the best.

1848. Let not the Unbelievers think that if they seem to prosper for a time, that is the end of the matter. They are warned about three things. (1) their ill deeds must carry evil consequences for them all the time, though they may not perceive them for a certain time. (2) Their homes, their places of resort, the circles in which they move, will also be haunted by their ill deeds and their consequences. For evil makes a complex =
SECTION 5.

32. Mocked were (many) messengers

Before thee: but I granted Respite to the Unbelievers, And finally I punished them: Then how (terrible) was My requital!

33. Is then He Who standeth Over every soul (and knoweth) All that it doth, (Like any others)? And yet They ascribe partners to Allah. Say: "But name them! Is it that ye will Inform Him of something He knoweth not on earth, Or is it (just) a show Of words?" Nay! to those Who believe not, their devising

of its environment. The walls of Jericho, when they fall, must bring down all Jericho in its ruins. (3) The ultimate Disaster, the final Reckoning, must come. for Allah never fails in His promise. True values must eventually be restored: the good to the good, and the evil to the evil.

The Commentators draw illustrations from the life of the Prophet, his exile from Makkah, and his restoration. A similar miracle works in all history. But the Command is with Allah.

1849. Cf. vi. 10.

1850. The punishment was in many cases deferred. But when it did come, how terrible and exemplary it was!

1851. Cf. xii. 40. 'You have but to name your false gods, and you will see that they are nothing but names. There is no reality behind them, whereas Allah is the One great Reality. He penetrates everything through and through and knows all things. Do you dare to tell Him of something on earth that He does not know? Or is it just a trick or a show of words?

1852. All pretences and fancies seem attractive to their inventors, but alas! they are a great obstruction to the Path of Religion and Truth. However, if by their contumacy, they have cut themselves off from Allah's grace, who can guide them or reclaim them from their errors?
1853. The consequences of sin may be felt in this life itself, but they are nothing compared to the final penalties in the life to come.

1854. For the comprehensive meaning of the root akafa (literally “to eat”), see v. 66, n. 776. In its derived meaning it means fruit and enjoyment of all kinds, spiritual as well as other. The joys of heaven are not like the joys of the earth, which fade away or cloy. The joys of heaven are pure, lasting, and without any of the drawbacks which we associate with the joys of the sense.

1855. Zillun: literally shade, hence, shelter, protection, security. All these meanings are implied. Shade is one of the delights of a garden. Cf. iv. 57 and n. 579.

1856. In this, as in other places, the Fire is contrasted with the Garden, as Misery is contrasted with Bliss. We can also imagine other incidents in contrast with those of the Garden, e.g., with the Fire will be drought, aridity, thirst, instead of beautiful rivers; pain and suffering, instead of perpetual delight; no protection against the fierceness of the heat, as contrasted with the cool shades ever deepening as you proceed in the Garden.

1857. The Book: in a general sense, Revelation. “Those to whom the Book hath been given” are both (1) the People of the Book of previous revelations, who study the new Revelation in Arabic without prejudice and find in it confirmation of what their ancestors had received and believed in it, and (2) the Muslims who receive the Qur-án with such joy.
Unto thee: but there are
Among the clans those who reject
A part thereof. Say:
"I am commanded to worship
Allah, and not to join partners
With Him. Unto Him
Do I call, and
Unto Him is my return."

37. Thus have We revealed it
To be a judgment of authority
In Arabic. Wert thou to follow
Their (vain) desires after the
knowledge
Which hath reached thee,
Then wouldst thou find
Neither protector nor defender
Against Allah.

SECTION 6.

38. We did send messengers
Before thee, and appointed
For them wives and children.

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1858. *Aḥzāb* (plural of *ḥizb* = parties, sects, troops, clans. The reference may be to the clans mentioned in xxx. 20 and 22 (that whole Sūra is called *Aḥzāb*). But we can understand it in a perfectly general sense. Among all sections of the people there are persons who would receive a portion of Allah's truth but reject whatever does not suit them or fall in with their selfish aims or vain desires. The proper answer to them is: Surely, Allah's command is universal,—to worship and serve Him and refuse to bend the knee to any other; the man of God finds his staff and support in it; but he must invite all to share in its blessings; it came from Allah, and to Allah shall we all return.

1859. The Qur-ān is in Arabic; therefore the Arabs, among whom it was promulgated, could have no difficulty in understanding its precepts and using it in judging of right and wrong in all their affairs. But it is also universal; therefore no one should give preference to his own vain fancies against this authoritative declaration.

1860. Cf. ii. 120. The variation is in the single word "Wāq" here in place of "Nāṣfē" in ii. 120. In each case the apt word is chosen not only for the rhythm in its own passage but for the general meaning in the Argument.

1861. All the Prophets of whom we have any detailed knowledge, except one, had wives and children. The exception is Jesus the son of Mary. But his life was incomplete; his ministry barely lasted three years; his mission was limited; and he was not called upon =
And it was never the part
Of a messenger to bring a Sign
Except as Allah permitted
(Or commanded). For each period
Is an appointment).

39. Allah doth blot out
Or confirm what He pleaseth:
With Him is
The Mother of the Book.

40. Whether We shall show thee
(Within thy life-time)
Part of what We promised them
Or take to Us thy soul
(Before it is all accomplished).
Thy duty is to make
(The Message) reach them:
It is Our part
To call them to account.

41. See they not that We
Gradually reduce the land
From its

= to deal with the many-sided problems that arise in a highly organised society or State.
We pay equal respect to him, because he was Allah's Messenger; but that is not to say
that his Message covers the same universal ground as that of Al-Muṣṭafā. There is no
reproach for a normal human being if he lives a normal human life; there is glory if he
beautifies it and sets a nobler example of virtue than other men, as did Al-Muṣṭafā.

1862. No Prophet performed any Miracle or showed forth any "Signs," except as
Allah willed. Allah’s Will (Mashiyat) is an all-wise, universal Plan, which is not formed
for the benefit of one tribe or millat or of one age or country (see also next verse). The
greatest Miracle in history was and is the Qur-an. We can apprehend its beauty and
grandeur to-day as much as did the people of Al-Muṣṭafā’s day,—even more, as our
collective knowledge of nature and of Allah’s creation has increased.

1863. Kitab: means “a Law decreed” or “a Decree established.”

1864. Umm-ul-Kitāb: Mother of the Book; the original foundation of all revelation;
the Essence of Allah’s Will and Law. Cf. iii. 7, and n. 347.
Outlying borders?\(^{1865}\) (Where) Allah Commands, there is none
To put back His command:
And He is Swift
In calling to account.

42. Those before them did (also)
Devote plots; but in all things
Allah is the devising altogether.\(^{1866}\)
He knoweth the doings
Of every soul: and soon
Will the Unbelievers know
Who gets home in the End.

43. The Unbelievers say: "No
messenger\(^{1867}\) Art thou." Say: "Enough
For a witness between me
And you is Allah, and such
As have knowledge of the Book."\(^{1868}\)

1865. In the Prophet’s ministry at Makkah, the Most stiff-necked opposition came from the seat and centre of power in Makkah. The humbler people—the fringe of Makkan society—came in readily, as also did some tribes round about Makkah. After the Hijrat there was a hard struggle between Makkah and Madinah and at last the bloodless conquest of Makkah in A.H. 8 made the Pagan structure finally collapse, though it had already been sapped to its foundations. So, generally, Truth finds easiest entrance through the humble and lowly, and not in the beginning at the headquarters of power, but in the fulness of time it makes its way everywhere with irresistible force.

1866. Cf. iii. 54 and n. 393.

1867. The enemies of Islam have to acknowledge that Al-Muṣṭafā was a great and noble character, but they deny his Prophethood. He could point to his credentials from Allah in the work which he achieved, and the Qur-ān which he brought.

1868. That is, those who have knowledge of revelation generally will recognise Allah’s revelation in the holy Qur-ān. An alternative reading is “min ‘indi·hi”, which is written the same in Arabic, with only three vowel points different. If we adopt that, the last clause will be: “and from Him is (all) knowledge of the Book”: i.e., ‘as all knowledge of the Book comes from Allah, the Qur-ān also bears witness to me’.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ibrāhīm, 14

For the chronology and the general argument of this Sūra in the series Sūras x. to xv., see Introduction to S. x.

The special subject-matter of this Sura is a continuation of the concluding portion of the last Sūra, which explained how Allah's revelation gains ground in spite of selfish men's opposition. Here illustrations are given from the story of Moses and Abraham, and Abraham's Prayer for Makkah forms the core of the Sūra.

Summary.—Revelation leads man from darkness to light. It comes to each nation in its own language and for its own special circumstances. So was it with Moses and other Prophets. There was a conflict of evil with good, but evil was destroyed. Parable of the Goodly Tree (xiv. 1-27).

Why will not men receive God's grace? Why will they choose to go astray? Abraham prayed to be saved from infidelity, himself and his posterity, and he prayed for Makkah, the city of the new revelation through Arabia. Good and Evil will find their proper retribution, and Allah's Plan of Unity will prevail (xiv. 28-52).
Ibrāhīm, or Abraham

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful.

1. A. L. R. 1869 A Book
   Which We have revealed Unto thee, in order that Thou mightest lead mankind Out of the depths of darkness Into light—by the leave
   Of their Lord—to the Way Of (Him) the Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise!—1870

2. Of Allah, to Whom do belong All things in the heavens And on earth! But alas for the Unbelievers For a terrible Chastisement (Their Unfaith will bring them)!

3. Those who prefer the life

1869. For those Letters see Introduction Appendix I.

1870. It is insisted on that every Prophet speaks not from himself but from Allah. His leading into the light is but by the grace and mercy of Allah, not by any power of his own, or by any merit of those who hear him.

1871. In this and the next verse where the sentence is completed, three qualities of Allah are mentioned, viz., (1) His exalted position above all Creation; (2) His goodness, which entitles Him, and Him alone, to Praise; and (3) His Power in all heaven and earth. Thus He stands in no need of man’s worship; His goodness is all for the good of man (and His creatures); and His control over His creatures is complete; so He can carry out His Will and Plan.

1872. See the last note. That being the case, in what a sad plight are those who reject the Faith and Grace offered to them, and draw down on themselves all the terrible consequences of that rejection,—the Wrath to come!

1873. The Unbelievers are here characterised in three ways: (1) they love this ephemeral life and its vanities more than the true Life which goes into the Hereafter; (2) they not only harm themselves but mislead others, (3) their own crooked minds search for something crooked in Allah’s straight Path (Cf. vii. 45). But in doing so, they go farther and farther from the Truth.
5. We sent Moses with Our Signs
(And the command). “Bring out Thy people from the depths Of darkness into light, And remind them of The Days of Allah.”\(^{1876}\) Verily In this there are Signs

4. We sent not a messenger Except (to teach) in the language\(^{1874}\) Of his (own) people, in order To make (things) clear to them. So Allah leads astray Those whom He pleases And guides whom He pleases\(^{1875}\) And He is Exalted in power, Full of Wisdom.

1874. If the object of a Message is to make things clear, it must be delivered in the language current among the people to whom the Messenger is sent. Through them it can reach all mankind. There is even a wider meaning for “language”. It is not merely a question of alphabets, letters, or words. Each age or people—or world in a psychological sense—casts its thoughts in a certain mould or form. Allah’s Message—being universal—can be expressed in all moulds and forms, and is equally valid and necessary for all grades of humanity, and must therefore be explained to each according to his or her capacity or receptivity. In this respect the Qur’an is marvellous. It is for the simplest as well as the most advanced.

1875. “Whom He pleases”; the usual expression for Mashiyat, the universal Will and Plan, which is all-wise and on the highest plane of goodness and righteousness.

1876. “The Days of Allah”: the days when Allah’s mercy was specially shown to them. Every day and every hour and minute, Allah’s grace flows to us abundantly, but there are special events in personal or national history which may be commemorated as Red-letter Days. Those to the Israelites were set out in great detail in ii. 30-61 and on other places.
For such as are firmly patient
And constant, grateful and
appreciative.  

6. Remember! Moses said
To his people: “Call to mind
The favour of Allah to you
When He delivered you
From the people of Pharaoh:
They set you hard tasks
And punishments, slaughtered
Your sons, and let your women-folk
Live: therein was
A tremendous trial from your Lord.”

SECTION 2.

7. And remember! your Lord
Caused to be declared (publicly):
“If ye are grateful, I will
Add more (favours) unto you;
But if ye show ingratitude,
Truly My punishment
Is terrible indeed.”

1877. Šabbār is the intensive form, and includes all the ideas implied in Šabr (ii. 45 and n. 61, and ii. 153 n. 157) in an intensive degree. Shākūr and Shākir have in them the idea of appreciation, recognition, gratitude as shown in deeds of goodness and righteousness. Both terms are applied to Allah as well as to men. A slight distinction in shades of meaning may be noted. Shākūr implies that the appreciation is even for the smallest favours and response on the other side; it is a mental attitude independent of specific facts. Shākir implies bigger and more specific things.

1878. Cf. ii. 49. The reference back to Israel and Moses serves a double purpose-as an appeal to the People of the Book, and as a reminder to the Quraish of the favour now conferred on them by the coming among them of a greater Prophet than Moses.

1879. The various shades of meaning in Shākara are explained in n. 1877 above. Kafara implies: (1) to reject Faith, as in ii. 6 and n. 30; (2) to be ungrateful for mercies and favours received, as here; (3) to resist Allah or Faith, as in iii. 13; (4) to deny (the Signs of Allah), as in iii. 21, or deny the mission of Messengers, as in xiv. 9. Kāfir in the most general sense may be translated “Unbeliever”.

- 692 -
8. And Moses said: "If ye show ingratitude, ye and all on earth together,—yet is Allah Free of all wants,’ Worthy of all praise.

9. Has not the story reached you, (O people!), of those who go before you?—Of the People of Noah, and ‘Ad, and Thamud?—And of those who (came) after them? None knows them. But Allah to them came messengers with clear (signs); but they put their hands up to their mouths, and said: ‘We do deny (the mission) on which ye have been sent, and we are really in suspicious (disquieting) doubt’.

880. Ingratitude not only in feeling or words, but in disobedience, and wilful rejection and rebellion. If the whole of you band together against Allah, you do not detract from Allah’s power one atom, because, Allah does not depend upon you for anything, and His goodness and righteousness and praiseworthiness cannot be called in question by your contumacy.

881. Cf. xxii. 64, xxix. 6, xxv. 15, lxvii. 38.

882. Even the names of all the Prophets are not known to men, much less the details of their story. If some “news” of them (for the word translated “story” may also be translated “news”) reaches us, it is to give us spiritual instruction for our own lives.

883. That is, either that the Unbelievers metaphorically put their hands up to the mouths of the Prophets to try to prevent them from proclaiming their Message, or that the Unbelievers put up their fingers to their own mouths, as much as to say “Do not listen to them,” or bite their own fingers in token of incontinent rage. Whatever construction we adopt, the meaning is that they were intolerant of their prophets even as the Quraish were intolerant of Al-Mustafà and did all they could to suppress Allah’s Truth.

884. Cf. xi. 62. The distinction between Shakk and raib may be noted. Shakk is intellectual doubt, a doubt as to fact; is it so, or is it not? Raib is something more than intellectual doubt; a suspicion that there is fraud or deception; something that upsets your moral belief and causes a disquiet in your soul. In lii. 30, it is used as equivalent to “calamity” or “disaster”, some punishment or evil. Both kinds of doubts and suspicions are hinted at against Prophets of Allah.
As to that to which
Ye invite us."

10. Their messengers said: "Is there
A doubt about Allah,
The Creator of the heavens
And the earth? It is He
Who invites you, in order
That He may forgive you
Your sins and give you
Respite for a term appointed!"
They said: "Ah! ye are
No more than human,
Like ourselves! Ye wish
To turn us away from
What our fathers
Used to worship; then
Bring us some clear authority.

11. Their messengers said to them:
"True, we are human
Like yourselves, but Allah
Doth grant His grace
To such of His servants
As He pleases. It is not
For us to bring you
An authority except as Allah
Permits. And on Allah
Let all men of faith
Put their trust.

1885. The Prophets (generally) clear both kinds of doubt. "You cannot doubt the existence of Allah! Behold His works! We are not speaking for ourselves or deceiving you. We speak according to the Message of inspiration from Allah." Notice that the doubters had said to the Prophets, "Ye invite us." The Prophets say: "It is Allah Who invites you, and He does it to save you by His grace, and give you plenty of time (but not indefinite time) for penitence and amendment."

1886. Infidelity is illogical and argues in a circle. If the Prophet speaks of Allah, the Unbeliever says, "You are only a man!" "But I speak from Allah!" "Oh well! our ancestral ways of worship are good enough for us!" "What if they are wrong?" "What authority have you for saying so?" "The highest authority, that from Allah!" And so we come back full circle! Then the wicked rely on violence, but it recoils on them, and they perish.
12. Why we should not put our trust
On Allah. Indeed He
Has guided us to the Ways
We (follow). We shall certainly
Bear with patience all
The hurt you caused us.
For those who put their trust
Should put their trust on Allah."

SECTION 3.

13. And the Unbelievers said
To their messengers: "Be sure
We shall drive you out
Of our land, or ye shall
Return to our religion."1887
But their Lord inspired
(This Message) to them:
"Verily We shall cause
The wrong-doers to perish!

14. "And verily, We shall
Cause you to abide
In the land, and succeed them.
This for such as fear1888
The Time when they shall stand
Before My tribunal,-such
As fear My Punishment."

1887. The arguments in a circle were explained in the last note. But Infidelity looks
upon argument merely as an amusement. Its chief weapon is physical force. As its only
belief is in materialism, it thinks that threats of force will put down the righteous. It offers
the choice between exile and violence against conformity to its own standards of evil,
which it thinks to be good. But Faith is not to be cowed down by Force. Its source of
strength is Allah, and it receives the assurance that violence will perish ultimately by
violence, and that Faith and Good must stand and be established. In fact the good must
inherit the earth and the evil ones be blotted out.

1888. "Fear" means here "have present before their minds something which should
cause fear, so that they should shape their conduct in order to avoid the ill consequences
of wickedness."
15. But they sought victory and decision (There and then), and frustration Was the lot of every Powerful obstinate transgressor.  

16. In front of such a one Is Hell, and he is given, For drink, boiling fetid water. 

17. In gulps will he sip it, But never will he be near Swallowing it down his throat; Death will come to him From every quarter, yet Will he not die; and In front of him will be A chastisement unrelenting.  

18. The parable of those who Reject their Lord is that Their works are as ashes.

1889. Cf. viii. 19. I have assumed that “they” in this verse is the same as “them” in the preceding verse, i.e., the ungodly. Hoping for victory they forced a decision, and they got it—against themselves. Or they challenged a punishment, and it came in good time. Some Commentators construe “they” here to mean “the Prophets”: in that case the verse would mean: “The Prophets prayed for a victory and decision, and the ungodly were frustrated in their efforts to suppress the Truth.”

1890. Cf. xi. 59. 

1891. A graphic and deterrent picture, from the preaching of the earlier Prophets, of unrelieved horror of the torments of Hell. The door of escape by annihilation is also closed to them. 

1892. Note the fulness of the parable. The works of the ungodly are in themselves light and unsubstantial like ashes; they are the useless rubbish that remains out of the faculties and opportunities which they have misused by burning them up. Further, the ashes are blown about hither and thither by the wind: the ungodly have no compass, direction, or purpose that can stand. The wind, too, which blows on them is no ordinary wind, nor the day on which they seek to enjoy the fruits of their labours an ordinary tranquil day: a furious gale is blowing, for such is the Wrath of Allah. They have neither internal peace nor external gain. In the scattering of the ashes they lose control even of such things as they might have earned but for their misdeeds. Their whole nature is contaminated. All their wishes go astray. They are carried so far, far away from what was in their minds. What did they aim at, and what did they achieve?
On which the wind blows
Furiously on a tempestuous day:
No power have they over
Aught that they have earned:
That is the straying
Far, far (from the goal).

19. Seest thou not that Allah
Created the heavens and the earth
In Truth?\(^{1893}\) If He so will,
He can remove you
And put (in your place)
A new Creation?

20. Nor is that for Allah
Any great matter.\(^{1894}\)

21. They will all be marshalled
Before Allah together: then
Will the weak say to those\(^{1895}\)
Who were arrogant, “For us,
We but followed you; can ye
Then avail us at all
Against the Wrath of Allah?”
They will reply, “If we
Had received the guidance\(^{1896}\)
Of Allah, we should have

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1893. *Haqq*: Truth, Right, Righteousness, True proportions, Reality. Allah’s creation is not to be trifled with. It is built on righteousness, and those who do not obey its laws must give place to others who do. This warning is repeated again and again in history and in revelation. Cf. vi. 73.

1894. *‘Aziz*: great, mighty, excellent, powerful, rare, precious.

1895. When the time for judgment comes, there are two kinds of disillusionment waiting for the ungodly: (1) Those who were misled and failed to see that each soul bears its own personal responsibility (ii. 134) and cannot shift it on to others, will turn to those who misled them, in the hope that they might intercede for them or do something to help them. They receive a plain answer as in the latter part of this verse. (2) Those who relied on Satan, His answer (in xiv. 22 below) is frank, cynical and brutal.

1896. Those whose power or specious intelligence or influence misled them—such as false priests or leaders—will find themselves in a parlous state. How can they help others? They themselves failed to profit from Allah’s guidance, and they can with some justice retort that they put them in the wrong path as they followed it themselves!
Given it to you; to us
It makes no difference (now)
Whether we rage, or bear
(These torments) with patience:
For ourselves there is no way
Of escape."

SECTION 4.

22. And Satan will say
When the matter is decided:
"It was Allah Who gave you
A promise of Truth: I too
Promised, but I failed
In my promise to you.
I had no authority over you
Except to call you, but ye
Listened to me; then
Reproach not me, but reproach
Your own souls. I cannot listen
To your cries, nor can ye
Listen to mine. I reject
Your former act in associating
Me with Allah.
For wrong-doers there must be
A grievous Chastisement."

23. But those who believe
And work righteousness
Will be admitted to Gardens
Beneath which rivers flow,­
To dwell therein for aye
With the leave of their Lord.

1897. After the Judgment, Evil declares itself in its true colours. Frankly it says: 'I deceived you. The promise of Allah was true, but you believed me rather than Allah. I had no power to force you. I had but to call you, and you came running after me. You must blame yourselves. Did you think I was equal with Allah? I know too well that I was not and never could be. If you did wrong, you must suffer the Penalty.'

1898. See the last note. An alternative interpretation of this sentence may be: "I had already beforehand rebelled against Allah with Whom ye associated me."
1899. How this contrasts with the misery and the mutual self-recriminations of the ungodly!

1900. “Goodly word” is usually interpreted as the Divine Word, the Divine Message, the True Religion. It may also be interpreted in a more general sense as a word of truth, a word of goodness or kindness, which follows from a true appreciation of Religion. For Religion includes our duty to Allah and our duty to man. The “evil word” is opposite to this: false religion, blasphemy, false speech, or preaching or teaching unkindness and wrong-doing.

1901. The goodly tree is known for: (1) its beauty; it gives pleasure to all who see it; (2) its stability; it remains firm and unshaken in storms, because its roots are firmly fixed in the earth; (3) its wide compass; its branches reach high, and it catches all the sunshine from heaven, and gives shade to countless birds in its branches and men and animals beneath it, and (4) its abundant fruit, which it yields at all times. So is the Good Word. It is as beautiful as it is true. It abides in all the changes and chances of this life, and even beyond (see verse 27 below); it is never shaken by sorrow or what seems to us calamity; its roots are deep down in the bed-rock facts of life. Its reach is universal, above, around, below: it is illuminated by the divine light from heaven, and its consolation reaches countless beings of all grades of life. Its fruit—the enjoyment of its blessings—is not confined to one season or one set of circumstances; furthermore the fortunate man who is the vehicle of that word has no self-pride; he attributes all its goodness, and his act in spreading it, to the Will and Leave of Allah. Cf. the New Testament Parable of the Sower (Matt. iv. 14-20) or of the Mustard-seed (Matt. iv. 30-32). In this Parable of the Qur-an there are fewer words and more spiritual meaning, and the emphasis is on more essential things.
27. Allah will establish in strength 
Those who believe, with the Word 
That stands firm, in this world 
And in the Hereafter; but Allah 
Will leave, to stray, those 
Who do wrong; Allah doeth 
What He willeth. 1903

28. Hast thou not turned 
Thy thought to those who 1904 
Exchanged the favour of Allah. 
With ingratitude and caused 
Their people to descend 
To the House of Perdition?—

29. Into Hell? They will burn 
Therein, an evil place 
To stay in!

1902. The evil tree is the opposite of the goodly tree. The parallelism of contrast can be followed out in all the details of the last note.

1903. His Will and Plan may be above comprehension, but will prevail over all things. It is not like the will of man, who may plan good things but is not necessarily able to carry them out.

1904. There is a particular and a general meaning. The particular meaning is understood to be a reference to the Makkan Pagans who turned the House of Allah into a place for the worship of horrible idols and the practice of unseemly rites and cults. There is no real difficulty in accepting this as part of a late Makkan Sura even without supposing it to be a prophecy. The Makkan Pagans had turned Religion into a blasphemous superstition, and were misleading their people, persecuting the true Messenger of Allah and all who followed his teaching. Their cup of iniquity seemed about full, and they seemed to be heading to perdition, as later events indeed showed to be the case.

The general meaning is also clear. Selfish men, when they seize power, want worship for themselves or their Phantasies, in derogation of the true God. Power, which should have been an instrument of good, becomes in their hands an instrument of evil. They and their people rush headlong to perdition. “These be thy gods, O Israel!” has been a cry repeated again and again in history, in the face, or at the back, of men of God!
30. And they set up (idols) 
As equal to Allah, to mislead 
(Men) from His Path! Say: 
"Enjoy (your brief power)! 
But verily ye are making 
Straightway for Hell!"

31. Speak to my servants 
Who have believed, 
That they may establish 
Regular prayers, and spend 
(In charity) out of the Sustenance 
We have given them, 
Secretly and openly, before 
The coming of a Day 
In which there will be 
Neither mutual bargaining 
Nor befriending.

32. It is Allah Who hath created 
The heavens and the earth 
And sendeth down rain

1905. Putting ourselves back in the position in which the Muslim community found themselves in Makkah just before the Hijrat, we can imagine how much encouragement and consolation they needed from the preaching, the Faith, and the steadfast character of Al-Mustafā. Intolerant persecution was the order of the day; neither the life nor the property or reputation of the Muslims was safe. They are asked to find strength and tranquillity in prayer and in helping each other according to their needs and resources.

1906. Here, as elsewhere, "Sustenance" is to be taken in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense. There were many among the Muslims who were poor, or slaves, or depressed, because they were deprived of the means of livelihood on account of their Faith. They were to be fed, clothed, and sheltered, by those who had means. Charity was to be ordinarily secret, so as to cut out all show or parade, and perhaps also lest the enemy should dry up those sources by unprincipled violence; but there must be much that had to be open and organised, so that all the needy could know where to go to be relieved.

1907. The great Day of Reckoning would be one on which all values would be changed. Wealth, as understood in this world, would no longer count. Should we not therefore use any wealth we have in this life, to give here and receive there? Bai includes all bargaining, barter, purchase and sale, etc. In this world, where wealth has some value, let us spend it and get for ourselves "treasures in heaven." In the next life each man will stand on his merits and personal responsibility. One man cannot help another. Let us here help each other to become true and righteous, so that our personal account may be favourable there.
From the skies, and with it Bringeth our fruits wherewith To feed you; it is He Who hath made the ships subject To you, that they may sail Through the sea by His Command; And the rivers (also) Hath He made subject to you.  

33. And He hath made subject To you the sun and the moon, Both diligently pursuing Their courses; and the Night And the Day hath He (also) Made subject to you.

34. And He giveth you Of all that ye ask for But if ye count the favours Of Allah, never will ye Be able to number them.

1908. We must realise that behind all our strength, skill, and intelligence there is the power and goodness of Allah, Who gave us all these things. Man can understand and control the forces of nature so as to bring them to his own service: he can only do so, because (1) he has got these gifts from Allah, and (2) Allah has fixed definite laws in nature, of which he can take advantage by Allah's command and permission. He has been made Viceregent on earth (ii. 30); Allah commanded the highest creatures to bow down to Adam (ii. 34). Man, by Allah's command, can use rain to produce food for himself; make ships to sail the seas; use rivers as highways, and cut canals for traffic and irrigation. Not only this, but even the heavenly bodies can (by Allah's command) contribute to his needs (see next verse).

1909. The sun gives out heat, which is the source of all life and energy on this planet, and produces the seasons of the year, by utilising which man can supply his needs, not only material, but immaterial in the shape of light, health, and other blessings. The sun and the moon together produce tides, and are responsible for atmospheric changes which are of the highest importance in the life of man. The succession of Day and Night is due to the apparent daily course of the sun through the skies; and the cool light of the moon performs other services different from those of warm day-light. Because there are laws here, which man can understand and calculate, he can use all such things for his own service, and in that sense the heavenly bodies are themselves made subject to him by Allah's command.

1910. Sincere and true prayer in faith is answered by Allah. Thus He gives us everything which a wise and benevolent Providence can give.
Verily, man is given up
To injustice and ingratitude.1911

SECTION 6.

35. Remember Abraham said:1912
“O my Lord! make this city
One of peace and security;
And preserve me and my sons
From worshipping idols.1913

36. “O my Lord! they have indeed
Led astray many among mankind;
He then who follows my (ways)
Is of me, and he that
Disobeys me,—but Thou
Art indeed Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

37. “O our Lord! I have made
Some of my offspring to dwell

1911. I have tried to render the intensive forms of the Arabic by what I consider their near equivalent here: the phrase “given up to injustice and ingratitude” suggests habitual ignoring of just values and ingratitude for the innumerable gifts and favours which Allah has showered on mankind.

1912. This Prayer of Abraham, the True in Faith, the progenitor of the Semitic peoples and the Prototype of their Religion, is introduced in this place, to illustrate the points referred to in the preceding section, xiv. 31-34, viz., how the new Revelation through the Ka‘ba bears out the universal Revelation of Prayer and Charity, Love of Allah and man, Recognition of Allah’s handiwork in nature, and Insistence on man’s turning away from false worship and ingratitude to Allah. Notice the four divisions into which it falls: (1) verses 35-36 are spoken by Abraham as on his own behalf (“O my Lord!”); (2) verses 37-38 are spoken on behalf of his progeny (“O our Lord!”) but with special reference to the elder branch, the children of Ismā‘îl; (3) verses 39-40 are again a personal appeal, but both branches of his family, viz., the sons of Ismā‘îl and Isaac, are expressly mentioned; (4) verse 41 is a Prayer for himself, his parents, and all Believers, typifying that in the universality of Islam all nations are to be blessed. Jerusalem, for the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Jesus, was the centre and symbol for the Jewish race, though of course all Allah’s Truth is universal; Makkah, the centre of the Arab race, was to throw off its tribal character and become universal, in spite of the Makkans themselves.

1913. Cf. ii. 125-129. Abraham (with Ismā‘îl) built the Ka‘ba, and Abraham asks a blessing on his handiwork and forgiveness for such lapses into idolatry as both branches of his family might fall into.
In a valley without cultivation,
By Thy Sacred House;
In order, O our Lord! that they
May establish regular Prayer:
So fill the hearts of some
Among men with love towards
them.
And feed them with Fruits.
So that they may give thanks.

"O our Lord! truly Thou
Dost know what we conceal
And what we reveal:
For nothing whatever is hidden
From Allah, whether on earth
Or in heaven.

"Praise be to Allah, Who hath
Granted unto me in old age
Ismail and Isaac: for truly
My Lord is He, the Hearer
Of Prayer!"

"O my Lord! make me
One who establishes regular Prayer,
And also (raise such)

1914. The Makkan valley is enclosed by hills on all sides, unlike Madinah, which has level cultivated plains. But just because of its natural isolation, it is fitted to be a centre for Prayer and Praise.

1915. Cf. ii. 126, and n. 128. (The "Fruits" are there explained). The righteous, though they have to have sustenance, both in a literal and figurative sense, require also the love and sympathy of their fellow-men.

1916. In Abraham's prophetic mind was the secret and open enmity or contempt which the Children of Israel were to have for the Children of Ismail (Arabs). He prays to Allah that they may be united in Islam, as indeed they were, except a small remnant.

1917. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen. xxii. 5); and as Ismail was 13 years old when Abraham was 99. (Gen. xvii. 24-25). Ismail was also a son of his father's old age, having been born when Abraham was 86 years old. The younger son's progeny developed the Faith of Israel and that of Christ; the elder son's progeny perfected the more universal Faith of Islam, the Faith of Abraham the True.
Among my offspring
O our Lord!
And accept Thou my Prayer.

41. “O our Lord! cover (us)
With Thy Forgiveness—me,
My parents, and (all) Believers,
On the Day that the Reckoning
Will be established!

SECTION 7.

42. Think not that Allah
Doth not heed the deeds
Of those who do wrong.
He but giveth them respite
Against a Day when
The eyes will fixedly stare
In horror.—

43. They running forward
With necks outstretched,
Their heads uplifted, their gaze

1918. Abraham prays for both branches of his family, having a wider vision than
some of the later Children of Israel.

1919. Read again n. 1912 above. Having prayed for his progeny, Abraham
now prays for Allah’s grace on himself, his parents, and the whole Brotherhood of Faith,
irrespective of family or race or time, to be perfected in the ideal of Islam.

1920. For the shades of meaning in the different words for Forgiveness, see n. 110
to ii. 109.

1921. My parents. Abraham’s father was an idolater (xliii. 26; vi. 74). Not only that,
but he persecuted the Faith of Unity and threatened Abraham with stoning and exile (xix.
46); and he and his people cast him into the Fire to be burned (xxi. 52, 68). Yet
Abraham’s heart was tender, and he prayed for forgiveness for his father because of a
promise which he had made (ix. 114), though he renounced the land of his fathers
(Chaldea).

1922. At the final Reckoning, all that may seem inequality or injustice in this world
will be redressed. But the merits of the best of us will need Allah’s Grace to establish
us in that lasting Felicity which is promised to the righteous. And Abraham, as the father
of Prophecy, prayed for all,—for the Universal Faith perfected in Islam.
1923. A picture of horror. The evil ones, when they realise the situation, will be dazed; their eyes will stare without expression, and never move back; their necks will be outstretched; their heads uplifted in terror of the Judgment from on High; and their hearts become empty of all hope or intelligence as the physical heart might become empty of blood when the circulation stops. In this state they will press forward to Judgment.

1924. Zawāl = decline from the zenith, as that of the sun, decline from the highest point reached by a heavenly body in its course through the sky. The ungodly are apt to think that their power will remain in the ascendant, on account of some material advantages given them temporarily by Allah, but they are constantly receiving warnings in history and revelation and from the example of others before them. There is a warning to the contemporary Pagan Makkans here; but the warning is perfectly general, and for all time.
48. One day the Earth will be
   Changed to a different Earth,
   And so will be the Heavens,
   And (men) will be marshalled
   Forth, before Allah, the One,
   The Irresistible;

49. And thou wilt see
   The Sinners that day
   Bound together in fetters;

50. Their garments of liquid pitch,
   And their faces covered with Fire;

51. That Allah may requite
   Each soul according
   To its deserts,
   And verily Allah is Swift
   In calling to account.

1925. “A new earth and a new heaven” refers to the entirely changed conditions at the end of things as we know them. Cf. xx. 105-107, xxxix. 67, 69, lxxiii. 14, lxxii. 1, lxxxiv. 3.

1926. Cf. xxxvi. 8, lx. 71, lxix. 30.

1927. Sirbâl; plural, Sarâbîl; a garment or coat of mail, breast plate; something covering the most vital parts of the body; like the shirt or the Indian kurtâ.

1928. Qaṭîrân: black pitch, a resinous substance exuding from certain kinds of trees like the terebinth or the pines, or distilled from wood or coal. It catches fire readily. Issuing from the upper garments (Sarâbîl) the flames soon cover the face, the most expressive part of man’s essence or being. The metaphor of fetters (n. 1926) is now changed to that of pitch, which darkens and sets on fire the soul of man.

1929. Its deserts: i.e., according to what it earned by its own acts, good or evil, in its life of probation.

1930. Swift in calling to account: We can understand this in two significations. (1) Let not the wicked think that because Allah, out of His infinite grace and mercy, grants respite, therefore the retribution will be slow in coming. When the time comes in accordance with Allah’s Plan and Wisdom, the retribution will come so swiftly that the ungodly will be surprised and they will wish they could get more respite (xiv. 44). (2) On the great Day of Reckoning, let it not be supposed that, because there will be millions of souls to be judged, there will be any delay in judgment as in a human tribunal. It will be a new world and beyond the flight of Time. Or if a metaphor from time as we conceive it in this world can be taken, it will all be as it were in the twinkling of an eye (xvi. 77).
52. Here is a Message for mankind:
That they may take warning
therefrom,
And may know that He
Is One Allah:1931
Let men of understanding
Take heed.

1931. Here is another aspect of the Truth of Unity. Allah being One, all justice is
of one standard, for Truth is one, and we see it as one as soon as the scales of
phenomenal diversity fall from our eyes. The one true Reality then emerges. Blessed are
those who treasured this Truth in their souls already in their life of probation.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Ḥijr, 15

This is the last of the six Sūras of the A.L.M. series (x. to xv.). Its place in chronology is the late Makkan period, probably somewhere near the middle of that period. See Introduction to S. x. where will be found also an indication of the general subject-matter of the whole series in the gradation of Qur'anic teaching.

The special subject-matter of this Sūra is the protection of Allah's Revelation and Allah's Truth. Evil arose from Pride and the warping of man's will, but Allah's Mercy is the antidote, as was proved in the case of Abraham and Lot, and might have been proved by the people of the Aika and the Hijr if they had only attended to Allah's "Signs". The Qurān, beginning with the Seven Oft-repeated Verses, is the precious vehicle for the praises of Allah.

Summary.—Allah will guard His Revelation, in spite of the cavils of the Unbelievers; Allah is the source of all things; He knows His own people, whom He will gather to Himself (xv. 1-25).

How Evil arose through the pride of Iblis, to whom a respite was granted for a period; but neither fear nor evil will affect those who receive Allah's Message. (xv. 26-50).

The Mercy of Allah to Abraham was conveyed by the same messengers that were sent to destroy the people of Lot for their unspeakable crimes; Evil brought its retribution also on the Companions of the Wood (Aika) and of the Rocky Tract Hijr (xv. 51-84).

The Qurān and its Sūras teach you to celebrate Allah's praises, learn humility in worship, and serve Allah all your life (xv. 85-99).
Al-Hijr, or The Rocky Tract.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious
Most Merciful.

1. A.L.R. 1932 These are
The Ayats 1933 of Revelation,—
Of a Qur-án
That makes things clear. 1934

2. Often will those
Who disbelieve, wish that they
Had been Muslims. 1935

3. Leave them alone, to
Eat and enjoy. 1936

1932. For these letters, see Appendix I.

1933. Cf. x. 1. and n. 1382.

1934. Note how appropriately the different phrases in which the Qur-án is
classified bring out its different aspects as a Revelation. Let us just consider the
phrases used at the beginning of the six A.L.M. Suras of which this is the last in order
of arrangement. In x. we read, “Ayats (or verses or Signs) of the Book of Wisdom”,
the theme being the wonders of Allah’s creation, and its relation to His Revelation. In
xi. we read, “a Book, with verses basic or fundamental, further explained in detail”:
the theme is Allah’s Justice and punishment, to preserve the fundamental scheme of His
Laws. In xii. we read, “The Symbols verses of the Perspicuous Book”: the wonderful
unfolding of Allah’s Plan is explained in Joseph’s story. In xiii. we read, “The Signs
(or verses) of the Book”: the contrasts in the modes of Allah’s Revelation and its
reception by man are pointed out, but not illustrated by detailed examples as in Joseph’s
perspicuous story. In xiv. we read, “A Book revealed to... darkness into light”: the theme being Abraham’s prayer for man to be rescued
from the darkness of false worship into the light of Unity. Here, in xv, we read, “Ayats
(or verses) of Revelation, of a Qur-án that makes things clear (or perspicuous)”: the
theme being an explanation of evil, and how Allah’s Truth is protected from it.

1935. The time must inevitably come when those who allow themselves to be
deceived by falsehood or deliberately break Allah’s Law will find themselves in a terrible
plight. They will then wish, ardently and again and again, that they had sought Allah’s
Will and walked in the light of Truth. That time may be early or late, in this life, or
at death, or at the Day of Judgment, but it must come. Man’s own highest interest
requires that he should awake to the Reality before it is too late for repentance.

And let (false) Hope distract them: soon
For they will soon know.\(^{1937}\)

4. Never did We destroy A population that had not A term decreed and assigned Beforehand.\(^{1938}\)

5. Neither can a people anticipate Its Term, nor delay it.\(^{1939}\)

6. They say: “O thou to whom The Message is being revealed! Truly thou art mad (or possessed).\(^{1940}\)

7. “Why bringest thou not Angels to us if it be That thou hast the Truth?”\(^{1941}\)

1937. The foolish and the wicked set great store by the pleasures of this world. In their pride they think they have all knowledge. In the fulness of knowledge they will see how wrong they were. Meanwhile those who have received the Light should not for a single moment wonder at the apparent prosperity of the ungodly in this world. They should leave them alone, confident in the goodness and justice of Allah.

1938. Kitabun ma'atam: literally, “a writing known”. There are many shades of meaning implied, (1) For every people, as for every individual, there is a definite Term assigned: their faculty of choice gives them the opportunity of moulding their will according to Allah's Will, and thus identifying themselves with Allah's Universal Law. During that Term they will be given plenty of rope; after that Term is past, there will be no opportunity for repentance. (2) Neither the righteous nor the ungodly can hasten or delay the doom: Allah's Will must prevail, and He is All-Wise. (3) The destruction of a people is not an arbitrary punishment from Allah: the people bring it on themselves by their own choice; for the fixed Law or Decree of Allah is always made known to them beforehand, and in many ways.

1939. Cf. vii. 34. Also see the last note.

1940. Al-Mustafâ was accused by the ungodly of being mad or possessed, because he spoke of higher things than they knew, and acted from motives purer and nobler than they could understand. So, in a minor degree, is the lot of all the righteous in the presence of an ungodly world. Their motives, actions, words, hopes, and aspirations are unintelligible to their fellows, and they are accused of being mad or out of their senses. But they know that they are on the right path, and it is the ungodly who are really acting against their own best interests.

1941. Cf. vi. 8-9, and notes 840, 841. On the part of the unbelievers, this is a mere taunt. They neither believe in Allah nor in angels nor in revelation nor in any but material things. It is ridiculous to suppose that they could be taken seriously.
8. We send not the angels
   Down except for just cause.\textsuperscript{1942}
   If they came (to the ungodly),
   Behold! no respite would they
   have!!\textsuperscript{1943}

9. We have, without doubt,
   Sent down the Message;
   And We will assuredly
   Guard it (from corruption).\textsuperscript{1944}

10. We did send messengers before thee
    Amongst the sects\textsuperscript{1945}
    Of old:

11. But never came a messenger
    To them but they mocked him.

12. Even so do We let it creep
    Into the hearts of the sinners—\textsuperscript{1946}

13. They do not believe
    In the Message, such has been

\textsuperscript{1942} Angels are not sent down to satisfy the whim or curiosity of the unbelievers. They are sent to bring inspiration to Allah's messengers and to execute Allah's decrees.

\textsuperscript{1943} If the angels were to appear before the ungodly, it would mean that they came to execute just punishment, and then there would be no hope of respite possible for the ungodly.

\textsuperscript{1944} The purity of the text of the Qur-\textsuperscript{a}n through fourteen centuries is a foretaste of the eternal care with which Allah's Truth is guarded through all ages. All corruptions, inventions, and accretions pass away, but Allah's pure and holy Truth will never suffer eclipse even though the whole world mocked at it and were bent on destroying it.

\textsuperscript{1945} Shiya'un, plural of Shi'atun = a sect, a religious division. Mankind sees fragments of Truth at a time, and is apt to fall into fragments and divisions. All true messengers of Allah come to reconcile these fragments or divisions, for they preach the true Gospel of Unity. So came Al-Mu斯塔fa to bring back to Unity the many jarring sects among the Jews, Christians, and Pagans. His mission was held up to ridicule, but so was the mission of his predecessors. Mockery itself should not discourage the preachers of Truth.

\textsuperscript{1946} If evil and disbelief exist in the world, we must not be impatient or lose our faith. We must recognise that if such things are permitted, they are part of the Universal Plan and purpose of Allah, Who is All-Wise and All-Good, but Whose wisdom and goodness we cannot fully fathom. One consolation we have, and that is stated in the next verse and the next note.
The way of those who went
Before them.

14. Even if We opened out to them
A gate from heaven,
And they were to continue
(All day) ascending therein,

15. They would only say:
“Our eyes have been intoxicated:
Nay, we have been bewitched
By sorcery.”

SECTION 2.

16. It is We Who have set out
Constellations in the heavens

1947. Sects, divisions, and systems invented by men tend to pass away, but Allah's pure Truth of Unity endures for ever. This we see in history when we study it on a large scale. Cf. the parable in xiv. 24-26 Khalat: I have translated it here in the same sense as in xii. 30 x. 102, and other places. Some Commentators give it a slightly different shade of meaning. The other meaning is seen in xlviii. 23.

1948. Cf. vi. 35. The spiritual kingdom is open to all to enter. But the entrance is not a mere matter of physical movement. It is a question of a total change of heart. Evil must cease to be evil before it can see or enjoy Good. If we could suppose Evil, like Bottom the weaver, to be “translated” or in some way carried up to heaven, it would only think that the Truth was an illusion, and the reality was mere witchery. The taint is in its very nature, which must first be purified and rendered fit for the reception of light, truth, and bliss.

1949. Evil having been described, not as an external thing, but as a taint of the soul, we have in this section a glorious account of the purity and beauty of Allah's Creation. Evil is a blot on it, not a normal feature of it. Indeed, the normal feature is the guard which Allah has put on it, to protect it from evil.

1950. In the countless millions of stars in the universe which we see, the first step in our astronomical knowledge is to find marvellous order, beauty, and harmony, on a scale of grandeur which we appreciate more and more as our knowledge increases. The first broad belt that we distinguish is the Zodiac, which marks the sun's path through the heavens year after year and the limit of the wanderings of the moon and the planets. We make twelve divisions of it and call them Signs of the Zodiac. Each marks the solar path through the heavens as we see it, month after month. We can thus mark off the seasons in our solar year, and express in definite laws the most important facts in meteorology, agriculture, seasonal winds, and tides. Then there are the mansions of the moon, the mapping out of the Constellations, and the other marvellous facts of the heavens, some of which affect our physical life on this earth. But the highest lessons we can draw from them are spiritual. The author of this wonderful Order and Beauty is One, and He alone is entitled to our worship.
And made them fair-seeming
To (all) beholders;

17. And (moreover) We have guarded them from every accursed Satan.

18. But any that gains a hearing by stealth, is pursued by a fiery comet, bright (to see).

19. And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance.

20. And We have provided therein means of subsistence—for you and for those for whose sustenance ye are not responsible.

1951. Taking the physical heavens, we can imagine the supreme melody of harmony—guarded from every disturbing force.

1952. Rajim: driven away with stones, rejected, accursed. Cf. iii. 36.


1955. Majesty, order, beauty and harmony are shown in all Allah’s Creation, but especially in the heavens. Coming nearer to man, Allah’s care for man and His goodness are shown (besides other qualities) in His creation of the earth. In highly poetical language, the earth is described as spread out like a carpet, on which the hills act as weights to keep it steady.

1956. And every kind of thing is produced on the earth in due balance and measure. The mineral kingdom supports the vegetable and they in their turn support the animal, and there is a link of mutual dependence between them. Excess is eliminated. The waste of one is made the food of another, and vice versa. And this is a chain of gradation and inter-dependence.

1957. See last note. ‘We provide sustenance of every kind, physical, mental, spiritual, etc., for you (i.e. for mankind). But We do more. We provide for everyone of Our creatures. And there are those of which mankind is not even cognisant. We provide for them also. There are those who may at first sight appear hostile to man, or whom man may consider hostile, such as wild and noxious animals. They are Our creatures, and We provide for them also, as they are Our creatures. But there is due order and balance in the economy of Our universal Plan.’
21. And there is not a thing
But its (sources and) treasures\textsuperscript{1958}
(Inexhaustible) are with Us;
But We only send down
Thereof in due and ascertainable
measures\textsuperscript{1959}
22. And We send the fecundating\textsuperscript{1960} winds.
Then cause the rain to descend
From the sky, therewith providing
You with water (in abundance),
Though ye are not the guardians\textsuperscript{1961}
Of its stores\textsuperscript{1962}

\textbf{1958. Khazā'īn:} treasures; store-houses; places where valuable things are accumulated, from which supplies are distributed from time to time as need arises.

\textbf{1959.} All the wonderful gifts and forces and energies which we see in the world around us have their sources and fountain-heads with Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the Worlds. And what we see or perceive or imagine is just a small portion of what exists. That portion is sent out to us and to our world according to our needs or its needs from time to time as the occasion arises. It is strictly limited according to rule and plan. Its source is unlimited and inexhaustible. In the same way the forces which we see operating around us, in nature or in the spiritual world, according to laws which we can grasp and ascertain, are mere derived forces, in the 2nd, 3rd, or nth degree. Their source and ultimate fountain head is with Allah.

\textbf{1960. Lawāqīḥ, plural of lāqīḥ,} from \textit{lāqāha}, to impregnate or fecundate the female date-palm by putting the pollen of the male tree on to the ovaries of the female tree. The date palm is uni-sexual. The wind performs this office for many flowers. Here, by a bold metaphor, its fecundating quality is transferred to the clouds, which by means of rain produce all kinds of fruit, grain, and vegetation. The clouds as vapour are manipulated by the winds, which set up atmospheric currents resulting in condensation and the descent of rain. Note the appropriateness of the little article “then”, showing the connection of winds with rain.

\textbf{1961. Cf.} the previous verse, and n. 1958. Man may store water in cisterns, tanks, lakes, and head-waters of canals. But he has no control over its original sources, which are the clouds, which by the help of the winds, act as the grand distributors of water over wide spaces of the world's surface.

\textbf{1962.} This verse must be understood as furnishing an example of illustration of what is said in the last verse.
23. And verily, it is We Who give life, and Who give Death: it is We Who remain Inheritors (After all else passes away).

24. To Us are known those of you Who hasten forward, and those Who lag behind.

25. Assuredly it is thy Lord Who will gather them together: For He is Perfect in Wisdom And Knowledge

SECTION 3.

26. We created man from sounding clay, From mud moulded into shape;

27. And the Jinn race, We had

1963. Note how the argument has mounted up from xv. 16 onwards to xv. 23—from things most remote from man to things touching his inmost being, and each of them in its own way is a wonderful instance of Allah's glory and goodness, and the beauty, order and harmony of His creation. First, the heavens, the zodiacal Signs, the stars, and the mysterious phenomena that we see above us; then the earth, and the perfect balance of life and forces therein, with man as an important factor, but not the only factor; then, the inexhaustible sources of energy, of which Allah alone is the Provider, but which come to us in measured proportions, as needed; and lastly, Life and Death itself, which will pass away but Allah will remain. A noble passage, and a fine vindication of Allah's wisdom and providence in dealing with His creatures.

1964. Literally, “We are the Heirs, or Inheritors.” Cf. iii. 180; “To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth.” See also the latter part of n. 988 to vi. 165.

1965. Meaning may be: “those who preceded you in point of time and those who come after you in point of time; they are all known to Allah, and He will gather them all together on the Day of Judgment.”

1966. Ṣaṣṭāl: dry clay which produces a sound, like pottery. Cf. iv. 14. Taking verses 26 and 29 together, I understand the meaning to be: that man's body was formed from wet clay moulded into shape and then dried until it could emit sound; that it was then further fashioned and completed; that into the animal form thus fashioned was breathed the spirit from Allah, which gave it a superiority over other Creation: and that the order for obeisance was then given.
Created before, from the fire
Of a scorching wind.\textsuperscript{1967}

28. Behold! thy Lord said
To the angels: “I am about
To creat man, from sounding clay
From mud moulded into shape;

29. “When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him.”\textsuperscript{1968}

30. So the angels prostrated themselves,
All of them together:

31. Not so\textsuperscript{1969} Iblis:\textsuperscript{1970} he refused to be
Among those who prostrated
themselves.\textsuperscript{1971}

32. (Allah) said: “O Iblis!
What is your reason
For not being among those
Who prostrated themselves?”

\textsuperscript{1967.} Cf. vi. 100 and n. 929.

\textsuperscript{1968.} Among other passages where the creation of Adam is referred to, cf. the following; ii. 30-39; vii. 11-25. Note that here the emphasis is on three points: (1) the breathing from Allah’s spirit into man \textit{i.e.}, the faculty of God-like knowledge and will, which, if rightly used, would give man superiority over other creatures: (2) the origin of evil in arrogance and jealousy on the part of Satan, who saw only the lower side of man (his clay) and failed to see the higher side, the faculty brought in from the spirit of Allah; (3) that this evil only touches those who yield to it, and has no power over Allah’s sincere servants, purified by His grace (xv. 40, 42). Adam is not here mentioned by name, but only Man.

\textsuperscript{1969.} Cf. n. 49 to ii. 34.

\textsuperscript{1970.} \textit{Iblis}: the name has in it the root-idea of desperateness or rebellion. Cf. n. 52 to ii. 36.

\textsuperscript{1971.} Apparently Iblis’s arrogance had two grounds: (1) that man was made of clay while he was made of fire; (2) that he did not wish to do what others did. Both grounds were false; (1) because man had the spirit of Allah breathed into him; (2) because contempt of the angels who obeyed Allah’s words showed not Iblis’s superiority but his inferiority.
33. (Iblis) said: "I am not one
To prostrate myself to man,
Whom Thou didst create
From sounding clay, from mud
Moulded into shape."

34. (Allah) said: "Then get thee out
From here; for thou art
Rejected, accursed.

35. "And the Curse shall be
On thee till the Day of
Judgment."

36. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord!
Give me then respite
Till the Day
The (dead) are raised."

37. (Allah) said: "Respite
Is granted thee—

38. "Till the Day
Of the Time Appointed."

39. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord!
Because Thou hast put me
In the wrong, I will

1972. After the Day of Judgment the whole constitution of the universe will be different. There will be a new world altogether, on a wholly different plane. (Cf. xxi. 104).

1973. What was this respite? The curse on Iblis remained, i.e. he was deprived of Allah’s grace and became in the spiritual world what an outlaw is in a political kingdom. An earthly kingdom may not be able to catch and destroy an outlaw. But Allah is Omnipotent, and such power as Iblis may have can only come through the respite granted by Allah. The respite then is what is expressed in xv. 39 below. In Allah’s grant of limited free-will to man is implied the faculty of choosing between good and evil, and the faculty is exercised through the temptations and allurements put forward by Satan, “the open enemy” of man. This is for the period of man’s probation on this earth. Even so, no temptations have power over the sincere worshippers of Allah, who are purified by His grace.

1974. Agwa’tani: ‘thrown me out of the way, put me in the wrong’: Cf. vii. 16. Satan cannot be straight or truthful even before Allah. By his own arrogance and rebellion he fell; he attributes this to Allah. Between Allah’s righteous judgment and Satan’s snares and temptations there cannot be the remotest comparison. Yet he presumes to put them on an equal footing. He is taking advantage of the respite.
Make (wrong) fair-seeming
To them on the earth,
And I will put them\textsuperscript{1975}
All in the wrong.

40. "Except Thy chosen servants among them,

41. (Allah) said: "This is for me a
Straight path.\textsuperscript{1976}

42. "For over My servants
No authority shalt thou
Have, except such as
Put themselves in the wrong
And follow thee."

43. And verily, Hell
Is the promised abode
For them all!

44. To it are seven Gates:\textsuperscript{1977}
For each of those Gates
Is a (special) class
(Of sinners) assigned.

SECTION 4.

45. The righteous (will be)
Amid Gardens
And fountains
(Of clear-flowing water).

\textsuperscript{1975} Iblis (the Satan) is powerless against Allah. He turns therefore against man.

\textsuperscript{1976} To be sincere in the worship of Allah is to obtain purification from all stain of evil and exemption from all influence of evil. It changes the whole nature of man. After that, evil cannot touch him. Evil will acknowledge him to be beyond its power and will not even tempt him. Apart from such purified souls, everyone who worships Allah invites Allah's grace to protect him. But if he puts himself in the way of wrong and deliberately chooses evil, he must take the consequences. The blame is not even on Satan, the power of evil, it is on the sinner himself, who puts himself into his power; xiv. 22: xv. 42.

\textsuperscript{1977} The ways of sin are numerous, and if they are classified into seven, each of them points to a Gate that leads to Hell.
46. (Their greeting will be);
   “Enter ye here
   In Peace and Security.”

47. And We shall remove
    From their hearts any
    Lurking sense of injury; (They will be) brothers
    (Joyfully) facing each other
    On raised couches.

48. There no sense of fatigue
    Shall touch them,
    Nor shall they (ever)
    Be asked to leave.

49. Tell My servants That I am indeed
    The Oft-Forgiving,
    Most Merciful;

50. And that My Chastisement
    Will be indeed
    The most grievous Chastisement

51. Tell them about
    The guests of Abraham.

52. When they entered his presence
    And said, “Peace!”

1978. Cf. vii. 43, and n. 1021. The hearts and minds will be so purified that all past
rancour, jealousy, or sense of injury will be obliterated. The true Brotherhood will be
realised there, when each will have his own dignity, there will be no question of invidious
comparisons; each will face the others with joy and confidence. There will be no sense
of toil or fatigue, and the joy will last for ever.

1979. We must realise both sides of Allah’s attributes: His mercy, grace, and
forgiveness are unbounded; if we reject all this, His justice and punishment will also be
beyond all that we can conceive.

1980. In illustration of the contrasts between Good and Evil, and the consequences
that flow from them, we have now a reference to four incidents from the past, viz.,:
(1) an incident from the story of Abraham; (2) from that of Lot, nephew of Abraham, and
the end of the Cities of the Plain, which he was sent to warn; (3) the People of the
Wood; and (4) the People of the Rocky Tract (Hijr), after whom this Sūra is called. As
usual, the recital of Allah’s abounding grace comes first.
He said, "We feel Afraid of you!"\(^{1981}\)

53. They said: "Fear not! We give thee glad tidings Of a son endowed With knowledge".\(^{1982}\)

54. He said: "Do ye give me such Glad tidings even though old age Has seized me? Of what, Then, is your good news?"

55. They said: "We give thee Glad tidings in truth; Be not then in despair!"

56. He said: "And who Despairs of the mercy Of his Lord, but such As go astray?"\(^{1983}\)

57. Abraham said:\(^{1984}\) "What then Is the business on which Ye (Have come), O ye Messengers (of Allah)?"

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\(^{1981}\) For a full understanding of this reference to the angels who were Abraham's guests and came to announce the birth of a son to him in his old age, read xi. 69-73 and notes. The appearance of two strangers of uncommon appearance, who refused to partake of the host's sumptuous hospitality, made Abraham at first suspicious and afraid.

\(^{1982}\) The birth of a son in old age, to a sonless father was glad tidings to Abraham personally. The birth of a son endowed with wisdom promised something infinitely more. Considering that the angels were divine messengers, the wisdom referred to was divine wisdom, and the event became an event of prime importance in the world's religious history. For Abraham became, through his progeny, the root of the three great universal religions, diffused throughout the world.

\(^{1983}\) Cf. xi. 69.

\(^{1984}\) When cordial understanding was established between Abraham and his guests and probably when the guests were about to depart, Abraham put a question to them: "What is the mission on which you are going?" It was further implied: "Is there anything I can do to help?" But no. The mission was one of Punishment for abominable sins. Note that the mention of Allah's Wrath is always linked with that of Allah's Mercy, and the Mercy comes first. The same angels that came to punish Sodom and Gomorrah were charged first to give the good news of Allah's Mercy to Abraham in the shape of a long line of Teachers of Righteousness.
58. They said: “We have been sent to a people (Deep) in sin.”

59. “Excepting the adherents of Lût: them we are certainly (Charged) to save (from harm).”

60. “Except his wife, who, we have ascertained, will be among those who will lag behind.”

SECTION 5.

61. At length when the messengers arrived among the adherents of Lût.

62. He said; “Ye appear to be uncommon folk.”

63. They said: “Yea, we have come to thee to accomplish that of which they doubt.”

1985. The Cities of the Plain round the Dead Sea, which to this day is called the Bahr Lût. They were given to unspeakable abominations. Read in this connection xi. 77-83 and notes.

1986. Here, again, Allah’s saving Grace is linked with His Wrath, and is mentioned first.

1987. See xi. 81, and n. 1577.

1988. Āl means people who adhere to the ways and teaching of a great Teacher; e.g., Āl-u-Muḥammad: it does not necessarily mean race or descendants. Ahl ( xv. 65 below) usually implies “household” but may be taken in an extended sense to include People generally; see xv. 67 Qaum ( xv. 62) may be any collection or aggregate of people. In xi. 70 the hostile inhabitants of the Cities of the Plain are called the qaum-u-Lût (the People of Lût). Aṣḥab (companions) refers to a Group rather than to a People: Cf. xv. 78.

1989. The unusual appearance of the angels struck Lot as it had struck Abraham. Knowing the abominable vices to which the Cities were addicted, he feared to entertain handsome young men. They at once disclosed their mission to him. In effect they said:
64. “We have come to thee with the Truth 1990
And assuredly We tell the truth.

65. “Then travel by night
With thy household,
When a portion of the night (Yet remains), and do thou Go behind them:
Let no one amongst you Look back, but pass on Whither ye are ordered.”

66. And We made known This decree to him, That the last remnants Of those (sinners) should be Cut off by the morning 1991

67. The inhabitants of the City Came in (mad) joy (At news of the young men) 1992

68. Lût said: “These are My guests: disgrace me not:

69. “But fear Allah, And shame me not.”

“You, Lot, have been preaching in vain to these wicked Cities. When you warn them of their inevitable end: Destruction, they laugh and doubt. Now their doubt will be resolved. Their destruction will be accomplished before the morning.”

1990. Al-Haqq: the Punishment which is justly and inevitably due, which must certainly come to pass. Cf. xxii. 18.

1991. As the last remnants of the wicked were to be cut off, and as the Mercy of Allah wished to save every true soul who might be with Lot, Allah’s decree was made known to Lot, so that he might save his adherents.

1992. They were addicted to unnatural crime, and the news of the advent of handsome young men inflamed them. How true it is that at the very verge of destruction, men rush blindly to their fate, and cut off any last hope of repentance and mercy for themselves. Cf. xv. 72 below.
70. They said: "Did we not
Forbid thee (to speak)
For all and sundry?" 1993

71. He said: "There are
My daughters (to marry),
If ye must act (so)." 1994

72. Verily, by thy life (O Prophet),
In their wild intoxication,
They wander in distraction,
To and fro. 1995

73. But the (mighty) Blast 1996
Overtook them at sunrise,

74. And We turned (the cities)
Upside down, and rained down
On them brimstones
Hard as baked clay. 1997

75. Behold! in this are Signs
For those who by tokens
Do understand.

1993. I understand the meaning to be that Lot, the only righteous man in the City, had frequently remonstrated with the inhabitants against their unnatural crimes, and they had forbidden him to speak to them again on behalf of any one, "as if" (they might tauntingly say) "he was the protector of all and sundry"

Some Commentators understand the verse to mean: 'Did we not forbid thee to entertain any strangers?'

1994. Cf. xi. 78, n. 1575. "My daughters" in the mouth of a venerable man may mean young girls of the City, which would be appropriate considering the large number of men who came to besiege Lot's house.

1995. The wild, mad fury of passion and sin attains its own destruction and cuts off the last hope of repentance or mercy.

1996. As-Saihat, the mighty Blast, is mentioned as accompanying earthquakes: Cf. xi. 67-94. Here it was the violent wind and noise accompanying the shower of brimstones, possibly with some volcanic action.

1997. Cf. xi. 82 and notes, in which the word Sijil and its origin are explained.
76. And the (Cities were) Right on the high-road.1998

77. Behold! in this Is a Sign For those who believe!1999

78. And the Companions of the Wood Wcre also wrong-doers;

79. So We exacted retribution From them. They were both On an open highway, Plain to see.

SECTION 6.

80. The Companions of the Rocky Tract2002
Also rejected the messengers:

1998. The Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed, and even their precise position cannot be identified. But the brimstone plain of the tract still exists, right on the highway between Arabia and Syria. To the traveller in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea the whole locality presents a scene of dismal desolation which truly suggests the awful punishment for unspeakable crimes.

1999. Verse 75 refers to all who have the intelligence to grasp the Signs of Allah. Verses 76-77 specially refer to those who use the Arabia-Syria highroad. The desolation is specially brought home to them.

2000. “Companions of the Wood”: As-hāb ul Aikati. Perhaps Aika is after all a proper noun, the name of a town or tract. Who were the Companions of the Aika? They are mentioned four times in the Qur-ān, viz., here, and in xxvi. 176-191; xxxviii. 13; and l. 14. The only passage in which any details are given is xxvi. 176-191. There we are told that their Prophet was Shu‘aib, and other details given correspond to those of the Madyan, to whom Shu‘aib was sent as Prophet; see vii. 85-93. In my notes to that passage I have discussed the question of Shu‘aib and the Madyan people. It is reasonable to suppose that the Companions of the Wood were either the same as the Madyan, or a Group among them or in their neighbourhood.

2001. Both: i.e., The Cities of the Plain and the Companions of the Aika.

2002. “The Rocky Tract” is undoubtedly a geographical name. On the maps of Arabia will be found a tract called the Ḥijr, north of Medinah, Jabal Ḥijr is about 150 miles north of Madinah. The tract would fall on the highway to Syria. This was the country of the Thamūd For them and the country see vii. 73, n. 1043.
81. We sent them Our Signs,
   But they persisted
   In turning away from them.

82. Out of the mountains
   Did they hew (their) edifices,
   (Feeling themselves) secure.

83. But the (mighty) Blast
   Seized them of a morning,

84. And of no avail to them
   Was all that they did
   (With such art and care)!

85. We created not the heavens,
   The earth, and all between them,
   But for just ends.
   And the Hour is surely
   Coming (when this will be manifest).
   So overlook (any human faults)
   With gracious forgiveness.

86. For verily it is thy Lord
   Who is the All-Creator,
   Knowing all things.

2003. Remains of these rock edifices in the Hijr are still found, and the City of Petra is not more than 380 miles from Jabal Hijr. See n. 1043 to vii. 73. “Petra” in Greek means “Rock”. For the Inscriptions found there, and their significance, see Appendix IV to S. xxvi.


2005. Allah’s Creation is all for a true, just, and righteous purpose. Cf. x. 5. It is not for mere whim or sport: xxi. 16.

2006. The Hour will not be long delayed when the true Design and Pattern of Life will be manifest. We must not be impatient, if there appear to be, to our limited vision, apparent injustices. We must bear and forbear, and as far as our own personal feelings are concerned, we must overlook other people’s faults with “a gracious forgiveness”.

2007. Khallâq: the emphatic intensive form, as meaning the Creator, Who is perfect in His skill and knowledge, and Whose creation answers perfectly to His design. Therefore no one should think that anything has gone wrong in Allah’s creation. What may seem out of joint is merely the result of our short-sighted standards. It often happens that what appears to us to be evil or imperfect or unjust is a reflection of our own imperfect minds. See the next two verses and notes.
87. And We have bestowed
Upon thee the Seven
Oft-repeated (Verses) and the Grand Qurân.

88. Strain not thine eyes.
(Wistfully) at what We
Have bestowed on certain classes
Of them, nor grieve over them:
But lower thy wing (in gentleness)
To the Believers.

89. And say: “I am indeed he
That warneth openly
And without ambiguity,”

90. (Of just such wrath)
As We sent down
On those who divided
(Scripture into arbitrary parts).

2008. The Seven Oft-repeated Verses are usually understood to be the Opening Sûra, the Fatîha. They sum up the whole teaching of the Qurân. What can be a more precious gift to a Muslim than the glorious Qurân or any Sûra of it? Worldly wealth, honour, possessions, or anything else, sinks into insignificance in comparison with it.

2009. It may be that other people have worldly goods which worldly men envy. Do they necessarily bring happiness? Even the temporary pleasure that they may give is not unmixed with spiritual poisons, and even so, will not last. The man of God looks with wistful eyes at other things,—the favour and countenance of Allah.

2010. The Prophet of Allah, in his human love and sympathy, may grieve over certain classes of people who are puffed up with false notions and callous to the Message of Allah. But he should not make himself unhappy. There is no flaw in Allah’s Plan, and it must prevail. This was addressed in the first instance to Al-Mustâfâ, but in a minor degree, it applies to all righteous men.

2011. The metaphor is from a bird who lowers her wing in tender solicitude for her little ones. Cf. xvii. 24, where it is applied to “lowering the wing” to aged parents.

2012. In the ministry of Al-Mustâfâ there was no mincing of matters, no compromises with evil. Evil was denounced in unambiguous terms. Mubin implies both openness and clearness, i.e. freedom from ambiguity.

2013. The Commentators differ as to the precise signification of verses 90 and 91. Are the persons referred to in the two verses the same, or different? And who were they? I adopt the view, for which there is good authority, that the two classes of persons were different but similar. Verse 90, I think, refers to the Jews and Christians, who took out of Scripture what suited them, and ignored or rejected the rest: ii. 85, 101. For verse 91 see next note.
91. (So also on such)
Who have made Qur-ān
Into shreds (as they please).

92. Therefore, by thy Lord,
We will, of a surety,
Call them to account.

93. For all their deeds.

94. Therefore expound openly
What thou art commanded,
And turn away from those
Who join false gods with Allah.

95. For sufficient are We
Unto thee against those
Who scoff.

96. Those who adopt, with Allah,
Another god: but soon
Will they come to know.

97. We do indeed know
How thy heart is distressed
At what they say.

98. But celebrate the praises
Of thy Lord and be of those
Who prostrate themselves
In adoration.

2014. The Makkkan Pagans, in the early days of Islam, in order to dishonour and ridicule the Qur-ān, divided what was so far revealed, into bits, and apportioned them to people coming on pilgrimage to Makkah by different routes, slandering and abusing the Prophet of Allah.

2015. Those who ridicule Scripture in any form will all be called to account for their insolence, for they are all alike.

2016. If the whole world is ranged against the Prophet of Allah, as was—at one time the case with the Prophet, and scoffs at all that is sacred, the sense of Allah’s presence and protection outweighs all. And after all, the scoffers are creatures of a day. Soon will they find their level, and be undeceived as to all their falsehoods. But the Truth of Allah endures for ever.

2017. Literally, ‘that thy breast is constrained.’
99. And serve thy Lord
    Until there come unto thee
    The Hour that is Certain.²⁰¹⁸

²⁰¹⁸ *Yaqīn*: Certainty; the Hour that is Certain; death.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT An-Naḥl, 16

Chronologically this Sūra, like the six which preceded it, belongs to the late Makkān period, except perhaps verse 110 and some of the verses that follow. But the chronology has no significance. In subject-matter it sums up, from a new point of view, the arguments on the great questions of Allah’s dealings with man. His Self-revelation to man, and how the Messengers and the Message are writ large in every phase of Allah’s Creation and the life of Man. The new point of view is that Nature points to Nature’s God.

Summary.—Everything in Creation proclaims the glory of Allah. To man is given dominion over Nature, that man may recognise Allah’s Unity and Allah’s Truth (xvi. 1-25).

Man should never lose sight of his goal, which is the Good, or dispute with the great Teachers, who are sent to all Peoples, to bring about Unity; all creatures serve Allah (xvi. 26-50).

Allah’s favours and man’s ingratitude recounted. His Signs in the rain-bearing clouds, the cattle that give milk, the bee that produces honey, the wonderful relations of family and social life, and the refinements and comforts of civilization (xvi. 51-83).

The Messengers of Truth will bear witness against those who reject the Truth. Allah will judge us according to our faith and deeds (xvi. 84-100).

The Qur-ān is true; it guides and gives glad tidings. Believe, and make the most of Life in all things good and lawful. Follow the example of Abraham; be true in Faith and righteous, and do good (xvi. 101-128).
An-Naål, or The Bee.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious
Most Merciful.

1. (Inevitable) cometh (to pass)
The Command of Allah: 2019
Seek ye not then
To hasten it: glory to Him,
And far is He above
Having the partners
They ascribe unto Him!

2. He doth send down His angels
With inspiration of His Command,
To such of His servants
As He pleaseth, (saying):
"Warn (Man) that there is
No god but I: so do
Your duty unto Me." 2020

3. He has created the heavens
And the earth with truth 2021
Far is He above having
The partners they ascribe to Him!

4. He has created man
From a sperm-drop

2019. This is an answer to the taunt of the Pagans, who said; "If there is a god, the One True God, as you say, with unified control, why does He not punish the wrong-doers at once?" The answer is; "The decree of Allah will inevitably come to pass; it will come soon enough; when it comes, you will wish it were delayed; how foolish of you to wish even to cut off your last hope of forgiveness?"

2020. The Pagans, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, good and evil, could play one off against another. That is mere mockery of religion. With such conceptions, man cannot understand the Unity of Design in the Universe nor realise the Power and Glory of the One True God, to Whom alone worship and service are due.

2021. Not for sport, or fortuitously and without Design. Cf. xv. 85. Surely the Unity of Design in Creation also proves the Unity of Allah their Creator.
2022. Man’s physical origin is lowly. Yet do men go back to material things, and neglect or dispute about the highest things in Life.

2023. Why will you go back to material things, considering that material things are made subservient to your use and enjoyment in various ways as suggested in the clauses that follow.

2024. From wool, and hair, and skins, and milk. Camel’s hair makes warm robes and blankets; and certain kinds of goats yield hair which makes similar fabrics. Sheep yield wool, and Llamas alpaca for similar uses. The skins and furs of many animals yield warm raiment or make warm rugs or bedding. The females of many of these animals yield good warm milk, a nourishing and wholesome diet. Then the flesh of many of these animals is good to eat. There are other uses, which the animals serve, and which are referred to later.

2025. The good man is proud of his cattle and is good to them. As they go to, and return from, pasture, morning and evening, he has a sense of his power and wealth and their beauty and docility. Will not man turn from these material facts to the great spiritual truths and purpose behind them?

2026. The cattle and animals also carry loads, and thus make inter-communication between different lands easy. But for them there would have been many difficulties, not only physical, but psychological. Weary men carrying loads are in no mood for social and spiritual intercourse. This intercourse is made possible by the kindness and mercy of Allah.
8. And (He has created) horses, Mules, and donkeys, for you To ride and as an adornment,\(^{2027}\) And He has created (other) things Of which ye have no knowledge.\(^{2028}\)

9. Allah alone can show The right path\(^{2029}\) But there are ways That turn aside; if Allah Had willed, He could have Guided all of you.

SECTION 2.

10. It is He Who sends down Rain from the sky From it ye drink, And out of it (grows) The vegetation on which Ye feed your cattle.

11. With it He produces For you corn, olives, Date-palms, grapes, And every kind of fruit:

2027. Horse, mules, and donkeys as well as other animals may be beasts of burden, but they may also be pedigree animals bred for beauty and for all those more refined uses, such as processions, in which grace and elegance is the predominant feature.

2028. If we examine the history of transport, there have been vast changes through the ages, from rude pack animals to fine equipages, and then through mechanical contrivances, such means of transport as elegant coaches, tramways and railways, useful motor lorries and Rolls-Royce cars, and air-ships and aeroplanes of all descriptions. At any given point of time, many of these were yet unknown to man. Nor can we suppose the limit to have been reached now or that it will ever be reached at any future time. Through the mind and ingenuity of man it is Allah that creates new things hitherto unknown to man.

2029. Through material things “the Way” does always lead to Allah. But some minds are so obsessed with material things that they miss the pointers to the spiritual. Allah could have forced all to the true Way, but in His Will and Plan is the training of man’s will, and that is done by the Signs in nature and Revelation.
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who give thought.

12. He has made subject to you
The Night and the Day;
The Sun and the Moon;
And the Stars are in subjection
By His Command: verily
In this are Signs
For men who are wise.

13. And the things on this earth
Which He has multiplied
In varying colours (and qualities);

2030. The least thought and study of nature will show you Allah's wise and benign Providence in making the processes of nature subserve man's use and refined life. A higher degree of intelligence and study is required ("men who are wise") to understand Allah's Signs to man in the processes connected with the heavenly bodies (verse 12). And a still higher spiritual understanding ("men who celebrate His praises" with gratitude) to realise the marvellous gradations, colours, and nuances in the creatures on this little globe of ours (verse 13). Reason this out carefully.

2031. The Night and the Day are caused by astronomical rotations. What is important for man to note is how Allah has given intelligence to man to make use of this alternation for work and rest; how man can, as soon as he rises from the primitive stage, get over their inequalities by artificial illuminants, such as vegetable or mineral oils, coal, gas, or electricity, which ultimately are derived from the stored-up energy of the sun; how the sun's heat can be tempered by various artificial means and can be stored up for use by man as required, how man can be independent of the tides caused by the moon and the sun, which formerly controlled navigation, but which no longer stand in man's way, with his artificial harbours and great sea-going ships, how navigation was formerly subject to direct observation of the Polar Star and other stars, but how the magnetic needle and charts have now completely altered the position, and man can calculate and to a certain extent control magnetic variations, etc. In such ways the sun, the moon, and the stars themselves become useful servants to him, all by Allah's gift and His Command, without which there would have been no laws governing them and no intelligence to make use of them.

2032. Whose heart has not been moved by the glorious gradation of colours in the sunset clouds? The gradations are infinite, and it is only the eye of an artist that can express their collective beauty. They are but a type of the infinite variety and gradation of qualities in the spiritual sphere even in the little space of our own globe. The big things that can be measured and defined have been spoken of before. Here we have mention of the subtle nuances in the spiritual world which can only be perceived by men who are so high in spiritual insight that their only reaction is to "cerebrate the praises of Allah" in gratitude for His infinite Mercies.
2033. Read again n. 2030 above, and see how subtly we are led up from the perception of the big to the perception of the subtle and delicate colours and qualities in the spiritual world.

2034. We have gone up in a climax of material things from the big to the subtle in the sky and the earth. Here we have another climax as regard the things of the sea. We get the delicate flesh of fishes and marine creatures of all kinds; we get the treasures of the deep; pearls, coral, amber, and things of that kind; and we have the stately ships ploughing the waves, for maritime commerce and intercourse, for unifying mankind, and for realising the spiritual bounty of Allah which can best be expressed by the boundless ocean.

2035. Connoisseurs know the delicate flavours of sea fish, such as the pomfret of the Indian Ocean, the herring of the North Atlantic, the mullet of Marseilles, and many another kind. Ṭārī, translated “fresh and tender,” also refers to the soft moist nature of fresh fish. It is another wonder of Allah that salt water should produce flesh or such fresh, tender, and delicate flavour.

2036. Diving for pearls—in both the primitive and the more advanced form—is another instance of man’s power over apparently inaccessible depths of the sea.

2037. After the material benefits which we get from the sea, we are asked to consider things of higher import to the spirit of man. There is the beautiful ship which stands as the symbol of international commerce and intercourse, things that may be of material benefit, but which have a higher aspect in unifying man and making his civilisation more universal. These are first steps in seeking of the “bounty of Allah” through the sea. But there are higher aspects. Navigation and international intercourse increase knowledge, which in its higher aspects should clean the mind and make it fitter to approach Allah. The salt water, which covers nearly 72 percent, of the surface of the Globe, is itself a purifying and sanitary agent, and is a good symbol of the higher bounties of Allah, which are as boundless as the Ocean.
15. And He has set up
On the earth mountains, Standing firm, lest it should Shake with you; and rivers And ways: that ye May guide yourselves;

16. And marks and sign-posts; And by the stars (Men) guide themselves.

17. Is then He Who creates Like one that creates not? Will ye not receive admonition?

18. If ye would count up The favours of Allah,

2038. Cf. xiii. 3 and xv. 19. Here and elsewhere the earth is spoken of as a spacious carpet beneath our feet and the hills as a steadying agent to keep the carpet from rolling or shaking about. In lxvii. 7 they are spoken of as pegs or stakes.

2039. In this passage (xvi. 15-16) we have the metaphor of the fixed mountains further allegorised. In these verses the key-words are indicated by the symbols for man’s Guidance (taḥtadān). First, the physical symbols are indicated; the mountains that stand firm and do not change from day to day in the landscape, unlike shifting sand-dunes, or the coast line of the sea, or rivers and streams, which frequently change their courses, then we have rivers and roads, which are more precise and therefore more useful, though less permanent; then we have ʻalāmāt (sign-posts), any kinds of signs erected by man, like direction posts, light-houses or beacons, or provided in nature, as tall trees, etc.; and finally, we have the pole-star, and now the magnetic needle, with its variations marked on navigation charts. All these are symbols for the higher Guidance which Allah provides for the spirit of man. See next note.

2040. See last note. Let us examine the completed allegory. As there are beacons, landmarks and signs to show the way to men on the earth, so in the spiritual world. And it is ultimately Allah Who provides them, and this is His crowning Mercy. Like the mountains there are spiritual Landmarks in the missions of the Great Prophets: they should guide us, or teach us, to guide ourselves, and not shake hither and thither like a ship without a rudder or people without Faith. As rivers and streams mark out their channels, smoothing out levels so we have wholesome Laws and Customs established, to help us in our lives. Then we have the examples of Great Men as further sign-posts: “Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime.” In long-distance travel, the pole-star and the magnetic needle are our guides; so in our long-distance journey to the other world, we have ultimately to look to heavenly guidance or its reflection in Allah’s Revelation.

2041. The supreme majesty of Allah have been set out in His favours of all kinds, it will be seen at once that the worship of any other than Allah is meaningless and ridiculous. Shall we not take the hint and understand?
Never would ye be able
To number them: for Allah
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 2042

19. And Allah doth know
What ye conceal,
And what ye reveal.

20. Those whom they invoke
Besides Allah create nothing
And are themselves created. 2043

21. (They are things) dead,
Lifeless: nor do they know
When they will be raised up. 2044

SECTION 3.

22. Your God is One God:
As to those who believe not
In the Hereafter, their hearts
Refuse to know, and they
Are arrogant. 2045

23. Undoubtedly Allah doth know
What they conceal,

2042. Of all Allah’s favours innumerable, His Mercy and Forgiveness in the spiritual plane is the greatest, and of eternal value to us in our future Lives.

2043. Allah is the only Creator and the Ultimate Reality. Everything else is created by Him, and reflects His glory. How foolish then to worship any other than Allah!

2044. Idols are dead wood or stone. If men worship stars, or heroes, or prophets, or great men, they too have no life except that which was given by Allah. In themselves they are lifeless. If they worship figments of the imagination, they are reflections in a double degree, and have no life in themselves. All these things will be raised up on the Last Day, in order that false worshippers may be confronted with them. But they themselves cannot tell when that Day will be.

2045. Everything points to Allah, the One True Eternal God. If so, there is a Hereafter, for He has declared it. In so far as people do not believe this, the fault is in their Will; they do not wish to believe, and the motive behind is arrogance, the sin which brought about the fall of Iblis: ii. 34.
And what they reveal. Verily He loveth not the arrogant.

24. When it is said to them, “What is it that your Lord Has revealed?” they say, “Tales of the ancients!”

25. That they may bear, on the Day Of Judgment, their own burdens In full, and also (something) Of the burdens of those Without knowledge, whom they Misled. Alas, how grievous The burdens they will bear!

SECTION 4.

26. Those before them did also Plot (against Allah’s Way): But Allah took their structures From their foundations, and the roof Fell down on them from above;

2046. Cf. xvi. 19, where the same words refer to man generally. Whether he conceals or reveals what is in his heart, Allah knows it, and as Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, His grace is available as His highest favour if man will take it. Here the reference is to those who “refuse to know”, who reject Allah’s guidance out of arrogance. Allah “loveth not the arrogant”. Such men deprive themselves of Allah’s grace.

2047. When the arrogant Unbelievers are referred to some definite argument or illustration from Scripture, they dismiss it contemptuously with the remark, “Tales of the ancients!” In this, they are not only playing with their own conscience, but misleading others, with perhaps less knowledge than themselves.

2048. Their responsibility or crime is twofold: (1) that they rejected Allah’s Message, and (2) that they misled others. Their Penalty will also be double. In vi. 164, we are told that “no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another”. This is against the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Every man is responsible for his own sins; but the sin of misleading others is a sin of the misleader himself, and he must suffer the penalty for that also, without relieving those misled, of their responsibility.
And the Wrath seized them
From directions they did not
perceive.\(^{2049}\)

27. Then, on the Day of Judgment,
He will cover them
With shame, and say:
"Where are My 'partners'
Concerning whom ye used
To dispute (with the godly)?"
Those endued with knowledge\(^{2050}\)
Will say: "This Day, indeed,
Are the Unbelievers covered
With Shame and Misery.-

28. "(Namely) those whose lives the
angels
Take in a state of wrong-doing
To their own souls.\(^{2051}\)
Then would they offer submission
(With the pretence). We did\(^{2052}\)
No evil (knowingly)." (The angels
Will reply), "Nay, but verily
Allah knoweth all that ye did;

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\(^{2049}\) Evil will always devise plots against the Prophets of Allah. So was it with Al-Muṣṭafa, and so was it with the Prophets before him. But the imposing structures which the ungodly build up (metaphorically) collapse at the Command of Allah, and they are often punished from quarters from which they least expected punishment. For example, the Quraysh were confident in their numbers, their organisations, and their superior equipment. But on the field of Badr they collapsed where they expected victory.

\(^{2050}\) The worshippers of false gods (ungodly, the Unbelievers) will be unable to reply when brought before the Judgment Seat. The comment of those "endued with knowledge"—the Prophets and Teachers whom they had rejected—will be by way of indictment and explanation of the position of those before the Judgment Seat.

\(^{2051}\) That is, those who died in a state of Kufr, or rebellion against Allah, which was really wrong-doing against their own souls.

\(^{2052}\) The excuse is a mere pretence. At first they were too dazed to reply. When they reply, they cannot deny the facts, but resort to the sinner's excuse of saying that they sinned through ignorance, and that their motives were not wrong. Such a plea raises a question of hidden thoughts which are difficult to appraise before a human tribunal. But here they are before their Divine Author, Who knows every secret of their souls, and before Whom no false plea can be of any value. So they are condemned.
29. “So enter the gates of Hell, 
To dwell therein. 
Thus evil indeed 
Is the abode of the arrogant.”

30. To the righteous 
(When) it is said, “What 
Is it that your Lord 
Has revealed?” they say, 
“All that is good.” To those 
Who do good, there is good 
In this world, and the Home 
Of the Hereafter is even better 
And excellent indeed is the Home 
Of the righteous,—

31. Gardens of Eternity which they 
Will enter: beneath them 
Flow (pleasant) rivers: they 
Will have therein all 
That they wish: thus doth 
Allah reward the righteous,—

32. (Namely) those whose lives 
The angels take in a state 
Of purity, saying (to them), 
“Peace be on you; enter ye 
The Garden, because of (the good) 
Which ye did (in the world).”

33. Do the (ungodly) wait but for 
The angels to come to them,

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2053. The contrast and parallelism is with xvi. 24, where the ungodly in their levity and their deliberate rejection of guidance find no profit from Allah’s Revelation.

2054. Unlike the ungodly, the good find good everywhere,—in this world and in the Hereafter; because they understand and are in accord with the truths around them.

2055. In a state of purity: from the evils of this world, from want of faith and want of grace. Purity from such evil is the mark of true Islam, and those who die in such purity will be received into Felicity with a salutation of Peace.
2056. That is, until death comes to them, or some Punishment in this life, itself, which precludes them from repentance, and the Mercy of Allah.

2057. The old, old argument: if Allah is All-Powerful, why did He not force all persons to His Will? This ignores the limited Free-will granted to man, which is the whole basis of Ethics. Allah gives man every opportunity of knowing and understanding things, but He does not force him, for that would be against the whole Plan on which our present Life is constituted.

2058. The Pagan Arabs prescribed various arbitrary prohibitions in the matter of meat; see vi. 143-145. These, of course, are not recognised by Islam, which also removed some of the restrictions of the Jewish Law; vi. 146. The general meaning, however, is far wider. Men erect their own taboos and prohibitions, barriers and restrictions, and ascribe them to Religion. This is wrong, and more consonant with Pagan practice than with Islam.

2059. Clear Message: Mubin: in three senses; (1) a Message clear and unambiguous; (2) one that makes all things clear to those who try to understand, because it accords with their own nature as created by Allah; (3) one preached openly and to everyone.
36. For We assuredly sent
   Amongst every People a
   Messenger, (With the Command), “Serve
   Allah, and eschew Evil”:
   Of the people were some whom
   Allah guided, and some
   On whom Error became
   Inevitably (established). So travel
   Through the earth, and see
   What was the end of those
   Who denied (the Truth).

37. If thou art anxious
   For their guidance, yet
   Allah guideth not such
   As He leaves to stray,
   And there is none
   To help them.

38. They swear their strongest oath
   By Allah, that Allah will not
   Raise up those who die:

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2060. Even though Allah’s Signs are everywhere in Nature and in men’s own conscience, yet in addition Allah has sent human Messengers to every People to call their attention to the Good and turn them from Evil. So they cannot pretend that Allah has abandoned them or that He does not care what they do. His divine Grace always invites their will to choose the right.

2061. While some people accept the guidance of the divine Grace, others so surrender themselves to Evil that it must necessarily follow that Evil obtains a grip over them. They have only to travel through Time or Space to see the end of those who abandoned their lights and surrendered to Evil and Error. For haqqat and the meaning of haqq in this connection cf. xv. 64.

2062. When once Allah’s Grace is rejected by any one, such a person loses all help and guidance. Such persons are then outside Allah’s Grace, and therefore they are outside guidance.

2063. The strongest oath of the Pagan Arabs would be by the Supreme Allah; less strong oaths would be by their subordinate deities, or their ancestors, or other things they valued or held sacred.

2064. The usual Pagan creed is: ‘If there is a God, it does not follow that He will raise us up; why should He?’ The answer is twofold: (1) Allah has promised it, and Allah’s promise is true; (2) He must finally manifest the Truth to them, convict them of their falsehood, and enforce their personal responsibility (xvi. 39).
Nay, but it is a promise (Binding) on Him in truth:
But most among mankind
Know it not.

39. (They must be raised up),
In order that He may manifest
To them the truth of that
Wherein they differ, and that
The rejecters of Truth
May realise that they were liars. 2065

40. For to anything which We
Have willed, We but say
"Be," and it is. 2066

SECTION 6.

41. To those who leave
Their homes in the cause
Of Allah, after suffering
oppression, 2067
We will assuredly give
A goodly home in this world;
But truly the reward
Of the Hereafter will be greater.
If they only realised (this)!

42. (They are) those who persevere
In patience, and put
Their trust on their Lord.

2065. See the last note.

2066. Allah's "Word" is in itself the Deed. Allah's Promise is in itself the Truth.
There is no interposition of Time or Condition between His Will and its consequences,
for He is the Ultimate Reality. He is independent of the proximate or material causes,
for He Himself creates them and establishes their Laws as He pleases.

2067. There is no merit in suffering exile (hijrat) in itself. To have any merit, it must be;
(1) in the cause of Allah, and (2) after such an oppression as forces the sufferer to
choose between Allah and man. When these conditions are fulfilled, the exiles are entitled
to the highest honour, as having made a great sacrifice in the cause of Allah. Such were
the early Muslim exiles to Abyssinia; such were the later exiles to Madinah before the
Prophet himself left his home in Makkah and went to Madinah; and such were the exiles
who went with the Prophet or followed him. At all these stages, his approval or advice
was always obtained, either specifically or generally.
43. And before thee
   We sent
   None but men, to whom
   We granted inspiration: if ye
   Realise this not, ask of those
   Who possess the Message.

44. (We sent them) with Clear Signs
And Scriptures
And We have sent down
Unto thee (also) the Message;
That thou mayest explain clearly
To men what is sent
For them, and that they
May give thought.

45. Do then those who devise
Evil (plots) feel secure
That Allah will not cause
The earth to swallow them up,
Or that the Wrath will not
Seize them from directions
They little perceive?

2068. Allah’s prophets were always men, not angels; and their distinction was the
inspiration they received.

2069. If the Pagan Arabs, who were ignorant of religious and other history, wondered
how a man from among themselves could receive inspiration and bring a Message from
Allah, let them ask the Jews, who had also received Allah’s Message earlier through
Moses, whether Moses was a man, or an angel, or a god. They would learn that Moses
was a man like themselves, but inspired by Allah. “Those who possess the Message” may
also mean any men of Wisdom, who were qualified to have an opinion in such matters.

2070. As the People of the Book had received “Clear Signs” and inspired Books
before, so also Allah’s Message came to the Prophet Muḥammad through the Qur-ān,
which superseded the earlier revelations, already corrupted in the hands of their followers.

2071. Cf. xvi. 26. The wicked plot against Prophets of Allah in secret, forgetting
that every hidden thought of theirs is known to Allah, and that for every thought and
action of theirs they will have to account to Allah. And Allah’s punishment can seize
them in various ways. Four are enumerated here. (1) They may be swallowed up in the
earth like Qārūn, whose story is told in xxviii. 76-81. He was swallowed up in the earth
while he was arrogantly exulting on the score of his wealth. (2) It may be that, like
Hāmān, the prime minister of Pharaoh, they are plotting against Allah, when they are
46. Or that He may not
   Call them to account
   In the midst of their goings\(^{2072}\)
   To and fro, without a chance
   Of their frustrating Him?—

47. Or that He may not
   Call them to account
   By a process of slow wastage\(^{2073}\)
   For thy Lord is indeed
   Full of kindness and mercy.

48. Do they not look
   At Allah's creation.
   Among things,\(^{2074}\)
   How their shadows
   Turn round, from the right
   And the left, prostrating
   Themselves to Allah, and that
   In the humblest manner?

49. And to Allah doth prostrate
   All that is in the heavens

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\(^{2072}\) Or the punishment may come to people away from their homes and humble them in their pride. It so happened to Abū Jahl, who came exulting in his pride to the Battle of Badr (A.H. 2). His army was three times the size of the Muslim army from Madinah. But it suffered a crushing defeat, and he himself was ignominiously slain.

\(^{2073}\) Or, as often happens, the punishment comes slowly and imperceptibly, the power of the enemies of Allah being wasted gradually, until it is extinguished. This happened to the Makkans during the eight years of the Prophet's exile. The conquest of Makkah was bloodless, because the power of the enemy had gradually vanished. The Prophet was thus able to show the unexampled generosity and clemency which he showed on that occasion, for two of Allah's attributes are expressed in the titles "Full of kindness" (Ra'-ūf) and "Full of mercy" (Raḥīm).

\(^{2074}\) I take "things" here to be inanimate things, for the next verse speaks of living "moving creatures" and angels. By a metaphor even such inanimate things are spoken of as recognising Allah and humbly worshipping Him. Even their shadows turn round from right and left according to the light from above, and they humbly prostrate themselves on the ground to celebrate the praises of Allah.
And on earth, whether
Moving creatures\textsuperscript{2075}
Or the angels: for none
Are arrogant (before their Lord).

50. They all fear their Lord,\textsuperscript{2076}
High above them, and they do
All that they are commanded.

\textbf{SECTION 7.}

51. Allah has said: "Take not
(For worship) two gods:\textsuperscript{2077}
For He is just One God:
Then fear Me (and Me alone)."

52. To Him belongs whatever
Is in the heavens and on earth,
And to Him is the religion always:
Then will ye fear other\textsuperscript{2078}
Than Allah?

53. And ye have no good thing
But is from Allah: and moreover,
When ye are touched by distress,
Unto Him ye cry with groans.\textsuperscript{2079}

\textsuperscript{2075.} Moving creatures, \textit{i.e.}, living creatures, "All that is in the heavens or earth," includes every created thing. And created things are mentioned in three classes: inanimate things, ordinary living things, and angels. Even the highest angels are not arrogant; they bow down and serve their Lord, and so does all Creation.

\textsuperscript{2076.} Allah is so high above the highest of His creatures, that they all look up to him in awe and reverence. And they joyfully do their duty in serving Him. This is the meaning of the "fear of the Lord."

\textsuperscript{2077.} The ancient Persians believed in two powers in the Universe, one good and the other evil. The Pagan Arabs also had pairs of deities: \textit{e.g.}, Jibr (Sorcery) and Ṭāgāt (Evil), referred to in iv. 51, n. 573, or the idols on Safā and Marwa referred to in n. 160 to ii. 158: their names were Isāf and Nāila.

\textsuperscript{2078.} The Pagans might have a glimmering of the One True God, but they had also a haunting fear of malevolent Powers of Evil. They are told that such fears are groundless. Evil has no power over those who trust in Allah: xv. 42. The only fear they should have is that of the Wrath of Allah. To the righteous all good things come from Allah, and they have no fear in their hearts.

\textsuperscript{2079.} Which shows that the natural tendency of man is to seek Allah, the only Power which can truly relieve distress.
Yet, when He removes
The distress from you, behold!
Some of you turn to other gods
To join with their Lord—

To show their ingratitude
For the favours We have
Bestowed on them! Then enjoy
(Your brief day); but soon
Will ye know (your folly)!

And they (even) assign,
To things they do not know,
A portion out of that
Which We have bestowed
For their sustenance!
By Allah, ye shall certainly
Be called to account
For your false inventions.

And they assign daughters
For Allah! — Glory be to Him!—
And for themselves what
They desire!

When news is brought
To one of them, of (the birth

2080. Idols and fictitious gods are certainly things of which they have no knowledge, idols being lifeless things of whose life or doings no knowledge is possible, and fictitious gods being but figments of their imagination.

2081. Cf. vi. 136-140, 142-144, and v. 103. The Pagans, in assigning and dedicating some of their children, or some of their cattle, or some of the produce of their fields, to their false gods as sharers with the true Supreme God, made themselves doubly ridiculous; first, because every good thing that they valued was given to them by Allah, and how could they patronisingly assign to Him a share of His own gifts?—and secondly, because they brought in other gods as sharers, who had no existence whatever! Besides, the cattle and produce was given for their physical sustenance and the children for their social and spiritual sustenance, and how can they, poor creatures, give sustenance to Allah?

2082. Some of the Pagan Arabs called angels the daughters of Allah. In their own life they hated to have daughters, as explained in the next two verses. They practised female infanticide. In their state of perpetual war sons were a source of strength to them; daughters only made them subject to humiliating raids!
59. With shame does he hide Himself from his people, Because of the bad news He has had! Shall he retain it\textsuperscript{2083} On (sufferance and) Contempt, Or bury it in the dust?\textsuperscript{2084} Ah! what an evil (choice) They decide on?\textsuperscript{2085}

60. To those who believe not In the Hereafter, applies The similitude of evil: To Allah applies the highest\textsuperscript{2086} Similitude: for He is The Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.

SECTION 8.

61. If Allah were to punish Men for their wrong-doing, He would not leave, on the (earth), A single living creature: But He gives them respite For a stated Term:

\textsuperscript{2083} “It”, in this and the following clause, refers grammatically to the “news” (mā bushšira bihi). In meaning it refers to the “female child”—by the figure of speech known as metonymy.

\textsuperscript{2084} Cf. lxxxi. 8-9. The practice of female infanticide is condemned in scathing terms. Female children used to be buried alive by the Pagan Arabs.

\textsuperscript{2085} It was an evil choice to decide on. Either alternative—to keep the poor girl as a thing of sufferance and contempt, bringing disgrace on the family, or to get rid of it by burying it alive—was cruel and indefensible.

\textsuperscript{2086} The word mathal ordinarily denotes a similitude, but in the context of the present verse, especially with reference to Allah, it signifies His sublime attributes rather than a similitude. Cf. xxx. 27.
When their Term expires,
They would not be able
To delay (the punishment)
For a single hour, just as
They would not be able
To anticipate it (for a single hour).

62. They attribute to Allah
What they hate (for themselves),
And their tongues assert
The falsehood that the reward most fair
Is for themselves: without doubt
For them is the Fire, and they
Will be the first to be
Hastened on into it!

63. By Allah, We (also) sent
(Our prophets) to Peoples
Before thee; but Satan
Made, (to the wicked),
Their own acts seem alluring:
He is their patron to-day,

2087. Allah's decree works without fail. If He were to punish for every wrong or shortcoming, not a single living creature on earth would escape punishment. But in His infinite mercy and forgiveness, He gives respite: He provides time for repentance. If the repentance is forthcoming, Allah's Mercy is forthcoming without fail, if not, the punishment comes inevitably on the expiry of the Term. The sinner cannot anticipate it by an insolent challenge, nor can he delay it when the time arrives. Let him not think that the respite given him may mean that he can do what he likes, and that he can escape scot-free from the consequences.

2088. See above, xvi. 57-58 and notes.

2089. The philosophy of Pleasure (Hedonism) assumes that worldly enjoyment is good in itself and that there is nothing beyond. But it can be shown, even on its own ground, that every act has its inevitable consequences. No Good can spring out of Evil. For falsehood and wrong the agony of the Fire is waiting, and the boastful votaries of Falsehood will be the first to fall into it.

2090. In all ages and among all Peoples Allah sent His Messengers to teach the Truth and point the way to righteousness. But the allurements of Evil seemed always attractive, and many men preferred their own ways and the ways of their ancestors to the more difficult path of rectitude. This happened again in the time of Al-Muṣṭafā, and will always happen as long as men succumb to Evil.
So but they shall have
A most grievous chastisement.

64. And We sent down the Book
To thee so that
That thou shouldst make clear
To them those things in which
They differ, and that it should be
A guide and a mercy
To those who believe.

65. And Allah sends down rain
From the skies, and gives therewith
Life to the earth after its death:
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who listen.

SECTION 9.

66. And verily in cattle (too)
Will ye find an instructive Sign.
From what is within their bodies,

2091. But the path of duty before Allah’s Messenger is clear. He is sent with the Revelation (the Qur’an) for three express purposes; (1) that he should bring about unity among the jarring sects, for the Gospel of Unity, while preaching the One True God, leads also to the unity of mankind; (2) that the revelation should be a guide to right conduct; and (3) that it should show the path of repentance and Salvation, and thus be the highest mercy to erring sinners.

2092. When the earth with all its vegetation is well-nigh dead, parched and shrivelled up, a vivifying shower of rain from above gives it new life. This natural phenomenon is a sign of Allah’s infinite power, especially of His power to resurrect the dead, and thereafter muster them for judgment.

2093. The spiritual sustenance which Allah gives is typified by the wonderful ways of sustenance in the physical world, which figure forth Allah’s providence and loving care for His creation. And the wonderful transformations in the physical world, which all tend to the benefit of man, are also Signs of His supreme wisdom. In the previous verse rain was mentioned, which gives new life to dead nature. In this and the following two verses our attention is drawn to milk, the products of the date and the vine, and honey.

2094. Their; in the Arabic, it is “its”, in the singular number, for two reasons: (1) cattle is the generic plural, and may be treated as a singular noun; (2) the instructive Sign is in cattle collectively, but the milk is the product of each single individual.
Between excretions and blood,\(^{2095}\)
We produce, for your drink,
Milk, pure and agreeable
To those who drink it.

67. And from the fruit
Of the date-palm and the vine,
Ye get out strong drink,\(^{2096}\)
And wholesome food: behold, in this
Also is a Sign
For those who are wise.

68. And thy Lord taught the Bee\(^{2097}\)
To build its cells in hills,
On trees, and in (men’s)
habitations;

69. Then to eat of all
The produce (of the earth),\(^{2098}\)

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2095. Milk is a secretion in the female body, like other secretions, but more specialised. Is it not wonderful that the same food, eaten by males and females, produces in the latter, when they have young, the wholesome and complete food, known as milk? Then, when cattle are tamed and specially bred for milk, the supply of milk is vastly greater than is necessary for their young and lasts for a longer time than during the period they give suck to their young. And it is a wholesome and agreeable diet for man. It is pure, as typified by its whiteness. Yet it is a secretion like other secretions, between the excretions which the body rejects as worthless and the precious blood-stream which circulates within the body and is the symbol of life itself to the animal which produces it.

2096. There are wholesome drinks and foods that can be got out of the date-palm and the vine: e.g., non-alcoholic drinks from the date and the grape, vinegar, date-sugar, grape-sugar, and dates and grapes themselves for eating. If sakar is taken in the sense of fermented wine, it would refer to the time before intoxicants were prohibited, for this is a Makkah Surah and the prohibition came in Madinah. In such a case it would imply a subtle disapproval of the use of intoxicants and mark the first of a series of steps that in time culminated in total prohibition.

2097. Auhdā: wahyūn ordinarily means inspiration, the Message put into the mind or heart by Allah. Here the Bee’s instinct is referred to Allah’s teaching, which it undoubtedly is. In xcix. 5, it is applied to the earth; we shall discuss the precise meaning when we come to that passage. The honey-comb, itself, with its hexagonal cells, geometrically perfect, is a wonderful structure, and is well called buyūt, homes. And the way the bee finds out inaccessible places, in the hills, in the trees, and even among the habitations of men, is one of the marvels of Allah’s working in His Creation.

2098. The bee assimilates the juice of various kinds of flowers and fruit, and forms within its body the honey which it stores in its cells of wax. The different kinds of food from which it makes its honey give different colours to the honey, e.g., it is dark-brown, =
And follow the ways of Thy Lord made smooth: there issues From within their bodies A drink of varying colours, Wherein is healing for men: Verily in this is a Sign For those who give thought.

70. It is Allah Who creates you And takes your souls at death; And of you there are Some who are sent back To a feeble age, so that They know nothing after Having known (much): For Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

SECTION 10.

71. Allah has bestowed His gifts Of sustenance more freely on some

= light-brown, yellow, white, and so on. The taste and flavour also varies, as in the case of heather honey, the honey formed from scented flowers, and so on. As food it is sweet and wholesome, and it is used in medicine. Note that while the instinctive individual acts are described in the singular number, the produce of “their bodies” is described in the plural, as the result of their collective effort.

2099. Zululan: two meanings are possible; (1) ways easy and spacious, referring to the unerring way in which bees find their way from long distances to their combs; and (2) the idea of humility and obedience in them.

2100. Besides the mystery and beauty of the many processes going on in the working of Allah’s Creation, there is the wonderful life of man himself on this earth; how he is created as a child; how he grows in intelligence and knowledge; and how his soul is taken back and his body suffers dissolution. In some cases he lives so long that he falls into a feeble old age like a second childhood; he forgets what he learnt and seems almost to go back in Time. Is not all this wonderful, and evidence of the Knowledge and Power of Allah?

2101. Our attention having been called to the remarkable transformations in life and nature, by which the Knowledge and Power of Allah work out His beneficent Plan for His creatures, we are reminded that man at best is but a feeble creature, but for the grace of Allah. We then pass on in the next Section to the differences in the gifts which men themselves enjoy, distinguishing them into so many categories. How much greater is the difference between the created things and their Creator?
Of you than on others: those
More favoured are not going
To throw back their gifts
To those whom their right hands
Possess, so as to be equal
In that respect. Will they then
Deny the favours of Allah?

72. And Allah has made for you
Mates of your own nature.
And made for you, out of them,
Sons and daughters and
grandchildren,
And provided for you sustenance
Of the best: will they
Then believe in vain things,
And be ungrateful for Allah’s
favours?

73. And worship others than Allah.—
Such as have no power
Of providing them, for sustenance.
With anything in heavens or earth,

2102. Even in the little differences in gifts, which men enjoy from Allah, men with superior gifts are not going to abandon them so as to be equal with men of inferior gifts, whom, perhaps, they hold in subjection. They will never deny their own superiority. How then (as the argument is pursued in the two following verses), can they ignore the immense difference between the Creator and created things, and make the latter, in their thoughts, partners with Allah?

2103. Of your nature: or of yourselves. Cf. iv. 1 and n. 504, Self, or Personality, or Soul, all imply a bundle of attributes, capacities, predilections, and dispositions, which we may sum up in the word Nafs, or nature. Woman was made to be (1) a mate or companion for man; (2) except for sex, of the same nature as man, and therefore, with the same moral and religious rights and duties; and (3) she is not to be considered a source of all evil or sin, as the Christian monks characterised her but rather as a blessing, one of the favours (Ni’mat) of Allah.

2104. Hafadat: collective plural, grandchildren, and descendants. The root hafada also implies obedient service and ministration. Just as the sons (first mentioned) should be a source of strength, so daughters and grand children should serve and contribute to the happiness of fathers and grandparents, and are to be looked upon as further blessings.

2105. “Sustenance” (rizq) in all this passage (xvi. 65-74), as elsewhere, implies all that is necessary for man’s life and growth, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. Milk, fruit, and honey are examples of physical gifts, with a metaphorical reference to mental and =
And cannot possibly have
Such power?

74. Invent not similitudes
For Allah: for Allah knoweth,
And ye know not.

75. Allah sets forth the Parable
(Of two men: one) a slave
Under the dominion of another;
He has no power of any sort;
And (the other) a man
On whom We have bestowed
Goodly favours from Ourselves,
And he spends thereof (freely),
Privately and publicly:
Are the two equal? (By no means;) Praise be to Allah. But Most of them know not.

76. Allah sets forth (another) Parable
Of two men: one of them Dumb, with no power
Of any sort; a wearisome burden Is he to his master;
Whichever way he directs him,
And cannot possibly have Such power?

= moral health; family life is an example of moral and social and (ultimately) spiritual opportunities in the life of man; and in xvi. 65 is an example of rain in the physical world as a type of Allah's revelation in the spiritual world.

2106. Cf. xvi. 60 above, and n. 2086. One instance of false similitudes is where Pagans say their gods are mere types of symbols, or where men pray to men as Intercessors.

2107. The first parable is of two men, one of whom is a slave completely under the dominion of another, with no powers of any sort, and another a free man, who is gifted in every way, and is most generous in bestowing out of his opulent wealth (material as well as intangible), privately and publicly, without let or hindrance; for he is his own master and owes no account to any one. The first is like the imaginary gods which men set up,—whether powers of nature, which have no independent existence but are manifestations of Allah, or deified heroes or men, who can do nothing of their own authority but are subject to the Will and Power of Allah; the second describes in a faint way the position of Allah, the Self-Subsistent, to Whom belongs the dominion of all that is in heaven and earth, and Who bestows freely of His gifts on all His creatures.
2108. In the second Parable, one man is dumb; he can explain nothing, and he can certainly do nothing; he is only a wearisome burden to his master, no matter what his master asks him to do; or perhaps he is really harmful instead of bringing any good; such are idols (literal and metaphorical) when taken as false gods. The other man is in a position to command, and he commands what is just and righteous; not only his commands but his doings also are on the path of righteousness. Such are the qualities of Allah.

2109. The gist of the argument is that those who deviate from the worship of Allah commit twofold treason. (1) They do not recognise the immense difference between the Creator and created things, although, in their own little selfish lives, they are tenacious of any little differences there may be between themselves and other fellow-creatures not so gifted. (2) They are guilty of gross ingratitude in forgetting that the source of goodness and power is Allah, to Whom alone they owe all the gifts they enjoy in life.

2110. The key to all things—not only those which we see and understand, but those which we do not see or of which we have no idea—is with Allah, Whose knowledge and power are supreme.

2111. Lures of this world and its fleeting pleasures often make man forget that the life hereafter is an imminent reality. Many of those who claim to believe in the life to come act and behave as if it belonged to a distant future, and had no relevance to their present activities and mode of living. The Qur-ān repeatedly reminds man that the Hour of Reckoning is not a distant possibility, but very close to man, and could come to pass any moment. The wisest course for man, therefore, is to be always alert and watchful and steer clear of all forms of sin and impiety, for when the Promised Hour comes it will come all of a sudden and without any prior notice. See also x. 45; xxx. 55, xlv. 35.
2112. Literally, 'hearts,' which are considered the centres of the affections, and in Arabic idiom, of intelligence also. We should therefore give thanks to Allah, not to imaginary deities or powers or forces.

2113. All the wonderful things in creation are due to the artistry, power, and wisdom of Allah. Such is the flight of birds in mid-air. So also are the inventions and discoveries, due to man's intelligence, in the next verse; for man's intelligence is a gift direct from Allah.

2114. Man's social, intellectual, and spiritual gifts make, of his permanent dwellings, homes of rest and quiet, of refinement and the purer affections, which are the types, in this earthly life, of the highest spiritual Good, the love of Allah. The pure Home thus becomes the type of the highest spiritual Destiny of man. And these capacities in man are the gifts of Allah.

2115. When man travels, he wants temporary dwellings, tents, which he can make of the skins of animals, or of the fabrics of vegetable fibres, similar to the skins of animals. These tents are easy to carry when moving, and easy to pitch during halts.
And their soft fibres\textsuperscript{2116} (Between wool and hair), And their hair, rich stuff And articles of convenience (To serve you) for a time.\textsuperscript{2117}

81. It is Allah Who made Out of the things He created, Some things to give you shade;\textsuperscript{2118} Of the hills He made some For your shelter; He made you Garments to protect you From heat, and coats of mail To protect you from Your (mutual) violence.\textsuperscript{2119} Thus does He complete His favours on you, that Ye may surrender to His Will\textsuperscript{2120} (In Islam).

82. But if they turn away, Thy duty is only to preach The Clear Message.

\textsuperscript{2116} Sīf, wool, is what we get from sheep. Sha'r, hair, is what we get from goats or similar animals, for weaving into fabrics. Wabar is the soft camel's hair of which, also, fabrics are woven; they may be considered intermediate between the other two; by extension and analogy the term may be applied to furs and such things, by way of illustration.

\textsuperscript{2117} All such articles of refined luxury, and useful articles of comfort and convenience only last for a while, but they must be considered as Allah's gifts.

\textsuperscript{2118} For example, trees, gardens, the roofs of houses; also from another point of view, the fact that the sun's rays at various times and in various parts of the earth, come obliquely, thus causing shadow along with sunshine. In the hills there are caves and grottoes.

\textsuperscript{2119} Our clothes protect us from heat and cold, just as our armour protects us from the hurt which we might otherwise receive in battle.

\textsuperscript{2120} All these blessings, which have both a physical and (by promoting the good of man) a spiritual purpose, should teach us to rally to Allah and tune our will with His Universal Will, which is another name for Islam.
83. They recognise the favours\textsuperscript{2121} Of Allah; then they deny them; And most of them Are (creatures) ungrateful.

\textbf{SECTION 12.}

84. On the Day We shall raise From all Peoples a Witness:\textsuperscript{2122} Then will no excuse be accepted From Unbelievers, nor will they Be allowed to make amends.\textsuperscript{2122-A}

85. When the wrong-doers (Actually) see the Chastisement\textsuperscript{2123} Then will it in no way Be mitigated, nor will they Then receive respite.

86. When those who gave partners To Allah will see their “partners”, They will say: “Our Lord! These are our ‘partners’, those Whom we used to invoke\textsuperscript{2124}

\textsuperscript{2121} ‘\textipa{\textit{Arafa}}\textipa{ is distinguished from ‘alima} is implying a specific discernment (or recognition) of various qualities and uses. All mankind recognised the value of the blessings they enjoy, but in forgetting or disobeying their Author, the wicked show gross ingratitude; for in practice they deny their obligation to Him for those blessings.

\textsuperscript{2122} To each People is sent Allah’s Messenger or Teacher, to point out the right way. There may be one, or there may be many. Such a Messenger (\textipa{\textit{Rasul}}) will be a witness that Allah’s Truth was preached to all peoples in express terms, in addition to the Signs of Allah everywhere in nature. There will then be no room for excuses of any kind. Those who rejected Allah after repeated warnings cannot reasonably ask for more respite, as they had every kind of respite during their life of probation; nor can they now take refuge behind Allah’s Grace, which they had repeatedly rejected.

\textsuperscript{2122-A} That is, they will not be allowed to seek grace by repentance. Cf. xxx. 57, xlv. 35.

\textsuperscript{2123} When the terrible Penalty is actually on them, it is too late for repentance and for asking for Mercy. Justice must take its course.

\textsuperscript{2124} The worshippers of false gods will try to shift the responsibility from their own shoulders to that of the false gods. They will suggest (though they will not have the courage for such a bare-faced lie) that they were misled by the false gods. But their lying suggestion will be contradicted and thrown back at them as explained in the next note.
In so far as the false gods were real things, such as deified men or forces of nature, they will openly disclaim them and then (as always) show their submission to Allah. In so far as the false gods were the invention or the fancy or the idolaters, they will leave their worshippers in the lurch, for they will be shown as non-existent.

To the thought expressed in xvi. 84 above, is added another detail here. Not only will there be witnesses from Peoples, but the witnesses will be men from amongst the Peoples themselves, men of their own kith and kin, who understood them and explained Allah’s Message in their own language. The Prophet Muḥammad will be witness against all those who rejected the Message he brought. For those who believe in him of (all races and peoples), the Book which he brought will be an explanation, a guide, a mercy and a Gospel.
SECTION 13.

90. Allah commands justice, the doing Of good, and giving to kith And kin, and He forbids All indecent deeds, and evil And rebellion: He instructs you, That ye may receive admonition.2127

91. Fulfil the Covenant of Allah When ye have entered into it, And break not your oaths After ye have confirmed them; Indeed ye have made2128 Allah your surety; for Allah Knoweth all that ye do.

92. And be not like a woman Who breaks into untwisted strands The yarn which she has spun, After it has become strong.2129

2127. Justice is a comprehensive term, and may include all the virtues of cold philosophy. But religion asks for something warmer and more human, the doing of good deeds even where perhaps they are not strictly demanded by justice, such as returning good for ill, or obliging those who in worldly language “have no claim” on you; and of course à fortiori the fulfilling of the claims of those whose claims are recognised in social life. Similarly the opposites are to be avoided; everything that is recognised as shameful, and everything that is really unjust, and any inward rebellion against Allah’s Law or our own conscience in its most sensitive form.

2128. The immediate reference may or may not be to the oath of fidelity to the Prophet taken at ‘Aqaba fourteen months before the Hijra and repeated a little later: see v. 7, and n. 705. But the general meaning is much wider. And this may be viewed in two aspects (1) Every oath taken, or covenant made, is a Covenant before Allah, and should be faithfully observed. In this it approaches in meaning to v. 1. (2) In particular, every Muslim makes, by the profession, of his Faith, a Covenant with Allah, and he confirms that Covenant every time he repeats that profession. He should therefore faithfully observe the duties taught to him by Islam.

2129. The Covenant which binds us in the spiritual world makes us strong, like strands of fluffy cotton spun into a strong thread. It also gives us a sense of security against much evil in this world. It costs a woman much labour and skill to spin good strong yarn. She would be foolish indeed, after she has spun such yarn, to untwist its constituent strands and break them into flimsy pieces.
2130. Here *tattakhithun* is used as an advert to qualify the negative command *takinni* at the beginning of the verse.

2131. Do not make your religion merely a game of making your own party numerically strong by alliances cemented by oaths, which you readily break when a more numerous party offers you its alliance. The Quraish were addicted to this vice, and in international politics at the present day, this seems to be almost a standard of national self-respect and international skill. Islam teaches nobler ethics for individuals and nations. A Covenant should be looked upon as a solemn thing, not to be entered into except with the sincerest intention of carrying it out: and it is binding even if large numbers are ranged against it.

2132. Disagreements need not necessarily cause conflict where the parties are sincere and honest and do not wish to take advantage of one another. In such cases they do not go by numbers, groupings, and alliances, but by just conduct as in the sight of Allah. Honest differences will be removed when all things are made clear in the Hereafter.

2133. Cf. xiv. 4 and n. 1875. Allah's Will and Plan, in allowing limited free-will to man, is, not to force man's will, but to give all guidance, and leave alone those who reject that guidance, in case they should repent and come back into Grace. But in all cases, in so far as we are given the choice, we shall be called to account for all our actions. "Leaving to stray" does not mean that we do what we please. Our personal responsibility remains.

2134. In xvi. 92, above, the motive for false and fraudulent covenants was pointed out with reprobation. Now are pointed out the consequences, viz., (1) to others, if they had not been deceived, they might have walked firmly on the Path, but now they lose =

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**Using your oaths**

To deceive one another,

Lest one party should be

More numerous than another:

For Allah will test you by this;

And on the Day of Judgment

He will certainly make clear

To you (the truth of) that

Wherein ye disagree.

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93. If Allah so willed, He

Could make you all one People:

But He leaves straying

Whom He pleases, and He guides

Whom He pleases: but ye

Shall certainly be called to account

For all your actions.

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93. And take not your oaths.

To practise deception between

yourselves.

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213. 6:161

214. S.16A.92-94
With the result that someone’s foot
May slip after it was
Firmly planted, and ye may
Have to taste the evil (consequences)
Of having hindered (men)
From the Path of Allah,
And a mighty Wrath
Descend on you.

95. Nor sell the Covenant of Allah
For a miserable price.²¹³⁵
For with Allah is (a prize)
Far better for you,
If ye only knew.

96. What is with you must vanish:
What is with Allah will endure.
And We will certainly bestow,
On those who patiently persevere,
Their reward according to
The best of their actions.²¹³⁶

97. Whoever works righteousness,
Man or woman, and has Faith,
Verily, to him will We give
A life²¹³⁷

²¹³⁵ Any possible gain that you can make by breaking your Covenant and thus breaking Allah’s Law must necessarily be miserable; while your own benefit is far greater in obeying Allah’s Will and doing right.

²¹³⁶ What comparison can there possibly be between spiritual Good, which will endure for ever, and any temporal advantage which you may snatch in this world, which will fade and vanish in no time? And then, Allah’s generosity is unbounded. He rewards you, not according to your merits, but according to the very best of your actions.

²¹³⁷ Faith, if sincere, means right conduct. When these two confirm each other, Allah’s grace transforms our life. Instead of being troubled and worried, we have peace and contentment; instead of being assailed at every turn by false alarms and the assaults of evil, we enjoy calm and attain purity. The transformation is visible in this life itself, but the “reward” in terms of the Hereafter will be far beyond our deserts.
When thou dost read the Qur-an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One.

No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.

His authority is over those only, who take him as patron and who join partners with Allah.

When We substitute one revelation for another, and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages).—They say, "Thou art but a forger" But most of them know not.

Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord.

That is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

Evil has no authority or influence on those who put their trust in Allah. It is good to express that trust in outward actions, and a formal expression of it—as in the formula, "I seek Allah's protection from Evil"—helps us. Man is weak at best, and he should seek strength for his will in Allah's help and protection.

The doctrine of progressive revelation from age to age and time to time does not mean that Allah's fundamental Law changes. It is not fair to charge a Prophet of Allah with forgery because the Message as revealed to him is in a different form from that revealed before, when the core of the Truth is the same, for it comes from Allah.

The title of the Angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations came down.
In Truth, in order to strengthen Those who believe,\(^{2142}\) and as a Guide And Glad Tidings to Muslims.

103. We know indeed that they Say, “It is a man that Teaches him.” The tongue Of him they wickedly point to Is notably foreign, while this Is Arabic, pure and clear.\(^{2143}\)

104. Those who believe not In the Signs of Allah,— Allah will not guide them, And theirs will be A grievous Chastisement.

105. It is those who believe not In the Signs of Allah, That forge falsehood: It is they who lie!\(^{2144}\)

106. Any one who, after accepting Faith in Allah, utters Unbelief,—\(^{2145}\)

\(^{2142}\). The People of the Book, if they had true faith, were themselves strengthened in their faith and cleared of their doubts and difficulties by the revelations brought by Al-Muṣṭafā; and all whether People of the Book or not—who came within the fold of Islam, found the Qurʾān a Guide and a Gospel, i.e., a substitute for the Mosaic Law and for the Christian Gospel, which had both been corrupted.

\(^{2143}\). The wicked attribute to Prophets of Allah just such motives and springs of action as they themselves would be guilty of in such circumstances. The Pagans and those who were hostile to the revelation of Allah in Islam could not and cannot understand how such wonderful words could flow from the tongue of the Holy Prophet. They must need to postulate some human teacher. Unfortunately for their postulate, any possible human teacher they could think of would be poor in Arabic speech if he had all the knowledge that the Qurʾān reveals of previous revelations. Apart from that, even the most eloquent Arab could not, and cannot, produce anything of the eloquence, width, and depth of Quranic teaching, as is evident from every verse of the Book.

\(^{2144}\). It is clearly those who raise the cry of forgery that are guilty of falsehood, as there is not the least basis or even plausibility in their suggestion.

\(^{2145}\). The exception refers to a case like that of ʿAmmār, whose father Yāsīr and mother Sumayya, were subjected to unspeakable tortures for their belief in Islam, but never recanted. ʿAmmār, suffering under tortures himself and his mind acted on by the
Except under compulsion,  
His heart remaining firm  
In Faith—but such as  
Open their breast to Unbelief.—  
On them is Wrath from Allah,  
And theirs will be  
A dreadful Chastisement.

107. This because they love  
The life of this world  
Better than the Hereafter:  
And Allah will not guide  
Those who reject Faith.

108. Those are they whose hearts,  
Ears, and eyes Allah has  
sealed up,
And they take no heed.

109. Without doubt, in the Hereafter  
They will be the losers.

110. But verily thy Lord,—  
To those who leave their homes  
After trials and persecutions,—  
And who thereafter strive  
And fight for the Faith  
And patiently persevere,—  
Thy Lord, after all this  
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

= sufferings of his parents, uttered a word construed as recantation, though his heart never wavered and he came back at once to the Prophet, who consoled him for his pain and confirmed his faith.

2146. Cf. ii. 7. On account of their iniquities and their want of Faith their hearts and their senses become impervious to Allah’s grace, and they run headlong to perdition.

2147. I take this verse to refer to such men as were originally with the Pagans but afterwards joined Islam, suffered hardships and exile, and fought and struggled in the Cause, with patience and constance. Their past would be blotted out and forgiven. Men like Khalid ibn Walid were numbered with the foremost heroes of Islam. In that case this verse would be a Madinah verse, though the Sūra as a whole is Makkan. Perhaps it would be better to read, with some Commentators, futīnā in the active voice rather than futīnā in the passive voice, and translate “after inflicting trials and persecutions (on Muslim).” Notice the parallelism in construction between this verse and verse 119 below.
111. On the Day every soul
Will come up pleading\(^{2148}\)
For itself, and every soul
Will be recompensed (fully)
For all its actions, and none
Will be unjustly dealt with.

112. Allah sets forth a Parable:
A city enjoying security\(^{2149}\)
And quiet, abundantly supplied
With sustenance from every place:
Yet was it ungrateful
For the favours of Allah:
So Allah made it taste
Of hunger and terror (in extremes)
(Closing in on it) like a garment\(^{2150}\)
(From every side), because
Of the (evil) which
(Its people) wrought.

113. And there came to them
A Messenger from among
themselves,
But they falsely rejected him;
So the Wrath seized them

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2148. When the Reckoning comes, each soul will stand on its own personal responsibility. No one else can help it. Full justice will be done, and all the seeming inequalities of this world will be redressed.

2149. The reference may be to any of the cities or populations in ancient or modern times, which were favoured with security and other blessings from Allah, but which rebelled from Allah's Law and tasted the inevitable penalty, even in the midst of their iniquities. Some Commentators see here a reference to the city of Makkah under Pagan control. See next note.

2150. There is a double metaphor: (1) the *tasting* of hunger and terror after the abundant supplies and the full security which it had enjoyed; and (2) the complete *enfolding* of the City as with a *garment*, by these two scourages, hunger and a state of subjective alarm. If the reference is to Makkah shortly before its fall to the Muslims, the "hunger" was the seven years' severe famine which afflicted it, and the alarm was the constant fear in the minds of the Pagans that their day was done. Peace and prosperity were restored after the re-entry of the Prophet.
Even in the midst
Of their iniquities.

114. So eat of the sustenance
Which Allah has provided
For you, lawful and good;
And be grateful for the favours of Allah, if it is He
Whom ye serve.

115. He has only forbidden you
Dead meat, and blood,
And the flesh of swine,
And any (food) over which
The name of other than Allah
Has been invoked.
But if one is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits, -
Then Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

116. But say not—for any false thing
That your tongues may put forth.—
"This is lawful, and this
Is forbidden," so as to ascribe
False things to Allah. For those
Who ascribe false things
To Allah, will never prosper.

117. In such falsehood
Is but a paltry profit;

2151. Ingratitude for Allah's sustenance (in the literal and figurative senses) may be shown in various ways, e.g., (1) by forgetting or refusing to acknowledge the true source of the bounty, viz., Allah, (2) by misusing or misapplying the bounty, as by committing excesses in things lawful, or refusing to share them with others of Allah's creatures when the need arises, or (3) by falsely ascribing to Allah any prohibitions we may set up for ourselves for special reasons or because of our special idiosyncrasies.

2152. Cf. ii. 173 and notes, v. 3-4, and vi. 121 and 138-146.

2153. Men are apt to create taboos for themselves, out of superstition, and often for selfish ends, and enforce them in the name of religion. Nothing can be more reprehensible.
But they will have
A most grievous Chastisement.

118. To the Jews We prohibited
Such things as We have
Mentioned to thee before: 2154
We did them no wrong,
But they were used to
Doing wrong to themselves.

119. But verily thy Lord,
To those who do wrong
In ignorance, but who
Thereafter repent and make
amends,-
Thy Lord after all this,
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 2155

SECTION 16.

120. Abraham was indeed a model, 2156
Devoutly obedient to Allah,
(And) true in faith, and he
Joind not gods with Allah. 2157

121. He showed his gratitude
For the favours of Allah,

2154. See vi. 146 and n. The further prohibitions to them were a punishment for their hardness of hearts, and not a favour.

2155. See above, xvi. 110 and n. 2147. The parallelism in construction confirms the suggestion of the alternative reading which is made in that note. The similarity of expressions also rounds off the argument, as by a refrain in poetry. What follows now in this Sūra is an exhortation to right conduct.

2156. Ummat: a model, pattern, example for imitation; but the idea that he was an Ummat in himself, standing alone against his world, should not be lost sight of. See next note.

2157. The Gospel of Unity has been the corner-stone of spiritual Truth for all time. In this respect Abraham is the model and fountain-head for the world of western Asia and its spiritual descendants all over the world. Abraham was among a people (the Chaldeans) who worshipped stars and had forsaken the Gospel of Unity. He was among them but not of them. He suffered persecution, and left his home and his people, and settled in the land of Canaan.
2159. Jr
Abraham's Way was the right way, the Jews were ready with the taunt, "Why don't you then observe the Sabbath?" The answer is twofold. (I) The Sabbath has nothing to do with Abraham. It was instituted with the Law of Moses because of Israel's hardness of heart (ii. 74); for they constantly disputed with their Prophet Moses (ii. 108), and there were constantly among them afterwards men who broke the Sabbath (ii. 65, and n. 79). (II) Which was the true Sabbath Day? The Jews observe Saturday. The Christians, who include the Old Testament in their inspired Scripture, observe Sunday, and a sect among them (the Seventh Day Adventists) disagree, and observe Saturday. So there is disagreement among the People of the Book. Let them dispute among themselves. Their dispute will not be settled till the Day of Judgment. Meanwhile, Muslims are emancipated from such stringent restrictions. For them there is certainly the Day of United Prayer on Friday, but it is in no sense like the Jewish or the Scotch Sabbath!

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2160. Cf. ii. 113.
And most gracious:\textsuperscript{2161}
For thy Lord knoweth best,
Who have strayed from His Path,
And who receive guidance.\textsuperscript{2162}

126. And if ye punish, let your
punishment
Be proportionate to the
Wrong that has been
Done to you:
But if ye show patience,
That is indeed the best (course)\textsuperscript{2163}
For those who are patient.

\textsuperscript{2161} In this wonderful passage are laid down principles of religious preaching, which are good for all time. But where are the Teachers with such qualifications? We must invite all to the Way of Allah, and expound His Universal Will; we must do it with wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow, or very wide. Our preaching must be, not dogmatic, not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate, and such as would attract their attention. Our manner and our arguments should not be acrimonious, but modelled on the most courteous and the most gracious example, so that the hearer may say to himself, “This man is not dealing merely with dialectics; he is not trying to get a rise out of me; he is sincerely expounding the faith that is in him, and his motive is the love of man and the love of Allah.”

\textsuperscript{2162} It may be that the Preacher sometimes says to himself, “What is the use of teaching these people? they have made up their minds, or they are obstinate; or they are only trying to catch me out.” Let him not yield to such a thought. Who knows how the seed of the Word of Allah may germinate in people’s minds? It is not for man to look for results. Man’s inner thoughts are known best to Allah.

\textsuperscript{2163} In the context this passage refers to controversies and discussions, but the words are wide enough to cover all human struggles, disputes, and fights. In strictest equity you are not entitled to give a worse blow than is given to you. Lest you should think that such patience only gives an advantage to the adversary, you are told that the contrary is the case, the advantage is with the patient, the self-possessed, those who do not lose their temper or forget their own principles of conduct.
127. And do thou be patient.\textsuperscript{2164}
For thy patience is but with the help From Allah; nor grieve over them: And distress not thyself Because of their plots.

128. For Allah is with those\textsuperscript{2165}
Who restrain themselves, And those who do good.

2164. In the previous verse are laid down the principles of conduct in controversy for all Muslims; 'if you catch them out, you are not entitled to strike a heavier blow than you received, but it is better to restrain yourself and be patient.' There patience was recommended. In this verse a command is directly addressed to the Prophet, 'Do thou be patient.' It is a command: his standard as the Great Teacher is much higher; and he carried out in his life. His patience and self-restraint were under circumstances of extraordinary provocation. In his human wisdom it may sometimes have seemed questionable whether forbearance and self-restraint might not be human weaknesses; he had to defend his people as well as himself against the enemy’s persecutions. He is told here that he need not entertain any such fears. Patience (with constancy) in those circumstances was in accordance with Allah’s own command. Nor was he to grieve if they rejected Allah’s Message; the Prophet had done his duty when he boldly and openly proclaimed it. Nor was his heart to be troubled if they hatched secret plots against himself and his people, Allah would protect them.

2165. And the Sūra ends with the highest consolation which the righteous can receive; the assurance that Allah is with them. A double qualification is indicated for so high an honour,—(1) that they should not yield to human passion or anger or impatience, and (2) that they should go on with constancy doing good all around them. To attain to the Presence of Allah in the sense of “I am with you” is the culmination of the righteous man’s aspiration.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Bani Isrāîl, 17

In the gradation of religious teaching (see Introduction to Sūra viii), we saw that the first seven Sūras sketched the early religious history of man, and led up to the formation of the new Ummat of Islam. Sūras viii to xvi formed another series dealing with the formation of the new Ummat and its consolidation, and Allah’s dealing with man taken as an Ummat and considered in his social relations in organised communities (see Introduction to Sūra viii, x, and xvi). We now come to a fresh series, (Sūras xvii-xxix), which may be considered in three parts. Sūras xvii-xxi begin with an allusion to the Isrā (of which more later), and proceed to religious history as touching individuals rather than nations. The old prophets and stories of the past are now referred to from this point of view. Sūras xxii-xxv refer to Hajj (pilgrimage), worship and prayer, chastity, privacy, etc., as related to a man’s individual religious growth. Sūras xxvi-xxix go back to the old prophets and stories of the past, as illustrating the growth of the individual soul in its reactions against the lives of the communities and the reactions of the communities to the lives of its great individual souls.

Let us now consider S. xvii. by itself. It opens with the night journey of the Holy Prophet: he was transported from the Sacred Mosque (of Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (of Jerusalem) in a night and shown some of the Signs of Allah. The majority of Commentators take this Night Journey literally. The Hadith literature gives details of this Journey and its study helps to elucidate its meaning. The holy Prophet was first transported to the seat of the earlier revelations in Jerusalem, and then taken through the seven heavens even to the Sublime Throne. The Spaniard, Miguel Asin, Arabic Professor in the University of Madrid, has shown that this Mi‘rāj literature had a great influence on the Mediaeval literature of Europe, and especially on the great Italian poem, the Divine Comedy (or Drama) of Dante, which towers like a landmark in Mediaeval European literature.

The reference to this great story of the Mi‘rāj is a fitting prelude to the journey of the human soul in its religious growth in life. The first steps in such growth must be through moral conduct—the reciprocal rights of parents and children, kindness to our fellow-men, courage and firmness in the hour of danger, a sense of personal responsibility, and a sense of Allah’s Presence through prayer and praise.

The Mi‘rāj is usually dated to the 27th night of the month of Rajab (though other dates, e.g., 17th of Rabi‘ I, are also given) in the year before the Hijra.
This fixes the date of the opening verse of the Sūra, though portions of the Sūra may have been a little earlier.

Summary.—The spiritual experience of the Prophets of Allah are given in order that Allah's Signs may be made clear to men: man is misled into evil, and must be guided to a sense of personal responsibility (xvii. 1-22).

Our service to Allah is shown also in our human relations, goodness to parents and kinsmen and strangers in want, as well as kindness to children, purity in sex relations, justice and respect for human life, protection of orphans, probity in all dealings, and avoidance of arrogance (xvii, 23-40).

Allah's glory is above all comparison, and the reception of His revelation marks off the man of faith from those who do not believe. But the Believers should speak fair and avoid dissensions, for Allah doth encompass all men (xvii. 41-60).

Pride caused the fall of Iblīs; but the children of Adam have been raised in excellence above other Creation. They will be judged by their deeds. Prayer is good at stated times and at night, and the Qurān is offered as healing and mercy (xvii. 61-84).

Inspiration (the Qurān) is a Sign of Allah's grace, and men should accept it without making carping excuses. Be humble in prayer and praise (xvii. 85-111).
Bani Isra'il, or the Children of Israel
or Al-Isra.'

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Glory to (Allah)
   Who did take His Servant
   For a Journey by night
   From the Sacred Mosque
   To the Farthest Mosque
   Whose precincts We did Bless,—in order that We
   Might show him some
   Of Our Signs: for He
   Is the One Who heareth
   And seeth (all things).2169

2166. The reference is to the Isra' for which see the Introduction to this Sûra.

2167. Masjid is a place of prayer: here it refers to the Ka'ba at Makkah. It had not yet been cleared of its idols and rededicated exclusively to the One True God. It was symbolical of the new Message which was being given to mankind.

2168. The Farthest Mosque must refer to the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem on the hill of Moriah, at or near which stands the Dome of the Rock, called also the Mosque of Hadhrat 'Umar. This and the Mosque known as the Farthest Mosque (Masjid-ul-Aqsa) were completed by the Amir 'Abd-ul-Malik in A.H. 68. Farthest, because it was the place of worship farthest west which was known to the Arabs in the time of the holy Prophet: it was a sacred place to both Jews and Christians, but the Christians then had the upper hand, as it was included in the Byzantine (Roman) Empire, which maintained a Patriarch at Jerusalem. The chief dates in connection with the Temple are: it was finished by Solomon about B.C. 1004; destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar about 586 B.C.; rebuilt under Ezra and Nehemiah about 515 B.C.; turned into a heathen idol-temple by one of Alexander's successors, Antiochus Epiphanes, 167 B.C.; restored by Herod, B.C. 17 to A.D. 29; and completely razed to the ground by the Emperor Titus in A.D. 70. These ups and downs are among the greater Signs in religious history.

2169. Allah's knowledge comprehends all things, without any curtain of Time or any separation of Space. He can therefore see and hear all things, and the Mi'raj was a reflection of this knowledge.

In this and the subsequent verses, the reference to Allah is generally in the first person and plural. But in the first and the last clause of this verse it is in the third person singular: "Glory to Allah, Who did take His Servant...."; "He is the One.....". In each of these two instances, the clause expresses the point of view of Allah's creatures, who glorify Him, and whose hearing and seeing are ordinarily so limited that they can do nothing but glorify Him when one of His creatures is raised up to hear and see the Signs. It is they who glorify Him.
2. We gave Moses the Book, 2170
And made it a Guide
To the Children of Israel,
(Commanding): "Take not
Other than Me 2171
As Disposer of (your) affairs."

3. O ye that are sprung
From those whom We carried
(In the Ark) with Noah? 2172
Verily he was a devotee
Most grateful.

4. And we decreed for
The Children of Israel 2173
In the Book, that twice 2174
Would they do mischief
On the earth and be elated

2170. *The Book*: the revelation that was given to Moses. It was there clearly laid down that those who followed Moses must consider Allah as the Only God. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...." thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...." etc. (Exod. xx. 3-5). These are the words of the English Bible. As a matter of fact the spirit of the Mosaic teaching went further. It referred all things to the Providence of Allah: Allah is the Disposer of all affairs, and we are to look to none but Him. This is Islam, and the *Mi'raj* showed that it was the teaching of Allah from the most ancient times, and yet it was violated by the very people who claimed to be its custodians.

2171. Note the transition from "We" in the first clause to "Me" in the second clause. The first clause refers to the majesty of Allah as the Heavenly King; the second clause refers to His personal interest in all our affairs.

2172. After the Deluge of the time of Noah the only descendants of Noah were those who were saved in the Ark with him. They had special reason to celebrate the praises of Allah. But they relapsed into idolatry, sin, and abominations. They are reminded of the true and sincere devotion of Noah himself, as contrasted with the unworthiness of Noah's descendants, especially the Children of Israel.

2173. The Book is the revelation given to the Children of Israel. Here it seems to refer to the burning words of Prophets like Isaiah. For example, see Isaiah, chap. xxiv. or Isaiah v. 20-30, or Isaiah iii. 16-26.

2174. What are the two occasions referred to? It may be that "twice" is a figure of speech for "more than once", "often". Or it may be that the two occasions refer to (1) the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., when the Jews were carried off into captivity, and (2) the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70, after which the Temple was never re-built. See n. 2168 above. On both occasions it was a judgment of Allah for the sins of the Jews, their backslidings, and their arrogance.
With mighty arrogance
(And twice would they be punished)!

5. When the first of the warnings
Came to pass, We sent
Against you Our servants
Given to terrible warfare:2175
They entered the very inmost
Parts of your homes;
And it was a warning
(Completely) fulfilled.

6. Then did We grant you
Victory over them:2176
We gave you increase
In resources and sons,
And made you
The more numerous
In man-power.

7. If ye did well,
Ye did well for yourselves;
If ye did evil,

2175. A good description of the war-like Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonians. They were servants of Allah in the sense that they were instruments through which the wrath of Allah was poured out on the Jews, for they penetrated through their lands, their Temple, and their homes, and carried away the Jews, men and women, into captivity. As regards “the daughters of Zion” see the scathing condemnation in Isaiah, iii. 16-26.

2176. The return of the Jews from the Captivity was about 520 B.C. They started life afresh. They rebuilt their Temple. They carried out various reforms and built up a new Judaism in connection with Ezra. See appendix II following S. v. For a time they prospered. Meanwhile their old oppressors the Babylonians had been absorbed by Persia. Subsequently Persia was absorbed in Alexander’s Empire. The whole of western Asia was Hellenized, and the new school of Jews was Hellenized also, and had a strong centre in Alexandria. But their footing in Palestine continued, and under the Asmonaean Dynasty (B.C. 167-63), they had a national revival, and the names of the Makkah bees are remembered as those of heroes. Another dynasty, that of the Iduma’ans, (B.C. 63 to B.C. 4), to which Herod belonged, also enjoyed some semi-independent power. The sceptre of Syria (including Palestine) passed to the Romans in B.C. 65, and Jewish feudatory Kings held power under them. But the Jews again showed a stiff-necked resistance to Allah’s Messenger in the time of Jesus, and the inevitable doom followed in the complete and final destruction of the Temple under Titus in 70 A.D.
There is such a thing as disgrace in this life, but the final disgrace is in the Hereafter, and that will be irretrievable.

2177. This is a parenthetical sentence. If anyone follows Allah's Law, the benefit goes to himself: he does not bestow a favour on anyone else. Similarly evil brings its own recompense on the doer of evil.

2178. The second doom was due to the rejection of the Message of Jesus. "To disfigure your faces" means to destroy any credit or power you may have got: the face shows the personality of the man.

2179. Titus's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was complete. He was a son of the Roman Emperor Vespasian, and at the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, had the title of Caesar as heir to throne. He ruled as Roman Emperor from 79 to 81 A.D.

2180. Merivale in his *Romans Under the Empire* gives a graphic account of the siege and final destruction (ed. 1890, vii. 221-255). The population of Jerusalem was then 200,000. According to the Latin historian Tacitus it was as much as 600,000. There was a famine and there were massacres. There was much fanaticism. The judgment of Merivale is: "They" (the Jews) "were judicially abandoned to their own passions and the punishment which naturally awaited them". (vii. 221).

2181. Now we come to the time of our holy Prophet. In spite of all the past, the Jews could still have obtained Allah's forgiveness if they had not obstinately rejected the greatest of the Prophets also. If they were to continue in their sins, Allah's punishment would also continue to visit them.

2182. There is such a thing as disgrace in this life, but the final disgrace is in the Hereafter, and that will be irretrievable.
Which is most right (or stable),
And giveth the glad tidings
To the Believers who work
Deeds of righteousness,
That they shall have
A magnificent reward;

10. And to those who believe not
In the Hereafter, (it announceth)
That We have prepared
For them a Chastisement
Grievous (indeed).

SECTION 2.

11. Man prays for evil
As fervently
As he prays for good
For man is given to
Haste.

12. We have made the Night
And the Day as two
(Of Our) Signs: the Sign
Of the Night have We made dark
While the Sign of the Day
We have made bright

2183. The instability and crookedness of the Jewish soul having been mentioned, the healing balm which should have cured it is now pointed out. The Message of the Qur-an is for all. Those who have Faith and show that Faith in their conduct must reap their spiritual reward. But those who reject Faith cannot escape punishment. Apart from what is past, apart from questions of national or racial history, there is a Hope—and a Danger—for every soul.

2184. Man in his ignorance or haste mistakes evil for good, and desires what he should not have. The wise and instructed soul has patience and does not put its own desires above the wisdom of Allah. He receives with contentment the favours of Allah, and prays to be rightly guided in his desires and petitions.

2185. If we were to cry when it is night, we shall look foolish when it is day; for the night is but a preparation for the day; perhaps, as the last verse says, we pray for the day when we want rest for the night. Both are Signs from Allah. Darkness and light stand for ignorance and knowledge. "Where ignorance is bliss, its folly to be wise." Darkness and light may also stand for shadow and sunshine, sorrow and joy: both may be for our development.
2186. By the physical light we see physical facts. And this physical gift of Allah is good for us in two ways: (1) we can arrange for our livelihood, or we can attain the knowledge of the physical sciences and gain some control over the physical forces of nature; and (2) the daily rising and setting of the sun gives us the computation of days and years, for the physical natural year is the solar year.

2187. Fate: Tā'ir, literally a bird, hence an omen, an evil omen, fate. Cf. xxxvi. 19. The Arabs, like the ancient Romans, sought to read the mysteries of human fate from the flight of birds. And many of us in our own day seek to read our future fortunes by similar superstitions. We read in the previous verse that there are Signs of Allah, but they are not meant to subserve the vulgar purpose of disclosing our future destiny in a worldly sense. They are meant for quite other purposes, as we have explained. Our real fate does not depend upon birds or omens or stars. It depends on our deeds; good or evil, and they hang round our necks.

2188. These deeds, good or evil, will be embodied in a scroll which will be quite open to us in the light of the Day of Judgment, however much we may affect to be ignorant of it now or waste our energies in prying into mysteries that do not concern us.

2189. Our true accusers are our own deeds. Why not look to them instead of vainly prying into something superstitious which we call a book of fortune or a book of omens?
2190. The doctrine of personal responsibility is insisted on, and the basis of ethics is shown to be our own good or evil as furthering or obstructing our highest development.

2191. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is condemned. Salvation for the wicked cannot be attained by the punishment of the innocent. One man cannot bear the burden of another: that would be unjust. Every man must bear his own personal responsibility. Cf. vi. 164. But Allah never visits His wrath on anyone until due warning is conveyed to him through an accredited messenger.

2192. Allah's Mercy gives every chance to the wicked to repent. When wickedness gets so rampant that punishment becomes inevitable, even then Allah's Mercy and Justice act together. Those who are highly gifted from Allah—it may be with wealth or position, or it may be with talents and opportunities—are expected to understand and obey. They are given a definite order and warning. If they still transgress there is no further room for argument. They cannot plead that they were ignorant. The command of the Lord is proved against them, and its application is called for beyond doubt. Then it is that their punishment is completed.

2193. Qaul here has the sense of word, order, law, charge framed against one under a definite law.

2194. Noah's Flood is taken as a new starting point in history. But even after that hundreds of empires, towns, and generations have perished for their wickedness.
To note and see
The sins of His servants.\textsuperscript{2195}

18. If any do wish
For the transitory things
(Of this life), we readily\textsuperscript{2196}
Grant them—such things
As We will, to such persons
As We will: in the end
Have We provided Hell
For them: they will burn
Therein, disgraced and rejected.\textsuperscript{2197}

19. Those who do wish
For the (things of) the Hereafter,\textsuperscript{2198}
And strive therefor
With all due striving,
And have Faith,—\textsuperscript{2199}
They are the ones
Whose striving will be thanked
(By Allah).

\textsuperscript{2195.} Let not the wicked think, because they are given a lease of life and luxury for a time, that their wickedness has escaped notice. Allah notes and sees all things, both open and secret. He knows the hidden motives and thoughts of men, and He has no need of any other evidence. His knowledge and sight are all-sufficient.

\textsuperscript{2196.} An explanation is now given of how it is that prosperity sometimes seems to attend the wicked. The explanation is threefold: (1) the transitory things of this life are worth little in the eternal scheme of things; (2) even they are provided, not just because their recipients wish for them, but according to a definite Plan of Allah; and (3) in the end there is for the wicked the eternal Misery and deprivation of grace—the Hell which is worse than destruction in the terms of this world.

\textsuperscript{2197.} All the pride and insolence will then be brought low. The disgrace and the exclusion from the “sight of the Face of Allah” will by themselves be punishments of which the magnitude cannot be measured in the terms of our present material life.

\textsuperscript{2198.} This is in contrast to the last verse. Those who wish for mere earthly good sometimes get it and misuse it. Those whose eyes are fixed on the Hereafter, they too share in their Lord’s bounty provided they fulfil the conditions explained in the next note; but their wishes and endeavours are more acceptable in the sight of Allah.

\textsuperscript{2199.} A mere wish for moral and spiritual good is not enough. It must be backed up by hard endeavour and supported by a lively Faith. On those conditions the wishes are accepted by Allah.
20. Of the bounties of thy Lord
We bestow freely on all—
These as well as those:
The bounties of thy Lord
Are not closed (to anyone). 2200

21. See how We have bestowed
More on some than on others;
But verily the Hereafter
Is more in rank and gradation
And more in excellence. 2201

22. Take not with Allah
Another god; 2202
Or thou (O man!) wilt sit
In disgrace and destitution. 2203

SECTION 3.

23. Thy Lord hath decreed
That ye worship none but Him,
And that ye be kind
To parents. Whether one
Or both of them attain
Old age in thy life, 2204

2200. Allah’s favours are showered on all— the just and the unjust, the deserving and the undeserving. But there is a difference as explained in the last two verses.

2201. Nor should man suppose that all gifts are of equal value. The spiritual ones rank far higher in dignity and real worth than the transitory ones. Therefore it is altogether wrong to compare the worldly prosperity of a wicked man with the apparent want of it to a man of spiritual worth. There is no comparison between them when measured by right standards.

2202. The seeming inequality of gifts to men might make short-sighted men impugn the impartiality of Allah. But the fault lies with such men’s own want of knowledge and want of Faith. There is no excuse for them to seek other objects of worship than Allah. For there is none worthy of worship except Allah.

2203. If foolish men turn to false objects of worship, they will not only be disappointed, but they will lose the respect of their own fellow-men, and spiritually they will be reduced to destitution. All their talents and their works will be of no avail.

2204. The spiritual and moral duties are now brought into juxtaposition. We are to worship none but Allah, because none but Allah is worthy of worship, not because “the Lord thy God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto
Say not to them a word
Of contempt, nor repel them
But address them,
In terms of honour.

24. And, out of kindness,
Lower to them the wing Of humility, and say:
"My Lord! bestow on them
Thy Mercy even as they
Cherished me in childhood."  

25. Your Lord knoweth best
What is in your hearts:
If ye do deeds of righteousness,
Verily He is Most Forgiving
To those who turn to Him
Again and again (in true
penitence).

—— the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Exod. xx. 5).

Note that the act of worship may be collective as well as individual; hence the plural ta'budut. The kindness to parents is an individual act of piety; hence the singular taqul, qul, etc.

2205. Cf. xv. 88 and n. 2011. The metaphor is that of a high-flying bird which lowers her wing out of tenderness to her offspring. There is a double aptness. (1) When the parent was strong and the child was helpless, parental affection was showered on the child: when the child grows up and is strong, and the parent is helpless, can he do less than bestow similar tender care on the parent? (2) But more: he must approach the matter with gentle humility: for does not parental love, remind him of the great love with which Allah cherishes His creatures? There is something here more than simple human gratitude; it goes up into the highest spiritual region.

2206. Note that we are asked to honour our father and mother, not "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exod. xx. 12), but upon much higher and more universal grounds, such as befit a perfected revelation. In the first place, not merely respect, but cherishing kindness, and humility to parents, are commanded. In the second place, this command is bracketed with the command to worship the One True God. Parental love should be to us a type of divine love: nothing that we can do can ever really compensate for that which we have received. In the third place (see next verse) our spiritual advancement is tested by this: we cannot expect Allah's forgiveness if we are rude or unkind to those who unselfishly brought us up.

2207. It is the heart, and its hidden and secret motives, by which we are judged: for Allah knows them all.
26. And render to the kindred
Their due rights, as (also)
To those in want,
And to the wayfarer: 2208
But squander not (your wealth)
In the manner of a spendthrift. 2209

27. Verily spendthrifts are brothers
Of the Satans.
And the Satan
Is to His Lord (Himself)
Ungrateful. 2210

28. And even if thou hast
To turn away from them
In pursuit of the Mercy
From thy Lord which thou
Dost expect, yet speak
To them a word
Of easy kindness. 2211

2208. In the Jewish Decalogue, which was given to a primitive and hard-hearted
people, this refinement of Kindness—to those in want and to wayfarers (i.e., total
strangers whom you come across) finds no place. Nor was there much danger of their
wasting their substance out of exuberance. Even the command “to honour thy father and
mother” comes after the ceremonial observance of the Sabbath. With us, the worship
of Allah is linked up with kindness—to parents, kindred, those in want, those who are far
from their homes though they may be total strangers to us. It is not mere verbal kindness.
They have certain rights which must be fulfilled.

2209. All charity, kindness, and help are conditioned by our own resources. There
is no merit if we merely spend out of bravado or for idle show. How many families are
ruined by extravagant expenses at weddings, funerals, etc., or (as they may call it) to
“oblige friends or relatives”, or to give to able-bodied beggars? To no one was this
command more necessary than it is to Muslims of the present day.

2210. Spendthrifts are not merely fools. They are of the same family as the Satans.
And the Satan himself—fell by his ingratitude to Allah. So those who misuse or squander
Allah’s gifts are also ungrateful to Allah.

2211. You may have to “turn away” from people for two reasons. (1) You may not
have the wherewithal with which to entertain them and give them their rights; or (2) you
may have to give them a wide berth because their thoughts are not as your thoughts.
In either case there is no need to speak harshly to them. Your words should be those
of “easy kindness”, i.e., the sort of kindness (not merely frigid politeness) which flows
from pity and understanding and smooths over unnecessary difficulties in human
intercourse.
29. Make not thy hand tied\(^{2212}\) (Like a niggard’s) to thy neck,
Nor stretch it forth
To its utmost reach,
So that thou become
Blameworthy and destitute.

30. Verily thy Lord doth provide
Sustenance in abundance
For whom He pleaseth, and He
Straiten it\(^{2213}\)
For He doth know
And regard all His servants.

SECTION 4.

31. Kill not your children\(^{2214}\)
For fear of want: We shall
Provide, sustenance for them
As well as for you.
Verily the killing of them
Is a great sin.

32. Nor come nigh to adultery:
For it is an indecent (deed)
And an evil way\(^{2215}\)

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2212. Cf. the phrase for niggardliness in v. 64. We are not to be so lavish as to make ourselves destitute and incur the just censure of wise men, nor is it becoming to keep back our resources from the just needs of those who have a right to our help. Even strangers have such a right, as we saw in xvii. 26 above. But we must keep a just measure between our capacity and other people’s needs.

2213. If a foolish spendthrift pretends that his generosity, even if it ruins himself, is good for other people, he is reminded that Allah will take care of all. He knows every one’s true needs and cares for them. He gives in abundance to some, but in all cases He gives in just measure. Who are we to pretend to greater generosity?

2214. The Arabs were addicted to female infanticide. In a society perpetually at war a son was a source of strength whereas a daughter was a source of weakness. Even now infanticide is not unknown in other countries for economic reasons. This crime against children’s lives is here characterised as one of the greatest of sins.

2215. Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road to many evils. It destroys the basis of the family: it works against the interests of children born or to be born; it may cause murders =
33. Nor take life—which Allah
Has made sacred—except
For just cause. And if
Anyone is slain wrongfully,
We have given his heir
Authority (to demand Qisās)\(^{2216}\)
Or to forgive): but let him
Not exceed bounds in the matter
Of taking life; for he
Is helped (by the Law).

34. Come not nigh
To the orphan’s property
Except to improve it,\(^{2217}\)
Until he attains the age\(^{2218}\)
Of full strength; and fulfil
(Every)\(^{2219}\) engagement,
For (every) engagement

and feuds and loss of reputation and property, and also loosen permanently the bonds of society. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation to it should be avoided.

2216. On the subject of Qisās see ii. 178 and the notes there to. Under the strict limitations there laid down, a life may be taken for a life. The heir is given the right to demand the life; but he must not exceed due bounds, because he is helped by the Law. Some Commentators understand “he” in “he is helped (by the Law)” to refer to the heir of the person against whom Qisās is sought. He too will be helped by the Law, if the heir of the first slain exceeds the bounds of Law.

2217. Cf. vi. 152, and other passages relating to orphans, e.g., ii. 220. If an orphan’s property is touched at all, it should be to improve it, or to give him something better than he had before,—never to take a personal advantage for the benefit of the guardian. A bargain that may be quite fair as between two independent persons would be, under this verse, unfair as between a guardian and his orphan ward until the latter attains the full age of understanding.

2218. Ashuddahu means the age when the orphan reaches his full maturity of strength and understanding, say between the ages of 18 and 30. The age of legal maturity may be 18 (as for certain purposes in India) or 21 (as in England). For certain purposes in Muslim law it may be less than 18. In the orphan’s interest a much stricter standard is required in his case.

2219. The definite article al has here a generic meaning, and is best translated by “every”.

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S.17 A.33-34
2220. From the context the engagements referred to would relate to beneficial contracts connected with the orphan’s property or promises or undertakings given by the guardian or implied in the terms of his appointment. But the words are general and may be interpreted in the general sense. Note that this sentence does not occur in the similar passage in vi. 152, where there was a discussion of social laws: it is appropriate here, where the discussion is about the guardian’s personal and individual responsibility.

2221. Giving just measure and weight is not only right in itself but is ultimately to the best advantage of the person who gives it.

2222. Idle curiosity may lead us to nose into evil, through our ignorance that it is evil. We must guard against every such danger. We must only hear the things that are known to us to be of good report, and see things that are good and instructive and entertain in our hearts feelings or in our minds ideas that we have reason to expect will be spiritually profitable to us. We shall be called to account for the exercise of every faculty that has been given to us. This goes a little farther than a famous sculpture on a Japanese temple in which three monkeys are shown as putting their hands to their ears, eyes, and mouths, respectively, to show that they were not prepared to hear any evil, or see any evil, or speak any evil. Here idle curiosity is condemned. Futility is to be avoided even if it does not reach the degree of positive evil.

2223. Insolence, or arrogance, or undue elation at our powers or capacities, is the first step to many evils. Besides, it is unjustified. All our gifts are from Allah.
38. Of all such things
   The evil is hateful
   In the sight of thy Lord.

39. These are among the (precepts
   Of) wisdom, which thy Lord
   Has revealed to thee. 2224
   Take not, with Allah,
   Another object of worship,
   Lest thou shouldst be thrown
   Into Hell, blameworthy and
   rejected. 2225

40. Has then your Lord,
   (O Pagans!) preferred for you
   Sons, and taken for Himself
   Daughters among the angels? 2226
   Truly ye utter
   A most dreadful saying!

SECTION 5.

41. We have explained (things)
   In various (ways) in this Qur-ān.

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2224. The moral law, as expounded in xvii. 23-39 is far in advance of the bare
Decalogue in that it searches out motives, and draws pointed attention to the weak and
helpless if we are to reach any real understanding of Allah. It begins with a mention
of the worship of Allah, the One True God and ends with a similar mention to close the
argument, thus emphasizing the fact that the love of Allah embraces the love of man and
practical help of our fellow-creatures.

2225. “Blameworthy” carries us back by reminiscence to xvii. 29, between which and
this verse there is mention of crimes committed out of covetousness and a selfish disregard
of other people’s rights. “Rejected” carries back our reminiscence to xvii. 18, from which
to here we have a reference to crimes that lead to deprivation of Allah’s grace. The latter
is of course wider than the former. Note how subtly the two streams of thought are here
conjoined.

2226. Cf. xvi. 57-59. Insistence on true worship means also exclusion of false worship
or worship derogatory to Allah. In circles where daughters were despised and even their
lives had to be protected by special legislation, what could have been dreadful than
ascripting daughters to Allah?
In order that they may receive\textsuperscript{2227} Admonition, but it only increases Their flight (from the Truth)!

42. Say: if there had been (Other) gods with Him,— As they say,—behold, They would certainly have Sought out a way in submitting To the Lord of the Throne!\textsuperscript{2228}

43. Glory to Him! He is high Above all that they say!— Exalted and Great (beyond measure)!

44. The seven heavens and the earth, And all beings therein, Declare His glory: There is not a thing But celebrates His praise; And yet ye understand not How they declare His glory!\textsuperscript{2229} Verily He is Oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving!

45. When thou dost recite The Qur-an, We put,

\textsuperscript{2227} Things are explained in the Qur-an from all points of view, individual and national, by means of stories, parables, and figures of speech, and by way of categorical commands. But those who are evil, instead of profiting by such instruction, often go farther and farther away from the Truth.

\textsuperscript{2228} There is only One True God. But if, as polytheists say, there had been subsidiary gods, they would yet have had to submit to the Throne of the Supreme God, and worship Him.

\textsuperscript{2229} All Creation, animate and inanimate, sings Allah’s praises and celebrates His glory,—animate, with consciousness, and inanimate, in the evidence which it furnishes of the unity and glory of Allah. All Nature bears witness to His power, wisdom, and goodness. It is only “ye”, \textit{i.e.}, those who reject the whole trend of your nature and deny Faith simply because ye have been given a limited amount of choice and free-will,—it is only such as “ye” that understand not what every other creature understands and proclaims with joy and pride. What must be your degradation! And yet Allah bears with you and forgives you! Such is His goodness!
Between thee and those who Believe not in the Hereafter, A veil invisible. 2230

46. And We put coverings Over their hearts (and minds) Lest they should understand The Qur-ān, and deafness 2231 Into their ears: when thou Dost mention thy Lord— And Him alone—in the Qur-ān, They turn on their backs, Fleeing (from the Truth).

47. We know best what it is They listen, when they listen 2232 To thee; and when they Meet in private Behold, the wicked say, “Ye follow none other than A man bewitched!”

2230. Veil invisible: Some Commentators understand masūr here as equivalent to sātir: a veil that makes invisible, a thick or dark veil. But I think that the meaning of masūr (in the passive voice) as “hidden or invisible” is more consonant with the whole passage. If all nature, external and within ourselves, declares Allah’s glory, those unfortunate who cut themselves off from their better nature are isolated from the true servants of Allah and the revelation of Allah, because (1) they are unfit for being in their company, and (2) because the servants of Allah and the revelation of Allah must be protected from the pain which blasphemy or rebellion must cause to their unsullied nature. The veil is none the less real even though it is invisible.

2231. The invisible veil being put against the ungodly on account of their deliberate rejection of Truth, the result is that their minds are fogged so that they cannot understand and their ears are clogged so that they cannot hear. In other words the effects of Evil become cumulative in shutting out Allah’s grace.

2232. See last note. That being so, the only motive for the ungodly to listen to Allah’s Truth is to scoff at it instead of to be instructed by it. They may make a show of listening, but when they meet together in private, they show themselves in their true colours. Cf. ii. 14. They cannot help seeing that there is singular charm and attractiveness in Allah’s Word, and that it consoles, helps, and elevates many people who receive it in the right spirit. So they pretend that they are superior to such people and laugh at them for listening to some one who is only under the influence of something which they call magic!
2233. Note that the word used is “Sabilan” “a way”, not “the way”. In going astray they have lost the way; but never can they find any means of getting back to that way, or of justifying themselves or making good their wicked similes.

2234. They do not realise that Allah Who created them once out of nothing can create them again, with memories of their past, in order to render to Him an account of how they used or misused the talents and opportunities which they were given. If it is to be a new Creation, what then? Bones and dust or ashes may yet retain something of the personality which was enshrined in them. But even if they were reduced to stones or iron or anything which their minds can conceive of as being most unlike them, yet there is nothing impossible to Allah! He has clearly sent a Message that we shall have to render an account of ourselves, and His Message is necessarily true.

2235. The sceptic shifts his ground when he is cornered in argument. It is no longer tenable for him to say that it cannot happen or that there is no one who can bring him back to life and memory. He now gets shaky, and says, “Well, when is that going to happen?” The actual time no man can tell. Indeed that event will be on a plane in which there will be no Time. Our relative ideas of time and place will have been completely overthrown, and it will appear to us then, not that it has been postponed too long, but that it has come too soon! See the next verse and note.
That be?" Say, "May be
It will be quite soon!

52. "It will be on the Day
When He will call you,
And ye will answer
(His call) with (words
Of) His praise, and ye Will think that ye tarried
But a little while!" 2236

SECTION 6.

53. Say to My servants
That they should (only) say
Those things that are best: 2238
For Satan doth sow
Dissensions among them:
For Satan is to man
An avowed enemy.

54. It is your Lord
That knoweth you best:

2236. It may be that this verse should not be in the inverted commas governed by the verb "say", in the last clause of the last verse. In that case, the answer to the sceptic would be finished in the last verse, and this verse would be a general statement applying also to the righteous, who will rise up celebrating the praises of Allah. But on the whole, I think it is better to take this verse as part of the answer to the sceptic referred to in the last verse.

2237. Whatever may have been your spiritual blindness in this life, the "new creation" will have opened your eyes to the Truth. No one will any longer be in any delusion as regards the Reality of Allah, and will be forced, by their new circumstances, to recognise the Truth and sing Allah's praises. And all will be surprised at the seemingly short flight of time since they had their little ephemeral life on this earth. They will now appraise its true worth.

2238. This command refers to two situations. (1) Even to your enemies and the enemies of Allah you should speak fair: who are you to judge others? Judgment belongs to Allah alone, for He knows you (i.e., all mankind) best, and your personal knowledge is at best imperfect. And Satan is always trying to divide mankind. (2) Amongst yourselves, also you should not entertain suspicions, but speak politely according to the best standards of human speech. A false or unkind word may destroy all your efforts at building up unity, because the forces of disruption are more numerous than the forces of unity.
If He please, He granteth You mercy, or if He please, He granteth punishment: We have not sent Thee to be a disposer of their affairs for them.

55. And it is your Lord That knoweth best all beings That are in the heavens And on earth: And We made some of The Prophets to excel Others and We gave To David The Psalms.

56. Say: “Call on those— Besides Him—whom ye fancy: They have neither the power To remove your troubles From you nor to change them.”

2239. Man should never for a single moment entertain a thought that would imply that he was wiser than Allah. Allah’s knowledge is all-embracing. If He grants mercy to some that you consider wicked or punishment to some that you consider righteous, it is your knowledge or your deductions that are at fault, not Allah’s righteous Plan. Even Prophets of Allah are not sent to arrange or dispose of men’s affairs, but only to teach Allah’s Message. How much less can ordinary men presume to judge other men? The Mashiyat—Will and Plan of Allah—is above all human wisdom.

2240. Not only are we not to judge other ordinary men and carp at them. We are not to set up false standards for judging the Prophets of Allah. If one was born of the unlearned Arab race, he yet was a mercy to all the worlds. If one spoke to Allah as Kalimullah or another’s life began with a miracle; it does not imply superiority. It only means that Allah’s wisdom is more profound than we can fathom.

2241. The gifts with which the prophets came may themselves take different forms, according to the needs of the world and the times in which they lived, as judged by the wisdom of Allah. A striking example here given is the gift of David over others. David was given the Zabūr, the Psalter or Psalms, intended to be for the worship of Allah and the celebration of Allah’s praise. For the Book of Psalms, see the last part of n. 669 to iv. 163, where exactly the same words are used about David.

2242. Men’s suspicions of each or of the prophets have been condemned in the previous verses. We now have the strongest condemnation of all, that of imagining any other being as being equal or in the same category with One true God. Allah has all power: they have no power. They cannot remove men’s troubles. They cannot even mitigate or change them so as to afford the least relief. Why indulge in false worship?
2243. Where men or heroes, or prophets or angels are worshipped, the worship is futile; because (1) even if they are good and holy, and ever so near to Allah, yet the nearest of them have need to seek means of access to Allah, and they do seek such means, viz.,: the hope of Allah’s Grace; (2) though by their very nature it is impossible for us to suppose that they will incur the Wrath of Allah, yet they are but creatures and are subject to the law of personal responsibility.

2244. These verses are a commentary on the last clause of the last verse. “The Wrath of thy Lord is something to take heed of.” The godless thoughtlessly challenge Allah’s Wrath, but do they realise its nature? Even the best of us must be moved with terror when we think of its consequences, were it not for His unbounded Mercy. Those who deny the Hereafter fail to realise its terrible Portents. They ask for Portents and Miracles now, but do they realise that their coming means destruction and misery to those who reject faith? They will come soon enough. The whole world will be convulsed before the Day of Judgment. The part of the wise is to prepare for it.

2245. Past generations treated Signs and Portents with contempt or rebellion, and brought about their own undoing. It is only Allah’s Mercy that gives them Grace for a time and prevents the coming of those Portents and Punishments which would overwhelm them if they were put to their trial at once.

2246. An example is cited from the story of Thamûd. A wonderful She-camel was sent among them as a Portent and a Symbol. In their wickedness they hamstrung her. So instead of her reclaiming them she was a cause of their destruction, as their sin and =
To the Thamūd—a visible Sign—
But they
Treated her wrongfully:
We only sent the Signs
By way of frightening
(And warning from evil). 2247

60. Behold! We told thee
That thy Lord doth encompass
Mankind round about: 2248
We granted the Vision
Which We showed thee, 2249
But as a trial for men,—
As also the Cursed Tree 2250
(Mentioned) in the Qur-ān:
We put fear (and warning)

= rebellion were laid bare. For the story of the She-camel and the references to the passages in which she is mentioned, see n. 1044 to vii. 73.

2247. Signs, Miracles, and Portents are sent by Allah as a warning, to strike terror into the hearts of evil-doers and reclaim them to the right path. I have discussed Fear as a motive for reclaiming certain kinds of hard hearts, in my note 82 to ii. 74. But some hearts are so hard that even this motive does not work. As they have a limited free-will given by Allah, they are to that extent free to choose. But when they actually choose evil, Allah in His infinite Mercy delays their punishment and removes the occasion for their immediate self-destruction by withholding the Signs which might make them transgress all the more and compass their total destruction.

2248. The reference may be to lxxii. 28, probably an earlier Makkan revelation. But the argument is independent of time. This verse falls naturally into three divisions. Warnings and Portents and Signs are sent or not sent according to Allah’s All-Wise Plan of Mercy and Justice, this is in no wise inconsistent with the apparent freedom given to the wicked: because (1) in any case Allah is all round all His creatures, and His delay as a Sign of Mercy in no way diminishes His power; (2) the Visions of Truth vouchsafed to Prophets of Allah are themselves Signs by which they can warn the ungodly; and (3) sometimes it is more merciful to give them time by not immediately bringing the matter to judgment.

2249. Some Commentators take this as referring to the Mi’raj (xvii. 1) and others to other visions. Such visions are miracles, and become a stumbling block to unbelievers. They are an encouragement to men of faith. Thus they are “a trial for men”.

2250. The tree Zaqqûm, a bitter and pungent tree described as growing at the bottom of Hell, a type of all that is disagreeable. See xxxvii. 62-65; xlv. 43-46; and lvi. 52. All these are Sūras chronologically earlier than this Sūra. The application of the name to a tree of the myrobalan kind in the region of Jericho is, I think, of post-Quranic date.
SECTION 7.

61. Behold! We said to the angels: 2251
   “Prostrate unto Adam”:
   They prostrated except Iblis:
   He said, “Shall I prostrate
   To one whom Thou didst create
   From clay?”

62. He said, “Seest Thou? This is
   The one whom Thou hast honoured
   Above me! If Thou wilt but
   Respite me to the Day
   Of Judgment, I will surely
   Bring his descendants
   Under my sway—
   All but a few!” 2252

63. (Allah) said: “Go thy way; 2253
   If any of them follow thee,
   Verily Hell will be
   The recompense of you (all)—
   An ample recompense.

It is a trial for wrong-doers. See xxxvii. 63 and n. 4073.

2251. Cf. vii. 11-18, which deals, as is the case here, with the temptation of the
individual human soul, while ii. 30-38 deals with the collective race of man through Adam.
Arrogance, jealousy, spite, and hatred are the ingredients in the story of Iblis.

2252. The power of Evil (Satan) over man is due to man’s limited free-will. In other
words man hands himself to Evil. As to those who loyally worship and serve Allah, Evil
has no power over them. This is expressly mentioned in verse 65 below, and in other
places.

2253. The power of Evil is summarily dismissed, but not without a clear warning.
“Do thy worst; if any of them misuse their limited free-will and deliberately follow thee,
they must take the consequences with thee; all of you must answer according to your
personal responsibility.”
64. And Arouse those
Whom thou canst among them, \(^\text{2254}\)
With thy (seductive) voice; \(^\text{2255}\)
Make assaults on them \(^\text{2256}\)
With thy cavalry and thy Infantry; mutually share
With them wealth and children; \(^\text{2257}\)
And make promises to them."
But Satan promises them
Nothing but deceit. \(^\text{2258}\)

65. “As for My servants, \(^\text{2259}\)
No authority shalt thou
Have over them:”
Enough is thy Lord
For a Disposer of affairs. \(^\text{2260}\)

66. Your Lord is He
That maketh the Ship
Go smoothly for you
Through the sea, in order that

\(^{2254}\) “Do thy worst; but ye are both warned that that path leads to destruction.”

\(^{2255}\) Evil has many snares for mankind. The one that is put in the foreground is the voice,—the seductive personal appeal, that “makes the worse appear the better part”.

\(^{2256}\) The forcible assault of Evil is next mentioned under the metaphor of cavalry and infantry. It is when cajolery and tempting fair-seeming seem to fail that an attack is made in force with weapons of violence, of all kinds, like the different arms in an organised army.

\(^{2257}\) If the first assaults are resisted. Evil has other weapons in its armoury. Tangible fruits are dangled before the eyes, ill-gotten gains and children of sin, that follow from certain very alluring methods of indulgence in passions. Or it may be children dedicated to sin or worldly gains, etc. And then there are all kinds of promises for the future.

\(^{2258}\) This is a parenthetical clause inserted to show up what the promises of the Satan are worth.

\(^{2259}\) This verse should be read along with the two preceding ones to complete their meaning. Evil has no power except over those who yield to its solicitations.

\(^{2260}\) As Evil has no authority over the sincere servants of Allah, they should put their trust completely in Him. For He is All-Sufficient to carry out their affairs, and by His grace, to save them from all harm and danger.
Ye may seek of His Bounty.\[^{2261}\]
For He is unto you
Most Merciful.

67. When distress seizes you
At sea, those that ye
Call upon—besides Himself—
Leave you in the lurch!
But when He brings you back
Safe to land, ye turn
Away (from Him). Most ungrateful\[^{2262}\]
is man!

68. Do ye then feel secure
That He will not cause you
To be swallowed up
Beneath the earth\[^{2263}\]
When ye are on land,
Or that He will not send
Against you a violent tornado
(With showers of stones)
So that ye shall find
No protector

69. Or do ye feel secure
That He will not send you
Back a second time
To sea and send against you

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\[^{2261}\] This illustration of the sea, and the skill with which, by Allah’s grace, men pass through it with ease in order to earn material gains by commerce, social gains by human intercourse, and spiritual gains by knowledge, is frequently used to enforce Allah’s goodness to man. Cf. ii. 164.

\[^{2263}\] Man is safe neither on land nor at sea except by the grace and mercy of Allah. How forcibly this is brought home to us by the Quetta earthquake of 31st May 1935, when tens of thousands of men, women, and children, perished in a few moments, by night, buried in debris! The stories of violent destructive tornadoes in such areas as the southern United States are equally impressive. The destruction is so sudden that the victims have no time to arrange anything. They are simply wiped out.
2264. If a man flees from the Wrath of Allah, there is no place secure for him. He may flee from sea to land, and back again from land to sea. But his life depends on the Disposer of all affairs. He may go again and again to sea, and perhaps finally end by being drowned.

2265. The distinction and honour conferred by Allah on man are recounted in order to enforce the corresponding duties and responsibilities of man. He is raised to a position of honour above the brute creation: he has been granted talents by which he can transport himself from place to place by land, sea, and now by air: all the means for the sustenance and growth of every part of his nature are provided by Allah; and his spiritual faculties (the greatest gift of Allah) raise him above the greater part of Allah’s Creation. Should he not then realise his noble destiny and prepare for his real life in the Hereafter?

2266. I have discussed the various meanings of Imam in ii. 124, n. 124. What is the meaning here? The Commentators are divided. Some understand the meaning to be that each People or Group will appear with its Leader, who will bear witness to its virtues or sins: Cf. xvi. 84. Another view is that the Imam is their revelation, their Book. A third is that the Imam is the record of deeds spoken of in the next clause. I prefer the first.
Dealt with unjustly
In the least.\textsuperscript{2267}

72. But those who were blind
In this world, will be
Blind in the Hereafter,\textsuperscript{2268}
And most astray
From the Path.

73. And their purpose was
To tempt thee away
From that which We
Had revealed unto thee,
To substitute in Our name
Something quite different:\textsuperscript{2269}
(In that case), behold!
They would certainly have
Made thee (their) friend!

74. And had We not
Given thee strength,
Thou wouldst nearly
Have inclined to them\textsuperscript{2270}
A little.

\textsuperscript{2267} Literally, by the value of a \textit{futul}, a small skin in the cleft of a date-stone: this has no value.

\textsuperscript{2268} On the Judgment Day the children of light will receive and peruse their record, and will render joyful thanks to Allah for His Mercies. What of the children of darkness? They had already been blind in this world’s life, and they will not receive the light of Allah’s Countenance then. On the contrary they will find that the longer the time they have travelled, the farther away they have gone from the Path. Notice the association of ideas—blindness, not seeing the light, going farther and farther away from the true Path.

\textsuperscript{2269} It happens with men of Allah, and it happened with the holy Prophet, that they are tempted by the world with many things which appeal to the world generally, if they would make some small concession in their favour. The “small concession” may hold the key of the position, and neutralise the whole teaching sent by Allah. If the Prophet had accepted wealth and position among the Quraish and “only respected” their idols! The Quraish would have taken him into their inner circle! A dishonest liar like Musailama would have jumped at the opportunity and been hailed as a friend and associate and made much of. But Prophets of Allah are made of sterner stuff. They are given special strength to resist all plausible deception.

\textsuperscript{2270} From a purely human point of view it may seem policy to make a small “concession” to men’s weakness in order to fulfil a divine mission. But the divine Messenger is given special strength to resist such temptations.
75. In that case We should
   Have made thee taste
   Double portion (of punishment)
In this life, and an equal portion
   In death: and moreover
   Thou wouldst have found
   None to help thee against Us!

76. Their purpose was to scare
   Thee off the land,
In order to expel thee;
   But in that case they
Would not have stayed
   (Therein) after thee,
Except for a little while.

77. (This was Our) way
   With the messengers We sent
Before thee: thou wilt find
   No change in Our ways.

2271. If such a thing was possible for a true Messenger of Allah, viz.: a compromise with evil and a dereliction of his mission, he would be no exception to the law of personal responsibility. Indeed, as the power and the responsibility were greater, the punishment would have been greater too. It would have been double,—an exposure in this life and the usual punishment in or after death for a desertion of Truth.

2272. The motive held out by the world for a compromise with Truth is itself fallacious. The motive is that the compromise may bring influence, position, and opportunity, if not wealth and the other good things of life. But these themselves (if attained) would be of no use or help if pitted against the command of Allah.

2273. As happened in the case of the holy Prophet, the enemies try to frighten the Prophet of Allah away from their midst, so that, once away, they could expel him and keep him out. But they are counting without the Plan of Allah. If they persecute the righteous, they dig their own graves!

2274. This was no new thing in history. Allah protects His own, and the ungodly cannot long enjoy the fruits of their unrighteousness even if their punishment be delayed a little while.
SECTION 9.

78. Establish regular prayers.\(^{2275}\)
   At the sun's decline
   Till the darkness of the night,
   And the recital of the Qur-ān
   In morning prayer
   For the recital of dawn is
   Witnessed.\(^{2276}\)

79. And as for the night
   Keep awake a part of it as\(^{2277}\)
   An additional prayer
   For thee: soon will thy Lord
   Raise thee to a Station
   Of Praise and Glory.\(^{2278}\)

80. Say: “O my Lord!
    Let my entry be\(^{2279}\)
    By the Gate of Truth
    And Honour, and likewise

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\(^{2275}\) The Commentators understand here the command for the five daily canonical prayers, viz.: the four from the declination of the sun from the zenith to the fullest darkness of the night, and the early morning prayer, Fajr, which is usually accompanied by a reading of the holy Qur-ān. The four afternoon prayers are: Zuhr, immediately after the sun begins to decline in the afternoon; ‘Asr, in the late afternoon; Magrib, immediately after sunset; and Ishā, after the glow of sunset has disappeared and the full darkness of the night has set in. There is difference of opinion as to the meaning of particular words and phrases, but none as to the general effect of the passage.

\(^{2276}\) The morning prayer is specially singled out for separate mention, because the morning is a “peaceful hour” and special influences act on the soul awaking from the night's rest. Special testimony is borne to the prayers of this hour by the angelic host.

\(^{2277}\) This is held to be addressed specially to the holy Prophet who usually prayed more than the five canonical prayers. The Tahajjud was a prayer after midnight, in the small watches of the morning.

\(^{2278}\) To the Prophet was to be assigned in the Hereafter the highest Post of Honour and Glory—the Maqām Mahmūd, implying his excellence above all other Prophets. The immediate reference may be to the hope that the Makkan persecution will soon be over and the glorious work in Madinah will begin.

\(^{2279}\) The entry and exit here referred to may be interpreted in four senses: (1) entry into death and exit at the resurrection: for the righteous, who have purified their souls by prayer (last verse) and spiritual teaching from the Qur-ān (next verse), there is on each occasion a fuller and fuller realisation and enjoyment of truth and honour: for those =
My exit by the Gate
Of Truth and Honour;
And grant me
From Thee
An authority to aid (me)\(^{2280}\)

81. And say: "Truth has (now)
Arrived, and Falsehood perished:
For Falsehood is (by its nature)
Bound to perish."\(^{2281}\)

82. We send down (stage by stage)
Of the Qur-ân that which
Is a healing and a mercy
To those who believe:
To the unjust it causes
Nothing but loss after loss.\(^{2282}\)

83. Yet when We bestow
Our favours on man,
He turns away and becomes
Remote on his side (instead
Of coming to Us), and when

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who are estranged from Allah, the effect is the opposite: the truth becomes bitter and there is ignominy and exposure instead of honour: (2) entry for the holy Prophet into the new life at Madinah, which was still in the womb of futurity, and exit from the life of persecution and the milieu of falsehood, which surrounded him in his native city of Makkah still given up to idolatry: (3) referring to the impending Hijrat again, the prayer may mean, "Let it be from pure motives of truth and spiritual honour, and not from motives of anger against the city of Makkah or its persecutors, or of ambition or worldly power from the city of Madinah, which was ready to lay everything at the Prophet's feet": (4) generally, entry and exit at every stage of life.

2280. All prayer must be for Allah's aid and authority. However much we may plan, our success must depend on His aid. However nobler our motives, we have no right to imperil any lives unless there is authority in the Word of Allah. The Prophet only acts on Allah's commission and inspiration.

2281. From its nature falsehood must perish, for it is the opposite of Truth, and Truth must ever prevail.

2282. In Allah's revelation there is healing for our broken spirits, hope for our spiritual future, and joy in the forgiveness of our sins. All who work in faith will share in these privileges. It is only the rebels against Allah's Law who will suffer loss. The more they will oppose Truth, the deeper down will they go into the mire—the state of sin and Wrath, which is worse than destruction.
Evil seizes him he
Gives himself up to despair! 2283

84. Say: “Everyone acts
According to his own disposition:
But your Lord knows best
Who it is that is
Best guided on the Way.” 2284

SECTION 10.

85. They ask thee concerning
The Spirit 2285
Say: “The Spirit is of the
Command of my Lord
Of knowledge it is only
A little that is communicated
To you, (O men!)”

86. If it were Our Will,
We could take away
That which We have
Sent thee by inspiration: 2286
Then wouldst thou find
None to plead thy affair
In that matter as against Us, –

2283. Truth saves us from two extremes: when we are happy, we are saved from being puffed up, for we realise that everything comes from Allah; and when we suffer misfortunes, we are not in despair, for we know that Allah is our sure refuge and help.

2284. If the wicked go their own ways, there is nothing to discourage us. It is their nature. We must seek and hold fast to true guidance.

2285. What is the nature of inspiration? Who brings it? Can it ask its Bringer questions? Can we ask anything which we wish? These are the sort of questions always asked when inspiration is called in question. The answer is given here, Inspiration is one of those high experiences which cannot be explained in the terms of our everyday human experience. It is spiritual. The Spirit (Gabriel) does not come of his own will. He comes by the command of Allah, and reveals what Allah commands him to reveal. Of the sum-total of true divine knowledge what a small part it is that ordinary mortals can understand! They can be only given that which they can understand, however dimly. We are not in a position to ask anything that we wish. If we did so, it would only make us look foolish, for the guidance comes from Allah’s Wisdom, not from our worldly knowledge.

2286. Even the spiritual knowledge that comes to us comes because of the favour and mercy of Allah. If He were to withhold it, who can call Him in question?
87. Except for Mercy from thy Lord;\(^{2287}\) For His Bounty is To thee (indeed) great.

88. Say: “If the whole Of mankind and Jinns\(^ {2288}\) Were to gather together To produce the like Of this Qur-ān, they Could not produce The like thereof, even if They backed up each other With help and support.\(^ {2289}\)

89. And We have explained To man, in this Qur-ān, Every kind of similitude:\(^ {2290}\) Yet the greater part of men Refuse (to receive it) Except with ingratitude.\(^ {2291}\)

90. They say: “We shall not Believe in thee, until thou

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\(^{2287}\) In that case the only one who can plead for us is the Mercy of Allah. We can interpret the phrase in its widest abstract sense, as well as in the concrete sense of the title which is applied to the holy Prophet Muhammad, the Mercy of Allah. Thus we come from the abstract question to the concrete question of the Qur-ān, which is referred to by name in the verses that follow.

\(^{2288}\) For the meaning of “Jinns”, see n. 929 to vi. 100.

\(^{2289}\) The proof of the Qur-ān is in its own beauty and nature, and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. The world is challenged to produce a Book like it and has not produced one. It is the only revealed Book whose text stands pure and uncorrupted today. Cf., for a similar challenge, ii. 23, x. 38, and xi. 13.

\(^{2290}\) In the Qur-ān everything is explained in detail from various points of view, by commands, similitudes, examples, stories, parables, etc. It does not merely narrate stories or lay down vague abstract propositions. It gives every detailed help in outward and inner life.

\(^{2291}\) One form in which it can be received with ingratitude is to pay verbal tributes to it but not study it as it ought to be studied (ii. 121, ḥuqqa tilāwatihi), or to disobey its precepts or standards.
Cause a spring to gush
Forth for us from the earth.\textsuperscript{2292}

91. "Or (until) thou have
A garden of date trees
And vines, and cause rivers
To gush forth in their midst,
Carrying abundant water;\textsuperscript{2293}

92. "Or thou cause the sky
To fall in pieces, as thou
Sayest (will happen), against us;\textsuperscript{2294}
Or thou bring Allah
And the angels before (us)
Face to face;\textsuperscript{2295}

93. "Or thou have a house
Adorned with gold,
Or thou mount a ladder
Right into the skies.\textsuperscript{2296}
No, we shall not even believe
In thy mounting until thou

\textsuperscript{2292} Cf. ii. 60.

\textsuperscript{2293} This ill-assorted and crude jumble of the sort of miracles which the Unbelievers wanted is in very appropriate contrast to the sober and reasoned argument which has begun in the last sentence of verse 93 and continued in sections 11 and 12, which close this Sûra. It is throughout reminiscent of the materialistic imagination of Jewish sceptics, which was mainly responsible for the fall of the Jewish nation (see verse 104 below). For a thirsty people sojourning in a dry land, the finding of a spring of water as in the story of Moses or of the well of Zamzam is an appropriate miracle. But miracles are not for faithless crowds to gape at. A beautiful well-watered Garden is a symbol of Felicity: but a sceptic cannot order Allah to produce it for his pleasure. The same may be said about a house adorned with gold, except that its symbolism is even more materialistic. The fall of the sky or producing Allah face to face or climbing to the skies by a ladder, or bringing down a book of parchment which men could handle, are all irreverent suggestions that make no distinction between spiritual and material things.

\textsuperscript{2294} Contrast the sublime passages like the beginning with lxxxii. 1. or that in xxv. 25, where the final breaking up of the firmaments as we know them is referred to in the world's catastrophe, with the ridiculous demand that it should be done for the sport of the sceptics!

\textsuperscript{2295} Cf. ii. 55 and iv. 153 about the desire of the Israelites to see Allah face to face; and vi. 8-9, about angels coming down to convince men.

\textsuperscript{2296} Cf. vi. 35 about a ladder to the skies.
Send down to us a book  
That we could read.”
Say: “Glory to my Lord!  
Am I aught but a man, –  
A messenger?”

SECTION 11.

94. What kept men back
From Belief when Guidance  
Came to them, was nothing  
But this: they said,
“Has Allah sent a man  
(Like us) to be (His) Messenger?”

95. Say, “If there were settled,  
On earth, angels walking about  
In peace and quiet, We  
Should Certainly have sent them  
Down from the heavens  
An angel for a messenger.”

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2297. Cf. vi. 7 for the foolish idea of materialistic sceptics that a spiritual revelation could come down from the heavens on a piece of parchment that they can touch.

2298. A prophet or messenger of Allah is a man at the command of Allah, and not to satisfy the disingenuous whims and fancies of Unbelievers. Miracles greater than any that their foolish fancies could devise were before them. The Qur-an was such a miracle, and it is a standing miracle that lasts through the ages. Why did they not believe? The real reason was spite and jealousy like that of Iblis. See next verse.

2299. When a man is raised to honour and dignity, his sincere brothers rejoice, for it is an honour that reflects its glory on them. But those with evil in their hearts are jealous like their prototype Iblis, (xvii. 61, n. 2251). To such men the mere fact that their own brother receives the grace of Allah is enough to turn them against that brother. Any other reasons they may devise are mere make-believe.

2300. The argument is that if angels inhabited this earth, an angel from heaven could be sent down as a messenger to them, as they could mutually understand each other, and the Message of Allah could be explained without difficulty. But the earth is inhabited by men, and the men themselves are divided into races, or groups, or nations. To each Group is sent a prophet from among their brethren: to ‘Ad, their brother Hâd (xi. 50); to Thamûd, their brother Sâlih (xi. 61); and so on. As a matter of fact, with wicked men, constituted as they are, the appearance of an angel causes disturbance and an unseemly riot, as in the case of the angels that came to Lot (xi. 77-80). In any case they cannot carry out an effective mission among men (vi. 8-9).
2301. 'If you want a real witness, it is not these sorts of fancy miracles, but the witness of the true ever-living God. Purify your hearts, and ask Him in true contrition and repentance, and He will guide you and show you the Way'.

2302. 'All your insincere subtleties are of no use. The only real guidance is the guidance of Allah. If you do not seek His grace, you will be lost. Besides Him, there is no true friend or protector'.

2303. 'If you still persist in your evil ways, what is to be your evil end? You will become more and more identified with the Company of Evil. You will come to shame and ignominy, like men thrown down prone on their faces. You will lose the use of all the faculties of judgment with which Allah has endowed you. Instead of seeing, you will be blind to Allah's Signs. Instead of having the power of seeking Him in prayer and rejoicing in His grace, you will be dumb. Instead of hearing the harmony and music of the spheres, as typified in the pure and harmonious lives of men, you will hear nothing or only hear dull or confused sounds like deaf men. The scorching fire of your punishment will not grow less, but grow more fierce as you go deeper into Hell'.

96. Say: “Enough is Allah
For a witness between me
And you: for He is
Well acquainted with His servants,
And He sees (all things).

97. It is he whom Allah guides,
That is on true guidance;
But he whom He leaves
Astray—for such wilt thou
Find no protector besides Him.
On the Day of Judgment
We shall gather them together,
Prone on their faces,
Blind, dumb, and deaf:
Their abode will be Hell:
Every time it shows abatement,
We shall increase for them
The fierceness of the Fire.'
Should we really be raised up (To be) a new Creation?" 2304

99. See they not that Allah,
Who created the heavens
And the earth, has power
To create the like of them (Anew)? Only He has
Decreed a term appointed,
Of which there is no doubt.
But the unjust refuse
(To receive it) except
With ingratitude. 2306

100. Say: "If ye had
Control of the Treasures
Of the Mercy of my Lord,
Behold, ye would keep them
Back, for fear of spending
Them: for man
Is (ever) niggardly!" 2307

2304. This phrase is repeated from xvii. 49. The reminiscence rounds off the argument. After certain moral precepts to which Faith was linked, we have had a discussion of Unfaith. Its various motives have been analysed, and its penalties have been allegorically shadowed forth. After this, the example of Pharaoh is held as a type of Unfaith in the next section, and the Sūra closed with an exhortation to faith and a declaration of the glory of Allah.

2305. Allah, Who created all that is in the heavens and on earth, has surely the power to revive the life of individual souls after their bodies have perished—and revive them with memories of their past life and for a continuation of their spiritual history. Only He has fixed a term for each stage of our existence, which we can neither prolong nor shorten.

2306. This phrase carries us back to xvii. 89, after we began the argument about the real motives for the rejection of the Qur-ān by sceptics. The argument is now closed in a sort of minor circle within the major circle sketched in n. 2304 above.

2307. A fresh argument is now addressed to those who would confine Allah's revelations to a limited circle of men, such as they themselves belonged to. The immediate reference was to the Jews, who could not understand how any Gentiles could receive revelations and guidance even superior to what they considered their own birth-right. But the tendency is widespread in the human race. A particular race, or caste, or a particular kind of culture, claims to be the custodian of Allah's Message, whereas it is universal. Allah's Mercy is universal, and He scatters the priceless Treasures of His Mercy broadcast among His creatures. They are not exhausted by spending. It is only the misers who hoard =
SECTION 12.

101. To Moses We did give
Nine Clear Signs:
Ask the Children of Israel:
When he came to them,
Pharaoh said to him:
"O Moses! I consider thee,
Indeed, to have been
Worked upon by sorcery!"

102. Moses said, "Thou knowest
Well that these things
Have been sent down by none
But the Lord of the heavens
And the earth as eye-opening
Evidence: and I consider thee
Indeed, O Pharaoh, to be
One doomed to destruction!"

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2308. Nine Clear Signs: see vii. 133, n. 1091. The story of Pharaoh (or a phase of it) is here told with a view to exhibiting the decline of a soul on account of pride in outward power and dignity.

2309. To them: i.e., to Pharaoh, as sitting in his Council, with the Chiefs of his People. Cf. vii. 103. The whole scene is described in some detail from the point of view of nations or Ummats in vii. 103-133.

2310. At a different and later stage in the scene, Pharaoh's Chiefs call Moses a "sorcerer well-versed" (vii. 109). Here Moses, who had come with the Nine Signs but had not yet shown them, is reproached with being the object of sorcery: he is practically told that he is mad!

2311. We can well suppose Moses to ask Pharaoh to recall all the past history of Moses, for Moses had been brought up in Pharaoh's palace in all the learning of the Egyptians. He could not therefore be mad, or a simpleton worked on by Egyptian magic. What he was going to show was something far greater; it was not the deceptive magic of Pharaoh's sorcerers, but true Signs that came from Allah, the Lord of all power. They were to open the eyes of his people, and if Pharaoh resisted faith. Moses warns him that Pharaoh in that case was doomed to destruction. This is the course of the soul that sinks down by Pride!
103. So he resolved to remove them\textsuperscript{2312} From the face of the earth: But We did drown him And all who were with him.

104. And We said thereafter To The Children of Israel, "Dwell securely in the land\textsuperscript{2313} (Of promise)\textsuperscript{2314}: but when The second of the warnings came To pass, We gathered you Together in a mingled crowd\textsuperscript{2314}

105. We sent down the (Qur\-\-\-\-\-an) In Truth, and in Truth\textsuperscript{2315} Has it descended: and We sent Thee but to give Glad Tidings and to warn (sinners).\textsuperscript{2316}

106. (It is) a Qur\-\-\-\-\-an Which We have divided (Into parts from time to time),
In order that thou mightest
Recite it to men
At intervals: We have
Revealed it by stages. 2317

107. Say: "Whether ye believe
In it or not, it is true
That those who were given2318
Knowledge beforehand, when
It is recited to them,
Fall down on their faces
In humble prostration,

108. "And they say: 'Glory
To our Lord! Truly
Has the promise of our Lord
Been fulfilled!'" 2319

109. They fall down on their faces
In tears, and it increases
Their (earnest) humility. 2320

2317. The marvel is that these parts, revealed at different times and in different circumstances, should fit together so closely and consistently as they do. All revelation is progressive. The previous revelations were also progressive. Each of them marked a stage in the world's spiritual history. Man's mind does not take in more than his spiritual state will have prepared him, for Allah's revelation comes as a light to illuminate our difficulties and show us the way in actual situations that arise.

2318. No one's belief or unbelief affects the beauty or grandeur of Allah's revelation. But those endowed with spiritual knowledge or insight know at once when they hear Allah's holy Word, and fall down and adore Allah. Those endowed with knowledge include those who had received previous revelations and had kept themselves free from corrupt ideas.

2319. Those who had received previous revelations find in the Qur'an and in the Messenger who brought it, the promise of Allah fulfilled. Those who were spiritually prepared for it found in the same way the satisfaction of their spiritual yearnings: to them, also, Allah's promise was sent to be fulfilled.

2320. A feeling of earnest humility comes to the man who realises how, in spite of his own unworthiness, he is brought, by Allah's Mercy, into touch with the most sublime Truths. Such a man is touched with the deepest emotion, which finds its outlet in tears.
110. Say: “Call upon Allah, or Call upon Rahmān: 2321
   By whatever name ye call
   Upon Him, (it is well):
   For to Him belong
   The Most Beautiful Names. 2322
   Neither speak thy Prayer aloud,
   Nor speak it in a low tone, 2323
   But seek a middle course
   Between.”

111. Say: “Praise be to Allah,
   Who begets no son,
   And has no partner
   In (His) dominion:

   2321. Cf. vii. 180. Rahmān describes one of the attributes of Allah,—His grace and Mercy which come to the sinner even before he feels conscious of the need of it,—the preventive Grace which saves Allah’s servants from sin. See n. 19 to i. 1. Allah can be invoked, either by His simple name, which includes all attributes, or by one of the names implying the attributes by which we try to explain His nature to our limited understanding. The attribute of Mercy in Rahmān was particularly repugnant to the Pagan Arabs (see xxv. 60, and xxi. 36): that is why special stress is laid on it in the Qur’ān.

   2322. These Beautiful Names of Allah are many. The hadith related by Tirmiẓī, accepted by some as authentic, mentions 99 names of Allah. Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaimān has published an Urdu monograph on the subject, published by the Daftar Rahmatun-lil-‘Alamin Patiala, 1930. Those who wish to see a poetic Commentary on the names in the form of stories in English may consult Sir Edwin Arnold’s Pearls of the Faith. Sir Edwin’s stories are of unequal merit, but a fine example is furnished by No. 4, al-Malik. “The King”.

   2323. Cf. vii. 205. All prayer should be pronounced with earnestness and humility, whether it is congregational prayer or the private outpouring of one’s own soul. Such an attitude is not consistent with an over-loud pronunciation of the words, though in public prayers the standard of permissible loudness is naturally higher than in the case of private prayer. In public prayers, of course, the Azān or call to prayer will be in a loud voice to be heard near and far, but the chants from the Sacred Book should be neither so loud as to attract the hostile notice of those who do not believe not so low in tone as not to be heard by the whole congregation.
Nor (needs) He any
To protect Him from humiliation:²³²⁴
Yea, magnify Him
For His greatness and glory!"

²³²⁴ A first step towards the understanding of Allah’s attributes is to clear our mind from superstitions, such as that Allah begot a son, or that He has partners, or that He is dependent upon other beings to protect Him from harm and humiliation. We must realise that He is the One and Peerless. His greatness and glory are above anything we can conceive: but using our highest spiritual ideas, we must declare forth His greatness and glory.

The Sûra began with singing the glory and praises of Allah: it ends on the same note, concluding the argument. The next Sûra takes up the same theme from another point of view, and opens with the same note, “Praise be to Allah”.

- 814 -
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Kahf, 18

It has been explained in the Introduction to S. xvii how the five Sūras xvii to xxi develop the theme of the individual soul’s religious history, and how they fit into the general scheme of exposition.

This particular Makkan Sūra may be called a lesson on the brevity and mystery of Life. First there is the story of the Companions of the Cave who slept therein for a long period, and yet thought they had been there only a day or less. Then there is the story of the mysterious Teacher who shows Moses how Life itself is a parable. And further there is the story of Zul-qarnain, the two-horned one, the powerful ruler of west and east, who made an iron wall to protect the weak against the strong. The parables refer to the brevity, uncertainty, and vanity of this life; to the many paradoxes in it, which can only be understood by patience and the fulness of knowledge; and to the need of guarding our spiritual gains against the incursions of evil.

Summary.—The Qur-ān is a direction and a warning. This life is brief and subject to vicissitudes. Our ideas of Time are defective, as shown in the story of the Companions of the Cave, who had faith, truth, patience, and other virtues. But their life was a mystery that can be fathomed but by few (xviii. 1-22).

Knowledge is for Allah: be on your guard against idle conjectures and cocksure hopes. Learn from the Qur-ān, Parable of the man who is puffed up with this world’s goods and is brought to nought (xviii. 23-44).

This life is uncertain and variable: goodness and virtue are better and more durable. For the Day of Reckoning will come, with its Mercy and its Wrath (xviii. 45-59).

Moses in his thirst for knowledge forgot his limitations. Patience and faith were enjoined on him, and he understood when the paradoxes of Life were explained (xviii. 60-82).

Zul-qarnain had a wide dominion: he punished the guilty and rewarded the good: he protected the weak from the lawless: but he had faith, and valued the guidance of Allah. Allah is One, and His service is righteousness (xviii. 83-110).
Al-Kahf, or the Cave.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Praise be to Allah,2325
Who hath sent to His Servant
The Book, and hath allowed
Therein no Crookedness:2326

2. (He hath made it) Straight,2327
(And Clear) in order that
He may warn (the godless)
Of a terrible Punishment
From Him, and that He
May give Glad Tidings
To the Believers who work
Righteous deeds, that they
Shall have a goodly Reward,

3. Wherein they shall
Remain for ever2328

2325. See n. 2324 to xvii. 111. The theme of the last Sûra, that Allah is good and worthy of all praise from His creatures, to whom He has granted a clear revelation, is continued in this Sûra. The spirit of man makes gradual progress upwards, through the grace and mercy of Allah.

2326. Some people’s idea of a Sacred Book is that it should be full of mysteries—dark corners, ambiguous expressions, words so far removed from human speech that they cover anything or nothing. Pagan oracles were couched in language which suggested one meaning to the hearer and claimed to have the very opposite meaning in the light of events which actually happened subsequently. They were distinctly crooked, not straight.

In the next verse the word “Straight” (qaiyim) is used to characterize the Qur-ân, in contrast to this word “crooked” (‘iwaj). See also xix. 36 n. 2488.

2327. Qaiyim: straight, that which has no bends and no corners to mystify people, that which speaks clearly and unambiguously, that which guides to the right path. Cf. ix. 36, where the adjective is used for a straight usage, in contrast to usages, which tend to mystify and deceive people. The Qur-ân is above all things straight, clear, and perspicuous. Its directions are plain for everyone to understand. Any book that deals with the highest mysteries of spiritual life must necessarily have portions whose full meaning is clearer to some minds than to others not so well prepared. But here there is nowhere any mystification, any desire to wrap up things in dark sayings repugnant to human reason. Allah’s purpose is to give clear warning of spiritual dangers and lead up to the highest bliss.

2328. Cf. iv. 122, xiii. 71, lxv. 11, xciii. 8.
4. Further, that He may warn
Those (also) who say,
"Allah hath begotten a son".2329

5. No knowledge have they
Of such a thing, nor
Had their fathers. It is
A grievous thing that issues
From their mouths as a saying.2330
What they say is nothing
But falsehood!

6. Thou wouldst only, perchance,
Fret thyself to death,
Following after them, in grief,2331
If they believe not
In this Message.

7. That which is on earth
We have made but as
A glittering show for it,2332

2329. The warning is not only needed for those who deny Allah or deny His Message, but also for those whose false ideas of Allah degrade religion in supposing that Allah begot a son, for Allah is One and is High above any ideas of physical reproduction.

2330. The attribution of a son “begotten” to Allah has no basis in fact or in reason. It is only a “word” or “saying” that issues out of their mouths. It is not even a dogma that is reasoned out or can be explained in any way that is consistent with the sublime attributes of Allah.

2331. In a reasonable world the preaching of a reasonable Faith like that of Islam would win universal acceptance. But the world is not altogether reasonable. It caused great distress to the unselfish Preacher of Islam that His Message met with so much opposition. He wanted to point the way to salvation. He only got, in the Makkans period, abuse from the chiefs of the Makkans—abuse and persecution, not only for himself but for the Truth which he was preaching. A heart less stout than his might have been appalled at what seemed the hopeless task of reclaiming the world from falsehood, superstition, selfishness, wrong, and oppression. He is here consoled, and told that he was not to fret himself to death: he was nobly doing his duty, and, as after-events showed, the seed of Truth was already germinating, although this was not visible at the time. Besides, these “chiefs” and “leaders” were only strutting in false plumes: their glory was soon to fade for ever.

2332. This world’s goods—worldly power, glory, wealth, position, and all that men scramble for—are but a fleeting show. The possession or want of them does not betoken a man’s real value or position in the coming world, the world which is to endure. Yet
8. Verily what is on earth
We shall make but as
Dust and dry soil
(Without growth or herbage). 2333

9. Or dost thou think2334
That the Companions of the Cave2335
And of the Inscription2336
Were wonders among Our Signs?

10. Behold, the youths betook
themselves2337
To the Cave: they said,
“Our Lord! bestow on us
Mercy from Thyself,

2333. The fairest sights on the earth will become as dust and waste when this earth vanishes, and true spiritual values are restored.

2334. A wonderful story or allegory is now referred to. Its lessons are: (1) the relativity of Time, (2) the unreality of the position of oppressor and oppressed, persecutor and persecuted, on this earth, (3) the truth of the final Resurrection, when true values will be restored, and (4) the potency of Faith and Prayer to lead to the Right.

2335. The unbelieving Quraish were in the habit of putting posers to the holy Prophet—questions which they got from Christians and Jews, which they thought the Prophet would be unable to answer. In this way they hoped to discredit him. One of these questions was about the floating Christian story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The Prophet not only told them the main story but pointed out the variations that were current, and rebuked men for disputing about such details (xviii. 22). Most important of all, he treated the story (under inspiration) as a parable, pointing to lessons of the highest value. This is Revelation in the highest sense of the term. The story is recapitulated in n. 2337 below.

2336. Raqım = Inscription. So interpreted by the Jalālāin, and the majority of Commentators agree. See n. 2337, below. Others think it was the name of the dog: see xviii. 18, and n. 2350 below.

2337. The bare Christian story (without the spiritual lessons taught in the Qur-ān) is told in Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (end of chapter 33). In the reign of a Roman Emperor who persecuted the Christians, seven Christian youths of Ephesus left the town and hid themselves in a cave in a mountain near by. They fell
And dispose of our affair
For us in the right way! 2338

11. Then We drew (a veil) 2339
Over their ears, for a number
Of years, in the Cave,
(So that they heard not):

12. Then We roused them, 2340
In order to test which

asleep, and remained asleep for some generations or centuries. When the wall which sealed up the cave was being demolished, the youths awoke. They still thought of the world in which they had previously lived. They had no idea of the duration of time. But when one of them went to the town to purchase provisions, he found that the whole world had changed. The Christian religion, instead of being persecuted was fashionable: in fact it was now the State religion. His dress and speech, and the money which he brought, seemed to belong to another world. This attracted attention. The great ones of the land visited the Cave, and verified the tale by questioning the man's Companions.

When the story became very popular and circulated throughout the Roman Empire, we may well suppose that an Inscription was put up at the mouth of the Cave. See verse 9 and n. 2336. This inscription was probably to be seen for many years afterwards, as Ephesus was a famous city on the west coast of Asia Minor, about forty to fifty miles south of Smyrna. Later on, the Khalifa Wāthiq (842-846 A.D.) sent an expedition to examine and identify the locality, as he did about the Zul-Qarnain barrier in Central Asia.

A popular story circulating from mouth to mouth would necessarily be vague as to dates and vary very much in details. Somewhere about the 6th century A.D a Syriac writer reduced it to writing. He suggested that the youths were seven in number; that they went to sleep in the reign of the Emperor Decius (who reigned from 249 to 251 A.D., and who was a violent persecutor of Christianity); and that they awoke in the reign of Theodosius II, who reigned from 408 to 450 A.D. In our literature Decius is known as Daqyānus (from the adjectival Latin from Decianus), and the name stands as a symbol of injustice and oppression, and also of things old fashioned and out-of-date, as res Decianae must have been two or three centuries after Decius.

2338. The youths hid in the cave, but they trusted in Allah, and made over their whole case to Him in prayer. Then they apparently fell asleep, and knew nothing of what was happening in the world outside.

2339. Drew (a veil) over their ears: i.e., sealed their ears, so that they heard nothing. As they were in the Cave they saw nothing. So they were completely cut off from the outer world. It was as if they had died, with their knowledge and ideas remaining at the point of time when they had entered the Cave. It is as if a watch stops at the exact moment of some accident, and any one taking it up afterwards can precisely fix the time of the accident.

2340. Roused them: or raised them up from their sleep or whatever condition they had fallen into (xviii, 18), so that they began to perceive the things around them, but only with the memories of the time at which they had ceased to be in touch with the world.
Of the two parties was best\textsuperscript{2341} At calculating the term Of years they had tarried!

SECTION 2.

13. We relate to thee their story In truth: they were youths Who believed in their Lord, And We increased them In guidance.\textsuperscript{2342}

14. We gave strength to their hearts.\textsuperscript{2343} Behold, they stood up\textsuperscript{2344} And said: “Our Lord is The Lord of the heavens And of the earth: never Shall we call upon any god Other than Him: if we Did, we should indeed Have uttered an enormity!

15. “These our people have taken\textsuperscript{2345} For worship gods other

\textsuperscript{2341} When they awoke to consciousness, they had lost all count of time. Though they had all entered together, and lain together in the same place for the same length of time, their impressions of the time they had passed were quite different. Time is thus related to our own internal experiences. We have to learn the lesson that men as good as ourselves may yet differ as to their reactions to certain facts, and that in such matters disputes are unseemly. It is best to say. “Allah knows best” (xviii. 19).

\textsuperscript{2342} Their Faith carried them higher and higher on the road to Truth. Faith is cumulative. Each step leads higher and higher, by the grace and mercy of Allah.

\textsuperscript{2343} So that they were not afraid to speak out openly, and protest the truth of the Unity which they clearly saw in their own minds and hearts.

\textsuperscript{2344} We may suppose them to have taken their stand and made a public protest before they betook themselves to the Cave (xviii. 16). The story really begins at xviii. 13, and the verses xviii. 9-12 may be considered as introductory. As the emphasis is on spiritual lessons, the facts stated in the introductory part are passed over lightly in the story.

\textsuperscript{2345} Besides the heathen gods, the cult of the Emperors also became fashionable in the Roman Empire in the first three centuries of the Christian Era. The statue of Diana (Artemis) at Ephesus had been one of the wonders of the ancient world. The city was =
Than Him: why do they
Not bring forward an authority
Clear (and convincing)
For what they do?
Who doth more wrong
Than such as invent
A falsehood against Allah?

16. "When ye turn away
From them and the things
They worship other than Allah,
Betake yourselves to the Cave:
Your Lord will shower
His mercies on you
And dispose of your affair
Towards comfort and ease.

17. Thou wouldst have seen
The sun, when it rose,
Declining to the right
From their Cave, and when
It set, turning away
From them to the left,
While they lay in the open
Space in the midst
Of the Cave. Such are
Among the Signs of Allah:

= a great seaport and the capital of Roman Asia. We may therefore imagine how the
heathen cults must have flourished there. St. Paul spent three years preaching there, and
was mobbed and assaulted, and compelled to leave (Acts, xix. 1-4).

2346. That is, 'do not be afraid of anything: put your whole case in the hands of
Allah: at present you are being persecuted; he will solve your difficulties and give you
ease and comfort'. The public protest ends at verse 15. In verse 16 they are taking counsel
among themselves. After they go into the Cave, verse 17 introduces us to the scene where
they are lying in the midst of the Cave in tranquil confidence in Allah.

2347. In the latitude of Ephesus, 38° north, i.e., well above the sun's northern
deciliation, a cave opening to north, would never have the heat of the sun within it,
as the sunny side would be the south. If the youths lay on their backs with their faces
looking to the north, i.e., towards the entrance of the Cave, the sun would rise on their
right side, declining to the south, and set on their left sides, leaving them cool and
comfortable.
He whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he Whom Allah leaves to stray,— For him wilt thou find No protector to lead him To the Right Way.

SECTION 3.

18. Thou wouldst have thought them Awake, whilst they were asleep, And We turned them On their right and on Their left sides: their dog Stretching forth his two fore-legs On the threshold: if thou Hadst looked at them, Thou wouldst have certainly Turned back from them in flight, And wouldst certainly have been Filled with terror of them.

19. Such (being their state), We raised them up (from sleep), That they might question Each other. Said one of them,
2353. They now give up barren controversy and come to the practical business of life. But their thoughts are conditioned by the state of things that existed when they entered the Cave. The money they carried was the money coined in the reign of the monarch who persecuted the Religion of Unity and favoured the false cults of Paganism.

2354. *Best food*, i.e., purest, most wholesome perhaps also most suitable for those who rejected idol worship, *i.e.*, not dedicated to idols. For they still imagined the world in the same state in which they had known it before they entered the Cave.

2355. They think that the world had not changed, and that the fierce persecution they knew was still raging, under which a man had to pay by his life for his religious faith, if he could not conform to Pagan worship.
And in that case ye would never attain prosperity.'

21. Thus did We make Their case known to the people, That they might know That the promise of Allah Is true, and that there can Be no doubt about the Hour Of Judgment. Behold, They dispute among themselves As to their affair. (Some) said, "Construct a building over them": Their Lord knows best About them: those who prevailed Over their affair said, "Let us surely build a place Of worship over them."

22. (Some) say they were three, The dog being the fourth

2356. That is, never succeed in keeping your religion. To become a renegade, to give up the Truth which you have won, simply on account of the fear of men, is the most despicable form of cowardice, and would rightly close the door of salvation if strict justice were to be done. But even then Allah's Mercy comes to the coward's aid so long as the door of repentance is open.

2357. Thus: in this way, by these means, i.e., by the sending out of one of the Sleepers with the old money to the town to buy provisions. His old-fashioned dress, appearance, and speech, and the old uncurrent money which he brought, at once drew the attention of people to him. When they learnt his story, they realised that Allah, Who can protect His servants thus and raise them up from sleep after such a long time, has power to raise up men for the Resurrection, and that His promise of goodness and mercy to those who serve Him is true and was exemplified in this striking way. On the other hand, to the men of the Cave themselves, it became clear that Allah can change the situation before we are aware, and our hope in Him is not futile, and that even when we are on the brink of despair, a revolution is surely working in the world before the world itself realises it.

2358. The perversity of man is such that as soon as ever a glimpse of truth becomes manifest, men fall into controversies about it. The Sleepers could not judge about the duration of their stay in the Cave, but they wisely left the matter and attended to the urgent business of their lives. The townsfolk could not agree as to the significance of the event; they fell to discussing immaterial details. What sort of a memorial should they raise?—a house or a place of worship or a tablet? The place of worship was built. But the real significance was missed until explained in the Qur'an.
Among them; (others) say
They were five, the dog
Being the sixth,—doubtfully
Guessing at the unknown;\(^{2359}\)
(Yet others) say they were
Seven, the dog being the eighth.
Say thou: "My Lord
Knoweth best their number;
It is but few that know\(^{2360}\)
Their (real case)." Enter not,
Therefore, into controversies
Concerning them, except
On a matter that is clear,\(^{2361}\)
Nor consult any of them
About (the affair of) the Sleepers.\(^{2362}\)

\section{4.}

23. Nor say of anything,
"I shall be sure to do
So and so to-morrow"—

24. Except "If Allah so wills"\(^{2363}\)
And remember thy Lord
When thou forgettest, and say,

\(^{2359}\) The controversy in after ages raged about the number of the Sleepers: were they three or five or seven? People answered, not from knowledge, but from conjecture. Gibbon's version, which has now become best known, makes the number of Sleepers seven. The point was immaterial: the real point was the spiritual lesson.

\(^{2360}\) The true significance of the story is known only to a few. Most men discuss futile details, which are not in their knowledge.

\(^{2361}\) It is unprofitable to enter such immaterial controversies and many others that have been waged about Religion by shallow men from time immemorial. Yet, if there is a matter of clear knowledge from experience that matters, we must openly proclaim it, that the world may be brought to listen to Allah's Truth.

\(^{2362}\) Vulgar story-mongers as such know little of the true significance of stories and parables. We have a clear exposition in the Qur-\-\-\n. What need is there to go into details of the number of men in the Cave, or of the time they remained there?

\(^{2363}\) Verses 23 and 24 are parenthetical. We must never rely upon our own resources so much as to forget Allah. If by any chance we do forget, we must come back to Him and keep Him in remembrance, as did the Companions of the Cave.
2364. In geometry the perfect circle is an ideal. Any given circle that we draw is not so perfect that we cannot draw one closer to the ideal. So in our life, there is always the hope of drawing closer and closer to Allah.

2365. This verse should be read with the next verse. In the floating oral tradition the duration of time in the Cave was given differently in different versions. When the tradition was reduced to writing, some Christian writers (e.g., Simeon Metaphrastes) named 372 years, some less. In round numbers 300 years in the solar Calendar would amount to 309 in the lunar Calendar. But the next verse points out that all these are mere conjectures: the number is known to Allah alone.

The authority on which Gibbon relies mentions two definite reigns, that of Decius (249-251 A.D.) and that of Theodosius II (408-450 A.D.). Taking 250 and 450, we get an interval of 200 years. But the point of the story does not lie in the name of any given Emperor, but in the fact that the beginning of the period coincided with an Emperor who persecuted: the Emperor’s name at the end of the period may be taken as approximately correct, because the story was recorded within two generations afterwards. One of the worst Emperors to persecute the Christians was Nero who reigned from 54 to 68. If we took the end of his reign (A.D. 68) as the initial point, and (say) 440 A.D. as the final point, we get the 372 years of Simeon Metaphrastes. But none of these writers knew any more than we do. Our best course is to follow the Quranic injunction, “Say, Allah knows best how long they stayed” (xviii. 26). There is also a rebuke implied: ‘do not imitate these men who love mischievous controversies!’ After all, we are given the narrative more as a parable than as a story.

2366. Who are “they” in this sentence? They may be the Companions of the Cave, for they put themselves under the protection of Allah, and disowned all attribution of partners to Him. Or “they” may refer to the people in general who go wrong and become “Mushriks” i.e., attribute imaginary partners to Allah.
27. And recite (and teach)
What has been revealed
To thee of the Book
Of thy Lord: none
Can change His Words,2368
And none wilt thou find
As a refuge other than Him.

28. And keep yourself content
With those who call
On their Lord morning
And evening, seeking2369
His Face; and let not
Thine eyes pass beyond them,
Seeking the pomp and glitter
Of this Life; nor obey
Any whose heart We
Have permitted to neglect
The remembrance of Us,
One who follows his own
Desires, and his affair has become
All excess.2370

29. Say, “The Truth is
From your Lord”

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2367. His Command: i.e., Allah's sovereignty of the world, or in His Judgment on the Day of Judgment.

2368. His Words: His Commands, Decrees, Orders.

2369. Cf. vi. 52 and n. 870. The true servants of Allah are those whose hearts are turned to Him morning, noon, and night, and who seek not worldly gain, but Allah's Grace, Allah's own Self, His Presence and nearness. Even if they are poor in this world's goods, their society gives far more inward and spiritual satisfaction than worldly grandeur or worldly attractions.

2370. For those who stray from Allah's path, Allah's Grace is ever anxious: it seeks to reclaim them and bring them back to the path. If such a one resists, and follows his own lusts, a point is reached when his case becomes hopeless. Allah's Grace does not then reach him, and he is abandoned to his pride and insolence. Beware of following the example or advice of such a one or seeking his society, or hankering after his wretched idols.
Let him who will, 
Believe, and let him
Who will, reject (it):²³⁷¹
For the wrong-doers We
Have prepared a Fire
Whose (smoke and flames),
Like the walls and roof
Of a tent, will hem
Them in: if they implore
Relief they will be granted
Water like melted brass,
That will scald their faces,
How dreadful the drink!
How uncomfortable a couch
To recline on!

30. As to those who believe
And work righteousness,
Verily We shall not suffer
To perish the reward
Of any who do
A (single) righteous deed.²³⁷²

31. For them will be Gardens
Of Eternity; beneath them
Rivers will flow: they will
Be adorned therein
With bracelets of gold,
And they will wear

²³⁷¹ Our choice in our limited Free-will involves a corresponding personal responsibility. We are offered the Truth: again and again is it pressed on our attention. If we reject it, we must take all the terrible consequences which are prefigured in the Fire of Hell. Its flames and roof will completely enclose us like a tent. Ordinarily there is water to quench the heat of thirst: here the only drink will be like molten brass, thick, heavy, burning, sizzling. Before it reaches the mouth of the unfortunates, drops of it will scald their faces as it is poured out.

²³⁷² The righteous will be rewarded, as has been said again and again, beyond their merits: xxviii. 84: xxx. 39. Not a single good deed of theirs will lose its reward, and the mercy of Allah will blot out their sins.
34. (Abundant) was the produce
This man had: he said
To his companion, in the course
Of a mutual argument:

SECTION 5

32. Set forth to them
The parable of two men:
For one of them We provided
Two gardens of grape-vines
And surrounded them
With date palms;
In between the two
We placed tillage. 2375

33. Each of those gardens
Brought forth its produce,
And failed not in the least
Therein: in the midst
Of them We caused
A river to flow.

34. (Abundant) was the produce
This man had: he said
To his companion, in the course
Of a mutual argument:

2373. Heaven is figured by all the pictures of ease and comfort which we can imagine in our present state: Gardens: perpetual springs of crystal water, which we can see as in a landscape from above; the finest and most costly ornaments; the most beautiful clothes to wear; green is the colour mentioned, because it is the most refreshing to the eye, and fits in well with the Garden; the wearer takes the choice of fine silk or heavy brocade; and for rest and comfort, high thrones of dignity on which the blessed ones recline.

2374. This picture is in parallel contrast to the picture of Misery in the last verse.

2375. Here is a simple parable of the contrast between two men. One was purse-proud, and forgot that what he had was from Allah, by way of a trust and a trial in this life. The other boasted of nothing: his trust was in Allah. The worldly wealth of the first was destroyed, and he had nothing left. The second was the happier in the end.
“More wealth have I
Than you, and more honour
And power in (my following
Of) men.”

35. He went into his garden
While he wronged himself: He said, “I deem not
That this will ever perish,”

36. “Nor do I deem
That the Hour (of Judgment)
Will (ever) come:
Even if I am brought back
To my Lord. I shall
Surely find (there)
Something better in exchange.”

37. His companion said to him,
In the course of the argument
With him: “Dost thou deny
Him Who created thee
Out of dust, then out of
A sperm-drop, then fashioned
Thee into a man?”

2376. The two men began to compare notes. The arrogant one was puffed up with his possessions, his income, and his large family and following, and thought in his self-complacency that it would last for ever. He was also wrong in looking down on his Companion, who, though less affluent, was the better man of the two.

2377. It was not wealth that ruined him, but the attitude of his mind. He was unjust, not so much to his neighbour, as to his own soul. In his love of the material, he forgot or openly defied the spiritual. As verse 37 shows, he took his companion with him, to impress him with his own importance, but the companion was unmoved.

2378. Here comes out the grasping spirit of the materialist. In his mind “better” means more wealth and more power, of the kind he was enjoying in this life, although in reality, even what he had, rested on hollow foundations and was doomed to perish and bring him down with it.

2379. The three stages of man’s creation: first dust, or clay, itself created out of nothing and forming the physical basis of his body; then, out of the produce of the earth as incorporated in the parents body, the sperm drop (with the corresponding receptive element), and then when the different elements were mixed in due proportion, and the soul was breathed into him, the fashioned man. Cf. lxxxvii. 2, and xv. 28-29.
The companion’s argument divides itself into five parts. (1) He remonstrates against the proud man denying Allah. (2) He, from his own spiritual experience, proclaims that Allah is One and that He is good. (3) He points out to him the better way of enjoying Allah’s gifts, with gratitude to Him. (4) He expresses contentment and satisfaction in Allah’s dealings with him. (5) He gives a warning of the fleeting nature of this world’s goods and the certainty of Allah’s punishment for inordinate vanity.

The punishment was that of thunderbolts (husbánan), but the general meaning of the word includes any punishment by way of a reckoning (hisāb), and I think that an earthquake is also implied, as it alters water-courses, diverts channels underground, throws up silt and sand, and covers large areas with ruin.
And turning his hands
Over what he had spent
On his property, which had
(Now) tumbled to pieces
To its very foundations,
And he could only say,
"Woe is me! Would I had
Never ascribed partners
To my Lord and Cherisher!"—

Nor had he numbers
To help him against Allah,
Nor was he able
To deliver himself.

There, the (only) protection comes
From Allah, the True One.
He is the Best to reward,
And the Best to give success.

SECTION 6

Set forth to them
The similitude of the life
Of this world: it is like
The rain which We send
Down from the skies:
The earth’s vegetation absorbs it,

2382. "Fruits", "spent", "twisting of the hands", should all be understood in a wide
metaphorical sense, as well as the literal sense. He had great income and satisfaction,
which were all gone. What resources he had lavished on his property! His thoughts had
been engrossed on it; his hopes had been built on it; it had become the absorbing passion
of his life. If he had only looked to Allah, instead of to the ephemeral goods of this
world!

2383. In this case, in his mind, there was his own Self and his Mammon as rivals
to Allah!

2384. He had built up connections and obliged dependants, and was proud of having
his "quiver full". But where were all things when the reckoning came? He could not help
himself; how could others be expected to help him!

2385. All else is vanity, uncertainty, the sport of Time. The only hope or truth is
from Allah. Other rewards and other successes are illusory: the best Reward and the best
Success come from Allah.
2386. Rain-water is a good thing in itself, but it does not last, and you can build no solid foundations on it. It is soon absorbed in the earth, and produces the flourishing appearance of grass and vegetation for a time. Soon these decay, and become as dry stubble, which the least wind from any quarter will blow about like a thing of no importance. The water is gone, and so is the vegetation to which it lent a brave show of luxuriance temporarily. Such is the life of this world, contrasted with the inner and real Life, which looks to the Hereafter. Allah is the only enduring Power we can look to, supreme over all.

46. Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: But the things that endure, Good Deeds, are best In the sight of thy Lord, As rewards, and best As (the foundation for) hopes.

2387. Other things are fleeting: but Good Deeds have a lasting value in the sight of Allah. They are best as (or for) rewards in two ways: (1) they flow from us by the Grace of Allah, and are themselves rewards for our Faith: (2) they become the foundation of our hopes for the highest rewards in the Hereafter.

47. On the Day We shall Remove the mountains, and thou wilt see the earth As a level stretch, And We shall gather them, All together, nor shall We leave out any one of them.

48. And they will be marshalled Before thy Lord in ranks (With the announcement), “Now have ye come to Us (Bare) as We created you” First: aye, ye thought We shall not fulfil
The appointment made to you
To meet (Us): 2390

49. And the Book (of Deeds)
Will be placed (before you);
And thou wilt see
The sinful in great terror
Because of what is (recorded)
Therein; they will say,
"Ah! woe to us!
What a book is this!
It leaves out nothing
Small or great, but
Takes account thereof!"
They will find all that they
Did, placed before them:
And not one will thy Lord
Treat with injustice. 2391

SECTION 7.

50. Behold! We said
To the angels, "Prostrate" 2392
To Adam": they prostrated
Except Iblis. He was
One of the Jinns, 2393 and he
Broke the Command
Of his Lord

2390. The sceptics will now at length be convinced of the Reality which will be upon them.

2391. Personal responsibility, for all deeds in this life will then be enforced. But it will be done with perfect justice. Expressed in the forms of this world, it will amount to a clear statement of all we did in this life; the record will be put before us to convince us. As it will be a perfect record, with no omissions and no wrong entries, it will be perfectly convincing. Where there is punishment, it has been earned by the wrong-doer's own deeds, not imposed on him unjustly.

2392. Cf. ii. 34, where the story is told of the fall of mankind through Adam. Here the point is referred to in order to bring home the individual responsibility of the erring soul. Iblis is your enemy; you have been told his history; will you prefer to go to him rather than to the merciful Allah, your Creator and Cherisher? What a false exchange you would make!'

2393. Cf. vi. 100, n. 929.
2394. Satan's progeny: we need not take the epithet only in a literal sense. All his followers are also his progeny.

2395. Out of the limited free-will that man has, if he were to choose Evil instead of Good. Satan instead of Allah, what a dreadful choice it would be! It would really be an evil exchange. For man is Allah's creature, cared for and cherished by Him. He abandons his Cherisher to become the slave of his enemy!

2396. Allah wants man's good: how can He take Evil for His partner?

2397. Some Commentators construe: "And We shall make a partition between them": i.e., the Evil ones will not even be seen by their misguided followers, much as the latter may go on calling on them.
SECTION 8.

54. We have explained
In detail in this Qur-ān,
For the benefit of mankind,
Every kind of similitude:
But man is, in most things,\(^{2398}\)
Contentious.

55. And what is there
To keep back men
From believing, now that
Guidance has come to them,
Nor from praying for forgiveness
From their Lord but that
(They wait for) the ways
Of the ancients to overtake\(^{2399}\)
Them, or the Wrath
Be brought to them
Face to face?

56. We only send the Messengers
To give glad tidings
And to give warnings;\(^{2400}\)
But the Unbelievers dispute
With vain argument, in order
Therewith to weaken the truth,

\(^{2398}\). If men had not cultivated the habit of contention and obstinacy, they would have found that the parables and similitudes of Scripture had fully met their difficulties, and they would gladly have obeyed the call of Allah.

\(^{2399}\). But man’s obstinacy or contrariness asks or calls for a repetition of what happened to the wicked and those who rejected Faith in ancient times. Out of curiosity, or by way of challenge, they seem to court the Punishment and ask that it be brought to pass at once. But it will come soon enough, and then they will think it too early! Cf. xiii. 6 and n. 1810.

\(^{2400}\). The Prophets of Allah are not sent to humour us with dialectics or satisfy the vulgar curiosity for miracles or dark unusual things. There is no “crookedness” (xviii. 1) in their preaching. They come to preach the Truth,—not in an abstract way, but with special reference to our conduct. They give us the good news of salvation lest we despair in the presence of Sin, and to warn us clearly of the dangers of Evil. Vain controversies about words only weaken their mission, or turn it into ridicule. The ungodly have a trick also of treating the earnest preaching to them itself as a jest and ridiculing it.
And they treat My Signs and warnings
As a jest.

57. And who doth more wrong
Than one who is reminded
Of the Signs of his Lord
But turns away from them,
Forgetting the (deeds) which his
hands
Have sent forth? Verily We
Have set veils over their hearts
So that they understand this not,
And over their ears, deafness.
If thou callest them
To guidance, even then
Will they never accept guidance.

58. But your Lord is Most Forgiving,
Full of Mercy. If He were
To call them (at once) to account
For what they have earned,
Then surely He would
Have hastened their Punishment:
But they have their appointed
Time, beyond which
They will find no refuge.

2401. Considering the power of sin, and how it gets hold of the hearts of men, and considering all the wrongs that men have done, it is the height of folly and injustice on their part to turn away from warnings which are given expressly for their good. But a stage of callousness is reached, when, by their own choice, they have rendered themselves impervious to Allah’s Grace. At that stage a veil is put over their hearts and they are left alone for a time, that they may commune with themselves and perhaps repent and seek Allah’s Mercy again. If they do not, it is their own loss. See next verse.

2402. *Min duni·hi:* should we take the pronoun to refer to “the appointed time.” or to “your Lord” mentioned at the beginning of the verse? Most Commentators take the former view, and I have translated accordingly. But I agree with those who take the latter view, and the better translation would be: “But they have their appointed time, and except with Allah, they will find no refuge.” That means that even during the period allowed them, when they are left to wander astray as they have rejected Allah’s Grace, Allah’s Mercy is open to them if they will repent and return; but nothing but Allah’s Mercy can save them.
59. Such were the towns
We destroyed when they
Committed iniquities; but
We fixed an appointed time
For their destruction.  

SECTION 9.

60. Behold, Moses said  
To his attendant, "I will not
Give up until I reach
The junction of the two  
Seas or (until) I spend
Years and years in travel."  

61. But when they reached
The Junction,  they forgot

2403. The instances of exemplary Punishment in former times were also subject to
this rule, that Allah gives plenty of rope to the wicked, in case they might turn, repent,
and obtain His Mercy.

2404. This episode in the story of Moses is meant to illustrate four points. (1) Moses
was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Even so that wisdom did not comprehend
everything, even as the whole stock of the knowledge of the present day, in the sciences
and the arts, and in literature, (if it could be supposed to be gathered in one individual),
does not include all knowledge. Divine knowledge, as far as man is concerned, is
unlimited. Even after Moses received his divine mission, his knowledge was not so perfect
that it could not receive further additions. (2) Constant effort is necessary to keep our
knowledge square with the march of time, and such effort Moses is shown to be making.
(3) The mysterious man he meets (xviii. 65 and n. 2411), to whom Tradition assigns the
name of Khidhr (literally, Green), is the type of that knowledge which is ever in contact
with life as it is actually lived. (4) There are paradoxes in life: apparent loss may be real
gain; apparent cruelty may be real mercy; returning good for evil may really be justice
and not generosity (xviii. 79-82). Allah's wisdom transcends all human calculation.

2405. The most probable geographical location (if any is required in a story that is
a parable) is where the two arms of the Red Sea join together, viz., the Gulf of 'Aqaba
and the Gulf of Suez. They enclose the Sinai Peninsula, in which Moses and the Israelites
spent many years in their wanderings.

2406. Huqub means a long but indefinite space of time. Sometimes it is limited to
80 years.

2407. Literally, 'the Junction of (the space) between the two,' i.e., the point at which
the two seas were united.
(About) their Fish, which took its course through the sea (Straight) as in a tunnel.

62. When they had passed on (Some distance), Moses said to his attendant: "Bring us Our early meal; truly We have suffered much fatigue At this (stage of) our journey."

63. He replied: "Sawest thou (What happened) when we Betook ourselves to the rock? I did indeed forget (About) the Fish: none but Satan made me forget To tell (you) about it: It took its course through The sea in a marvellous way!"

64. Moses said: "That was what We were seeking after: So they went back On their footsteps, following (The path they had come).

65. So they found one Of Our servants.

2408. Moses was to go and find a servant of Allah, who would instruct him in such knowledge as he had not already got. He was to take a fish with him. The place where he was to meet his mysterious Teacher would be indicated by the fact that the fish would disappear when he got to that place.

2409. When they came to the Junction of the Seas, Moses forgot about the fish, and his attendant forgot to tell him of the fact that he had seen the fish escaping into the sea in a marvellous way. They passed on, but the stages now became heavier and heavier, and more fatiguing to Moses.

2410. The attendant actually saw the fish swimming away in the sea, and yet "forgot" to tell his master. In his case the "forgetting" was more than forgetting. Inertia had made him refrain from telling the important news. In such matters inertia is almost as bad as active spite, the suggestion of Satan.

2411. One of Our servants: his name is not mentioned in the Qur-ān, but Tradition gives it as Khidhr. Round him have gathered a number of picturesque folk tales, with which we are not here concerned. "Khidhr" means "Green": his knowledge is fresh and
On whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves
And whom We had taught Knowledge from Our own2412 Presence.

66. Moses said to him:
"May I follow thee,
On the footing that
Thou teach me something
Of the (Higher) Truth
Which thou hast been taught?"2413

67. (The other) said: "Verily
Thou wilt not be able
To have patience with me!2414

68. "For how canst thou
Have patience about things
Which are beyond your knowledge?"

69. Moses said: "Thou wilt
Find me, if Allah so will,

= green, and drawn out of the living sources of life for it is drawn from Allah's own Knowledge. He is a mysterious being, who has to be sought out. He has the secrets of some of the paradoxes of Life, which ordinary people do not understand, or understand in a wrong sense, as we shall see further on. The nearest equivalent figure in the literature of the People of the Book is Melchizedek or Melchisedek (the Greek form in the New Testament). In Gen. xiv. 18-20, he appears as king of Salem, priest of the Most High God: he blesses Abraham, and Abraham gives him tithes.

2412. Khidhr had two special gifts from Allah: (1) Mercy from Him, and (2) Knowledge from Him too. The first freed him from the ordinary incidents of daily human life; and the second entitled him to interpret the inner meaning and mystery of events, as we shall see further on.

2413. Moses, not understanding the full import of what he was asking, makes a simple request. He wants to learn something of the special Knowledge which Allah had bestowed on Khidhr.

2414. Khidhr smiles, and says that there will be many things which Moses will see with him, which Moses will not completely understand and which will make Moses impatient. The highest knowledge often seems paradoxical to those who have not the key to it.

2415. Khidhr does not blame Moses. Each one of us can only follow our own imperfect lights to the best of our judgment, but if we have Faith, we are saved many false steps.
Moses has Faith. He adopts the true attitude of the learner to the Teacher, and promises to obey in all things, with the help of Allah. The Teacher is doubtful, but permits him to follow him on condition that he asks no questions about anything until the Teacher himself mentions it first.

70. The other said: "If then Thou wouldst follow me, Ask me no questions About anything until I Myself speak to thee Concerning it."

SECTION 10.

71. So they both proceeded: Until, when they were In the boat, he scuttled it. Said Moses: "Hast thou Scuttled it in order To drown those in it? Truly a strange thing Hast thou done!"

72. He answered: "Did I not Tell thee that thou canst Have no patience with me?"

73. Moses said: Rebuke me not For forgetting, nor grieve me By raising difficulties In my case."

74. Then they proceeded: Until, when they met A young boy, he slew him. Moses said: "Hast thou Slain an innocent person Who had slain none?"

2416. Moses has Faith. He adopts the true attitude of the learner to the Teacher, and promises to obey in all things, with the help of Allah. The Teacher is doubtful, but permits him to follow him on condition that he asks no questions about anything until the Teacher himself mentions it first.

2417. The explanation follows in xviii. 79.

2418. The explanation follows in xviii. 80-81.
2419. The inhabitants were churlish. They broke the universal Eastern rule of hospitality to strangers, and thus showed themselves beyond the pale of ordinary human courtesies. Note that they would have been expected to offer hospitality of themselves, unasked. Here Moses and his companion actually had to ask for hospitality and were refused point-blank.

2420. As they were refused hospitality, they should, as self-respecting men, have shaken the dust of the town off their feet, or shown their indignation in some way. Instead of that, Khidr actually goes and does a benevolent act. He rebuilds for them a falling wall, and never asks for any compensation for it. Perhaps he employed local workmen for it and paid them wages, thus actually benefiting a town which had treated him and his companion so shabbily! Moses is naturally surprised and asks, “Could you not at least have asked for the cost?”
Tell thee the interpretation
Of (those things) over which
Thou wast unable
To hold patience. 2421

79. "As for the boat,
It belonged to certain
Men in dire want:
They plied on the water:
I but wished to render it
Unserviceable, for there was
After them a certain king
Who seized on every boat
By force. 2422

80. "As for the youth,
His parents were people
Of Faith, and we feared
That he would grieve them
By obstinate rebellion
And ingratitude (to Allah) 2423

81. "So we desired that
Their Lord would give them
In exchange (a son)

2421. The story and the interpretation are given with the greatest economy of words.
It would repay us to search for the meaning in terms of our own inner and outer experience.

2422. They went on the boat, which was plying for hire. Its owners were not even ordinary men who plied for trade. They had been reduced to great poverty, perhaps from affluent circumstances, and deserved great commiseration, the more so as they preferred an honest calling to begging for charity. They did not know, but Khidhr did, that that boat, perhaps a new one, had been marked down to be commandeered by an unjust king who seized on every boat he could get—it may have been, for warlike purposes. If this boat had been taken away from these self-respecting men, they would have been reduced to beggary, with no resources left them. By a simple act of making it unseaworthy, the boat was saved from seizure. The owners could repair it as soon as the danger was past. Khidhr probably paid liberally in fares, and what seemed an unaccountably cruel act was the greatest act of kindness he could do in the circumstances.

2423. This seemed at first sight even a more cruel act than scuttling the boat. But the danger was also greater. Khidhr knew that the youth was a potential parricide. His parents were worthy, pious people, who had brought him up with love. He had apparently gone wrong. Perhaps he had already been guilty of murders and robberies and had escaped the law by subtleties and fraud. See next note.
2424. The son was practically an outlaw—a danger to the public and a particular source of grief to his righteous parents. Even so, his summary capital punishment would have been unjustified if Khidhr had been acting on his own. But Khidhr was not acting on his own: see the latter part of the next verse. The plural “we” also implies that he was not acting on his own. He was acting on higher authority and removing a public scourge, who was also a source of extreme sorrow and humiliation to his parents. His parents are promised a better-behaved son who would love them and be a credit to them.

2425. The wall was in a ruinous state. If it had fallen, the treasure buried beneath it would have been exposed and would certainly have been looted, among so churlish and selfish a people. See n. 2419 above. The treasure had been collected and buried by a righteous man. It was not, in any sense of the word, ill-gotten gains; it was buried expressly in the interests of the orphans by their father before his death. It was intended that the orphans should grow up and safely take possession of their heritage. It was also expected that they would be righteous men like their father, and use the treasure in good works and in advancing righteousness among an otherwise wicked community. There was thus both public and private interests involved in all the three incidents. In the second incident Khidhr uses the word “we”, showing that he was associating in his act the public authorities of the place, who had been eluded by the outlaw.

2426. Age of full strength: Cf. xvii. 34 and n. 2218.

2427. Those who act, not from a whim or a private impulse of their own, but from higher authority, have to bear the blame, for acts of the greatest wisdom and utility.
SECTION 11.

83. They ask thee concerning Zul-qarnain. Say,
"I will rehearse to you Something of his story."

84. Verily We established his power
On earth, and We gave him
The ways and the means
To all ends.

85. One (such) way he followed,

86. Until, when he reached
The setting of the sun,
He found it set
In a spring of murky water:
Near it he found a People:
We said: "O Zul-qarnain!

2428. Literally, "the Two-horned one", the King with the Two Horns, or the Lord of the Two Epochs. Who was he? In what age, and where did he live? The Qur-an gives us no material on which we can base a positive answer. Nor is it necessary to find an answer, as the story is treated as a Parable. Popular opinion identifies Zul-qarnain with Alexander the Great. An alternative suggestion is an ancient Persian King, or a pre-historic Himyarite King.

Zul-qarnain was a most powerful king, but it was Allah. Who, in His universal Plan, gave him power and provided him with the ways and means for his great work. His sway extended over East and West, and over people of diverse civilisations. He was just and righteous, not selfish or grasping. He protected the weak and punished the unlawful and the turbulent. Three of his expeditions are described in the text, each embodying a great ethical idea involved in the possession of kingship or power.

2429. Great was his power and great were his opportunities ("ways and means"), which he used for justice and righteousness. But he recognised that his power and opportunities were given to him as a trust by Allah. He had faith, and did not forget Allah.

2430. This is the first of the three episodes here mentioned, his expedition to the west. "Reaching the setting of the sun" does not mean the extreme west, for there is no such thing. West and East are relative terms. It means a western expedition terminated by a "spring of murky water." This has puzzled Commentators, and they have understood this to mean the dark, tempestuous sea. If Zul-qarnain is Alexander the Great, the reference is easily understood to be to Lychnitis (now Ohrida), west of Macedonia. It is fed entirely by underground springs in a limestone region, where the water is never very clear.
87. He said: "Whoever doth wrong, Him shall we punish; then Shall he be sent back2432 To his Lord; and He will Punish him with a punishment Unheard-of (before).

88. "But whoever believes, And works righteousness,— He shall have a goodly Reward, and easy will be His task as we order it By our command."2433

89. Then followed he (another) way,
90. Until, when he came To the rising of the sun,2434 He found it rising On a people for whom

2431. He had great power and a great opportunity. He got authority over a turbulent and unruly people. Was he going to be severe with them and chastise them, or was he going to seek peace at any price, i.e., to wink at violence and injustice so long as it did not affect his power? He chose the better course, as described in the next verse. To protect the weak and the innocent, he punished the guilty and the headstrong, but he remembered always that the true Punishment would come in the Hereafter—the true and final justice before the throne of Allah.

2432. Though most powerful among kings, he remembered that his power was but human, and given by Allah. His punishments were but tentative, to preserve the balance of this life as he could appraise it. Even if his punishment was capital ("wrong doer sent back to his Lord") it was nothing compared to the dire consequences of sin, in the final Justice of Allah.

2433. He never said like Pharaoh. "I am your Lord Most High!" (lxix. 24). On the contrary his punishments were humbly regulated as not being final, and he laid more stress on the good he could do to those who lived normal lives in faith and righteousness. His rule was easy to them: he imposed no heavy tasks because of his power, but gave every opportunity to rich and poor for the exercise of virtue and goodness. Such is the spiritual lesson to be learned from the first episode.

2434. We now come to the second episode. This is an expedition to the east. "Rising of the sun" has a meaning corresponding to "setting of the sun" in xviii. 86, as explained in n. 2430.
We had provided
No covering protection
Against the sun.

91. (He left them) as they were:
We completely understood
What was before him.

2436. They were a primitive people. He did not fuss over their primitiveness, but
left them in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity in their own way. In this he was wise.
Power is apt to be intolerant and arrogant, and to interfere in everything that does not
accord with its own glorification. Not so Zul-qarnain. He recognised his own limitations
in the sight of Allah: man never completely understands his own position, but if he
devoutly looks to Allah, he will live and let live. This is the spiritual lesson from the
second episode.

92. Then followed he (another) way,

93. Until, when he reached
(A tract) between two mountains,
He found, beneath them, a people
Who scarcely understood a word.

94. They said: “O Zul-qarnain!
The Gog and Magog (people)
Do great mischief on earth:
Shall we then render thee
Tribute in order that
Thou mightest erect a barrier
Between us and them?

2435. The people here lived very simple lives. Perhaps the climate was hot, and they
required neither roofs over their heads, nor much clothing to protect them from the sun.
What did he do with them? See next note.

2436. They were a primitive people. He did not fuss over their primitiveness, but
left them in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity in their own way. In this he was wise.
Power is apt to be intolerant and arrogant, and to interfere in everything that does not
accord with its own glorification. Not so Zul-qarnain. He recognised his own limitations
in the sight of Allah: man never completely understands his own position, but if he
devoutly looks to Allah, he will live and let live. This is the spiritual lesson from the
second episode.

2437. Cf. xxi. 96.

2438. It does not mean that they had no speech. It means that they did not
understand the speech of the Conqueror. But they had parleys with him (through
interpreters), as is evident from the verses following (xviii. 94-98).

2439. What we are mainly concerned with is its interpretation. The Conqueror had
now arrived among a people who were different in speech and race from him, but not
quite primitive, for they were skilled in the working of metals, and could furnish blocks
(or bricks) of iron, melt metals with bellows or blow-pipes, and prepare molten lead (xviii.
96). Apparently they were a peaceable and industrious race, much subject to incursions
from wild tribes who are called Gog and Magog. Against these tribes they were willing
to purchase immunity by paying the Conqueror tribute in return for protection. The
permanent protection they wanted was the closing of a mountain gap through which the
incursions were made.
95. He said: “(The power) in which My Lord has established me Is better (than tribute).  
Help me therefore with strength (And labour): I will Erect a strong barrier Between you and them:

96. “Bring me blocks of iron.”  
At length, when he had Filled up the space between The two steep mountain-sides, He said, “Blow (with your bellows)” Then, when he had made It (red) as fire, he said: “Bring me, that I may Pour over it, molten lead.”

97. Thus were they made Powerless to scale it Or to dig through it.

98. He said: “This is A mercy from my Lord:

2440. Zul-qarnain was not greedy and did not want to impose a tribute to be carried away from an industrious population. He understood the power which Allah had given him, to involve duties and responsibilities on his part—the duty of protecting his subjects without imposing too heavy a taxation on them. He would provide the motive force and organising skill. Would they obey him and provide the material and labour, so that they could close the gap with a strong barrier, probably with well-secured gates? The word radm, translated “Barrier,” does not necessarily mean a wall, but rather suggests a blocked door or entrance.

2441. I understand the defences erected to have been a strong barrier of iron, with iron Gates. The jambs of the Gates were constituted with blocks or bricks of iron, and the interstices filled up with molten lead, so as to form an impregnable mass of metal. It may be that there was a stone wall also, but that is not mentioned. There was none in the Iron Gate near Bukhārā.

2442. Made it (red) as fire: what does “it” refer to? Probably to the iron, either in sheets or blocks, to be welded with the molten lead.

2443. The iron wall and gates and towers were sufficiently high to prevent their being scaled and sufficiently strong with welded metal to resist any attempt to dig through them.

2444. After all the effort which Zul-qarnain has made for their protection, he claims no credit for himself beyond that of discharging his duty as a ruler. He turns their=
But when the promise
Of my Lord comes to pass,
He will make it into dust;
And the promise of
My Lord is true."

99. On that day We shall
Leave them to surge
Like waves on one another:2445
The trumpet will be blown,
And We shall collect them
All together.

100. And We shall present
Hell that day for Unbelievers
To see, all spread out,2446

101. (Unbelievers) whose eyes
Had been under a veil
From Remembrance of Me,
And who had been unable
Even to hear.2447

SECTION 12.

102. Do the Unbelievers think
That they can take
My servants as protectors

= attention to Allah, Who has provided the ways and means by which they can be helped and protected. But all such human precautions are apt to become futile. The time must come when they will crumble into dust. Allah has said so in His Revelation; and His word is true.

And so the lesson from the third episode is: Take human precautions and do all in your power to protect yourselves from evil. But no protection is complete unless you seek the help and grace of Allah. The best of our precautions must crumble to dust when the appointed Day arrives.

2445. And so we pass on to the Last Days before the Great Summons comes from Allah. All human barriers will be swept away. There will be tumultuous rushes. The Trumpet will be blown, and the Judgment will be set on foot.

2446. If men had scoffed at Faith and the Hereafter, their eyes will be opened now, and they will see the terrible Reality.

2447. Those very men who refused to see the many Signs of Allah which in this world convey His Message and to hear the Word of the Lord when it came to them, will then see without any mistake the consequences fully brought up before them.
Besides Me? Verily We Have prepared Hell For the Unbelievers For (their) entertainment.

103. Say: "Shall we tell you Of those who lose most In respect of their deeds?" 2448

104. "Those whose efforts have Been wasted in this life, While they thought that They were acquiring good By their works?" 2449

105. They are those who deny The Signs of their Lord And the fact of their Having to meet Him (In the Hereafter): vain Will be their works, Nor shall We, on the Day Of Judgment, give them Any Weight. 2450

106. That is their reward, Hell; because they rejected Faith, and took My Signs And My Messengers

2448. That is, those who prided themselves on their works in this life, and now find that those works are of no avail. Their loss is all the greater because they had a misplaced confidence in their own deeds or in the assistance of false "protectors". Allah is the only Protector: no one else's protection is of any use.

2449. Many people have such a smug sense of self-righteousness that while they go on doing wrong, they think that they are acquiring merit. So, in charity, all the elements that make for outward show or selfishness (as to get some worldly advantage) nullify the deed of charity. In the same way hypocrites sometimes affect to be surprised that their declared effort for somebody's good is not appreciated, when they are really seeking some hidden gain or false glory for themselves. The sincere are only those who believe in their spiritual responsibility and act as in Allah's sight.

2450. What weight can be attached to works behind which the motives are not pure, or are positively evil? They are either wasted or count against those who seek to pass them off as meritorious!
By way of jest.  

107. As to those who believe  
   And work righteous deeds,  
   They have, for their entertainment,  
The Gardens of Paradise;  

108. Wherein they shall dwell  
   (For aye): no change  
   Will they wish for from them.  

109. Say: “If the ocean were  
   Ink (wherewith to write out)  
The words of my Lord;  
   Sooner would the ocean be  
   Exhausted than would the words  
   Of my Lord, even if we  
   Added another ocean  
   Like it, for its aid.”  

110. Say: “I am but a man  
   Like yourselves, (but)  
The inspiration has come  
   To me, that your God is  
   One God: whoever expects  
   To meet his Lord, let him  
   Work righteousness, and,  
   In the worship of his Lord,  
   Admit no one as partner.”  

2451. False motives, pretence, deception, and hypocrisy, flourish because people do not take the higher life seriously. In effect they treat it as a jest. Signs and Messengers are sent as a special and personal Mercy from Allah, and for such things the first person singular is used as in this verse, even when it involves a sudden transition from the first person plural as in the last verse.  

2452. *Firdaus* in Persian means an enclosed place, a park. In technical theological language the word is used for the inner circle of Heaven, or the highest Heaven, the destination of those who perfectly fulfil both requirements, viz.; a sound faith, and perfectly righteous conduct. Small faults in either respect are forgiven; the Mercy of Allah steps in.  

2453. The Words and Signs and Mercies of Allah are in all Creation, and can never be fully set out in human language, however extended our means may be imagined to be.  

2454. Righteousness and true respect for Allah—which excludes the worship of anything else, whether idols, or deified men, or forces of nature, or faculties of man, or Self—these are the criteria of true worship.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Maryam, 19

The religious growth of man as an individual soul having been explained in S. xvii as beginning with the first principles of moral conduct and in S. xviii as being dependent upon our realisation of the brevity and mystery of this life and the true use of power as in the story of Zul-qarnain, we now pass on to the story of individual Messengers of Allah in their personal relations with their environment,—Yahyā with his father Zakariya, Jesus with his mother Mary; Abraham with his unbelieving father. Moses with his brother Aaron, Ismā‘il with his family, and Idrīs in the high station to which he was called. Seeing how these great ones fitted into the scheme of life, man is condemned for his want of faith, or for degrading his faith to superstition, and warned of the Hereafter.

In chronology, it was revealed before the first resort of the batch of Muslims to Abyssinia, say seven years before the Hijrat.

Summary.—Zakariya was anxious to have an heir to carry on Allah’s work in a world of unrighteousness, and Yahyā was given to him (xix. 1-15).

Mary the mother of Jesus was maligned by her people, but Jesus comforted her and was good to her (xix. 16-40).

Abraham was persecuted for his Faith by his people, including his unbelieving father, but he withdrew from them, and was blessed; Moses was helped by his brother Aaron; Ismā‘il brought up his family in piety; and Idrīs was truthful and pious in a high station: they showed the way; yet men will not learn the good life (xix. 41-65).

Man should not disbelieve in the Hereafter, nor sully his faith by false notions about Allah (xix. 66-98).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.


2. (This is) a mention 2456
   Of the Mercy of thy Lord
   To His servant Zakariya.

3. Behold! he cried
   To his Lord in secret. 2457

4. Praying: “O my Lord!
   Infirm indeed are my bones,
   And the hair of my head
   Doth glisten with grey:
   But never am I unblest,
   O my Lord, in my prayer 2458
   To Thee!

5. “Now I fear (what)
   My relatives (and colleagues)
   (Will do) after me:
   But my wife is barren:

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2455. This is the only Sūra which begins with these five Abbreviated Letters, K., H., Y., ‘A., Š. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I.

2456. The Mercy of Allah to Zakariya was shown in many ways: (1) in the acceptance of his prayer; (2) in bestowing a son like Yahyā; and (3) in the love between father and son, in addition to the work which Yahyā did as Allah’s Messenger for the world. Cf. iii. 38-41 and notes. There the public ministry was the point stressed; here the beautiful relations between the son and the father.

2457. In secret: because he feared that his own family and relatives were going wrong (xix. 5), and he wanted to keep the lamp of Allah burning bright. He could not very well mention the fear about his colleagues (who were his relations) in public.

2458. This preface shows the fervent faith of Zakariya. Zakariya was a prophet of the Most High Allah. His office was in the Temple, and his relatives were his colleagues. But he found in them no true spirit of the service of Allah and man. He was filled with anxiety as to who would uphold the godly ideas he had in mind, which were strange to his worldly colleagues.
So give me an heir\textsuperscript{2459} As from Thyself,—

6. "(One that) will (truly) Inherit me, and inherit\textsuperscript{2460} The posterity of Jacob; And make him, O my Lord! One with whom Thou art Well-pleased!"

7. (His prayer was answered): "O Zakariya! We give thee Good news of a son: His name shall be Yahyä: On none by that name Have We conferred distinction before."\textsuperscript{2461}

8. He said: "O my Lord How shall I have a son, When my wife is barren And I have grown quite decrepit From old age?"

\textsuperscript{2459} His was not merely a desire for a son. If it had been, he would have prayed much earlier in his life, when he was a young man. He was too full of true piety to put merely selfish things into his prayers. But here was a public need, in the service of the Lord.

\textsuperscript{2460} It is true that an heir inherits property, but his higher duty is to represent in everything the personality of him from whom he inherits. It is doubtful whether Zakariya had any worldly property. But he had character and virtue, as a man of God, and this he wanted to transmit to his heir as his most precious possession. It was almost the most precious possession of the posterity of Jacob. The people around him had fallen away from Allah's Message. Could his heir, like him, try and renew it?

\textsuperscript{2461} This was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. In accordance with his father's prayer he, and Jesus for whom he prepared the way, renewed the Message of Allah, which had been corrupted and lost among the Israelites. The Arabic form Yahyä suggests "Life". The Hebrew form is Johanan, which means "Jehovah has been Gracious". Cf. Hanânâ in verse 13 below. It does not mean that the name was given for the first time, for we read of a Johanan the son of Careah in II Kings, xxv. 23, an otherwise obscure man. It means that Allah had, for the first time, called one of His elect by that name.
9. He said: "So (it will be)."\textsuperscript{2462}

Thy Lord saith, 'That is Easy for Me: I did
Indeed create thee before,
When thou hadst been nothing!'\textsuperscript{2463}

10. (Zakariya) said: "O my Lord!
Give me a Sign,"\textsuperscript{2464}

"Thy Sign," was the answer,
"Shall be that thou
Shalt speak to no man
For three nights,\textsuperscript{2465}
Although thou art not dumb.

11. So Zakriya came out
To his people
From his chamber:

\textsuperscript{2462} Who is the "He" in this clause? As I have construed it, following the majority of Commentators, it means the angel who brought the message from Allah. Cf. xix. 21 below. But some Commentators construe it to refer to Zakariya. In that case the meaning will be: Zakariya after a little reflection said (in his wonder) "So!", i.e., "Can it really be so? Can I really have a son in my old age?" "The speech following. "Thy Lord saith," etc., will then be that of the angel-messenger.

\textsuperscript{2463} Every man was nothing just before he was created, i.e., his personality was called into being by Allah. Even if there are material processes in forming the body, in accordance with the laws of nature, the real creative force is the power of Allah. But here there is a subtler meaning. John was the harbinger of Jesus, preparing the way for him; and this sentence also prepares us for the more wonderful birth of Jesus himself, see verse 21 below. Everything is possible with Allah.

\textsuperscript{2464} The "Sign", was in order to convince Zakariya that the Lord's promise was true.

\textsuperscript{2465} Compare this verse with iii. 41. The variations are interesting. Here it is "for three nights": there it is "for three days". The meaning is the same, for a day is a period of 24 hours. But the point of view is different in each case. There it was from the point of view of the Ummat or Congregation, among whom he worked by day; here the point of view is that of his individual soul, which spent the nights in prayer and praise. Notice again that at the end of the next verse, we have here, "In the morning and the evening", and at the end of iii. 41, "In the evening and in the morning"—showing again that the point of view is reversed.
He told them by signs
To celebrate Allah's praises
In the morning
And in the evening.

12. (To his son came the command): 2466
   "O Yahyá! take hold
   Of the Book with might":
   And We gave him Wisdom 2467
   Even as a youth,

13. And pity (for all creatures)
   As from Us, and purity: 2468
   He was devout,

14. And kind to his parents,
   And he was not overbearing
   Or rebellious.

15. So Peace on him
   The day he was born,
   The day that he dies,
   And the day that he

2466. Time passes. The son is born. In this section of the Sûra the centre of interest is Yahyá, and the instruction is now given to him. ‘Keep fast hold of Allah’s revelation with all your might’: for an unbelieving world had either corrupted or neglected it, and Yahyá (John the Baptist) was to prepare the way for Jesus, who was coming to renew and re-interpret it.

2467. Hukm, translated Wisdom, implies something more than Wisdom; it is the Wisdom or Judgment that is entitled to judge and command, as in the matter of denouncing sin.

2468. John the Baptist did not live long. He was imprisoned by Herod, the tetrarch (provincial ruler under the Roman Empire), whom he had reproved for his sins, and eventually beheaded at the instigation of the woman with whom Herod was infatuated. But even in his young life, he was granted (1) wisdom by Allah, for he boldly denounced sin; (2) gentle pity and love for all Allah’s creatures, for he moved among the humble and lowly, and despised “soft raiment”; and (3) purity of life, for he renounced the world and lived in the wilderness. All his work he did in his youth. These things showed themselves in his conduct, for he was devout, showing love to Allah and to Allah’s creatures, and more particularly to his parents (for we are considering that aspect of his life): this was also shown by the fact that he never used violence, from an attitude of arrogance, nor entertained a spirit of rebellion against divine Law.
Will be raised up
To life (again)! 2469

SECTION 2.

16. Relate in the Book
(The story of) Mary, 2470
When she withdrew
From her family
To a place in the East. 2471

17. She placed a screen
(To screen herself) from them:
Then We sent to her
Our angel, and he appeared
Before her as a man
In all respects.

18. She said: “I seek refuge
From thee to (Allah)
Most Gracious: (come not near)
If thou dost fear Allah.”

19. He said: “Nay, I am only
A messenger from thy Lord
(To announce) to thee
The gift of a pure son.” 2472

2469. This is spoken as in the life-time of Yahyā. Peace and Allah's Blessings, were on him when he was born; they continue when he is about to die an unjust death at the hands of a tyrant; and they will be specially manifest at the Day of Judgment.

2470. Cf. the story of Mary as related in iii. 42-51. Here the whole theme is different: it is the personal side of the experiences of the worshippers of Allah in relation to their families or environment.

2471. To a private eastern chamber, perhaps in the Temple. She went into privacy, from her people and from people in general, for prayer and devotion. It was in this state of purity that the angel appeared to her in the shape of a man. She thought it was a man. She was frightened, and she adjured him not to invade her privacy.

2472. Allah had destined her to be the mother of the Prophet Jesus Christ, and now had come the time when this should be announced to her.
20. She said: “How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?”

21. He said: “So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, ‘That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a sign unto men and a mercy from Us:’

22. So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place.

23. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree:
She cried (in her anguish):

2473. The mission of Jesus is announced in two ways (1) he was to be a sign to men; his wonderful birth and wonderful life were to turn an ungodly world back to Allah; and (2) his mission was similar to that of all prophets of Allah. But the point here is that the Israelites, to whom Jesus was sent, were a hardened race, for whom the message of Jesus was truly a gospel of mercy.

2474. For anything that Allah wishes to create, He says "Be", and it is (Cf. iii. 47). There is no interval between His decree and its accomplishment, except such as He imposes by His decree. Time may be only a projection of our own minds in this world of relativity.

2475. The annunciation and the conception, we may suppose, took place in Nazareth (of Galilee), say 65 miles north of Jerusalem. The delivery took place in Bethlehem about 6 miles south of Jerusalem. It was a remote place, not only with reference to the distance of 71 miles, but because in Bethlehem itself the birth was in an obscure corner under a palm-tree, from which perhaps the babe was afterwards removed to a manger in a stable.
“Ah! would that I had
Died before this! would that
I had been a thing
Forgotten.”

24. But (a voice) cried to her
From beneath the (palm-tree):
“Grieve not! for thy Lord
Hath provided a rivulet
Beneath thee;

25. “And shake towards thyself
The trunk of the palm-tree:
It will let fall
Fresh ripe dates upon thee.”

26. “So eat and drink
And cool (thine) eye.
And if thou dost see
Any man, say, ‘I have
Vowed a fast to (Allah)
Most Gracious, and this day
Will I enter into no talk
With any human being”

27. At length she brought
The (babe) to her people.

2476. She was but human, and suffered the pangs of an expectant mother, with no one to attend on her. The circumstances being peculiar, she had got far away from her people.

2477. Unseen Providence had seen that she should not suffer from thirst or from hunger. The rivulet provided her with water also for ablutions.

2478. *Cool thine eye*: An idiom for “comfort thyself and be glad”. The literal meaning should not, however, be lost sight of. She was to cool her eyes (perhaps full of tears) with the fresh water of the rivulet and take comfort that a remarkable babe had been born to her. She was also to look around, and if any one came near, she was to decline all conversation. It was quite true: she was under a vow, and could not talk to any one.

2479. She was to decline all conversation with man or woman, on the plea of a vow to Allah. The “fast” here does not mean abstinence literally from eating and drinking. She has just been advised to eat the dates and drink of the stream. It means abstinence from the ordinary household meals, and indeed from human intercourse generally.
Carrying him (in her arms),
They said: “O Mary!
Truly a strange thing
Has thou brought?”

28. “O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not
A man of evil, nor thy
Mother a woman unchaste!”

29. But she pointed to the babe. They said: “How can we
Talk to one who is
A child in the cradle?”

30. He said: “I am indeed
A servant of Allah:
He hath given me
Revelation and made me
A prophet:

31. “And He hath made me
Blessed wheresoever I be,
And hath enjoined on me

2480. The amazement of the people knew no bounds. In any case they were ready
to think the worst of her, as she had disappeared from her kin for some time. But now
she comes, shamelessly parading a babe in her arms! How she had disgraced the house
of Aaron, the fountain of priesthood! We may suppose that the scene took place in the
Temple in Jerusalem, or in Nazareth.

2481. Aaron the brother of Moses was the first in the line of Israelite priesthood.
Mary and her cousin Elisabeth (mother of Yahyâ) came of a priestly family, and were
therefore, “sisters of Aaron” or daughters of Imrân (who was Aaron’s father). See n.
375 to iii. 35. Mary is reminded of her high lineage and the unexceptionable morals of
her father and mother. How, they said, she had fallen, and disgraced the name of her
progenitors!

2482. What could Mary do? How could she explain? Would they, in their censorious
mood, accept her explanation? All she could do was to point to the child, who, she knew,
was no ordinary child. And the child came to her rescue. By a miracle he spoke, defended
his mother, and preached—to an unbelieving audience. See iii. 46, and n. 388.
2483. There is a parallelism throughout the accounts of Jesus and Yahyā, with some variations. Both the parallelisms and the variations are interesting. For instance Jesus declares at the very outset that he is a servant of Allah, thus negativing the false notion that he was Allah or the son of Allah. The greatness of Yahyā is described in xix. 12-13 in terms that are not applied to Jesus, but the verses xix. 14-15 as applied to Yahyā are in almost identical terms with those applied to Jesus here (xix. 32-33). Devotion in Prayer and Charity is a good description of Christ at its best, and pity, purity, and devotion in Yahyā are a good description of the ways leading to Prayer and Charity, just as John led to Jesus.

2484. Overbearing violence is not only unjust and harmful to those on whom it is practised; it is perhaps even more harmful to the person who practises it, for his soul becomes turbid, unsettled, and ultimately unhappy and wretched—the state of those in Hell. Here the negative qualities are “not overbearing or miserable.” As applied to John they were “not overbearing or rebellious.” John bore his punishment from the State without any protest or drawing back.

2485. Cf. xix. 15, and n. 2469. Christ was not crucified (iv. 157).

2486. The disputations about the nature of Jesus Christ were vain, but also persistent and sanguinary. The modern Christian churches have thrown them into the background, but they would do well to abandon irrational dogmas altogether.
2487. Begetting a son is a physical act depending on the needs of men’s animal nature. Allah Most High is independent of all needs, and it is derogatory to Him to attribute such an act to Him. It is merely a relic of pagan and anthropomorphic materialist superstitions.

2488. As opposed to the crooked superstitions which take refuge in all sorts of metaphysical sophistries to prove three in one and one in three. In the Qur-an there is no crookedness (xviii. 1). Christ’s teaching was simple, like his life, but the Christians have made it crooked.

2489. Judgment: the word in the original is Mash-had, which implies many things: (1) the time or place where evidence is taken, as in a Court of Judgment; (2) the time or place where people are produced (to be judged); and (3) the occasion for such production for the taking of evidence. A very expressive phrase for the Day of Judgment.

2490. Cf. l. 22. and that whole passage, where the Resurrection is described.

40. It is We Who will inherit\textsuperscript{2492} the earth, and all beings thereon: to Us will they all be returned.

SECTION 3.

41. (Also) mention in the Book (The story of) Abraham: He was a man of Truth, a prophet.

42. Behold, he said to his father:\textsuperscript{2493} "O my father! why worship that which heareth not and seeth not, and can profit thee nothing?"

43. "O my father! to me hath come knowledge which hath not reached thee:\textsuperscript{2494} So follow me: I will guide thee to a Way that is even and straight.\textsuperscript{2495}

\textsuperscript{2492} Cf. iii. 180. n. 485; xv. 23 n. 1964, Material property passes from one to another: when one dies, another inherits it. Allah gives life and death, and all that survives after physical death goes back to Allah, the original source of all things.

\textsuperscript{2493} The reference to Abraham here is in relation to his tender solicitude for his father, who had not received the light of Unity, and to whom Abraham wanted to be a guide and friend.

\textsuperscript{2494} Some are more receptive of Light than others. It is their duty and privilege to guide and point to the right Way.

\textsuperscript{2495} Sawiyan—right, smooth, even; complete, perfect; hence the derived meaning: in xix. 10, in full possession of all the physical senses; in that context, 'not dumb': in xix. 17, when the angel appears in the form of a man, 'completely like' a man, a man 'in all respects.'

2496.

45. “O my father! I fear Lest a Chastisement afflict thee From (Allah) Most Gracious, So that thou become To Satan a friend.”

46. (The father) replied: Art thou shrinking From my gods, O Abraham? If thou forbear not, I will Indeed stone thee: Now get away from me For a good long while!”  

2497.

47. Abraham said: “Peace be On thee: I will pray To my Lord for thy forgiveness.”  

2498.

2496. The rebellion is all the more heinous and inexcusable, considering that Allah is Most Just, Most Merciful, Most Gracious.

2497. To entertain a feeling of friendliness, instead of aversion, to Evil, is in itself a degradation of our nature, a Penalty which Allah imposes on our deliberate rejection of the Truth. And the friendliness to Evil also implies the sharing of the outlawry of Evil.

2498. Note the gentle persuasive tone of Abraham in his speeches in xix. 42-45 (for we may suppose those sentences to sum up a long course of arguments) and in xix. 47-48, contrasted with the brusque and repellent tone of the father’s reply in this verse. The one was the outcome of the true Light which had come to Abraham from Allah, as the other was the outcome of Pagan arrogance and the worship of brute force. The spiritual lesson from this episode of Abraham’s life may be stated in four propositions: (1) the pious son is dutiful to his father and wishes him well in all things, material and spiritual, (2) if the father refuses Allah’s Light, the son will do his utmost to bring such Light to the father; (3) having received the Light, the son will never renounce that Light, even if he has to forfeit his father’s love and renounce his home; (4) even if the father repels him and turns him out, his answer will be a soft answer, full of love and forgiveness on the one hand, but firmness on behalf of Truth on the other.

2499. Cf. ix. 114. where this promise of Abraham to pray for his father is referred to, and its limitations pointed out.
48. "And I will turn away
From you (all) and from those
Whom ye invoke besides Allah:
I will call on my Lord
Perhaps, by my prayer to my Lord,
I shall be not unblest."  

49. When he had turned away
From them and from those
Whom they worshipped besides
Allah, We bestowed on him
Isaac and Jacob, and each one
Of them We made a prophet.  

50. And We bestowed
Of Our Mercy on them,
And We granted them
Lofty honour on the tongue
Of truth.

2500. Abraham left his father and the home of his fathers (Ur of the Chaldees) and never returned. He left because he was turned out, and because it was not possible for him to make any compromise with what was false in religion. In return for abuse, he spoke gentle words. And he expressed his fervent hope that at least he (Abraham) would have Allah’s blessing in reply to his prayers. Here was a prefiguration of another Hijrat many centuries later! In both cases the prayer was abundantly fulfilled.

2501. Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob are mentioned here as carrying on one line of Abraham’s traditions. The other line was carried on by Ismā’il, who is mentioned independently five verses lower down, as his line got special honour in the Holy Prophet of Islam. That is why his mention comes after that of Moses. Cf. xxi. 72.

2502. Abraham and his son and grandson Isaac and Jacob, and their line, maintained the banner of Allah’s truth for many generations, and they won deservedly high praise—the praise of truth—on the tongues of men. Abraham prayed that he should be praised by the tongue of truth among men to come in later ages: xxvi. 84. Ordinary praise may mean nothing: it may be due to selfish flattery on the part of others or artful management by the person praised. Praise on the tongue of sincere truth is praise indeed!
SECTION 4.

51. Also mention in the Book
(The story of) Moses:
For he was specially chosen.
And he was a messenger
And a prophet.  

52. And We called him
From the right side
Of Mount (Sinai), and made
Him draw near to Us,
For converse in secret

53. And, out of Our Mercy,
We gave him his brother
Aaron, (also) a prophet.

54. Also mention in the Book
(The story of) Ismā’īl:

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2503. Moses was (1) especially chosen, and therefore prepared and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, in order that he might free his people from Egyptian bondage; there may also be a reference to Moses’s title of Kalimullüh, the one to whom Allah spoke without the intervention of angels: see iv. 164, and n. 670; (2) he was a prophet (nabi), in that he received inspiration; and (3) he was a messenger (rasūl) in that he had a Book of Revelation, and an Ummat or organised Community, for which he instituted laws.

2504. The incident here I think refers to the incidents described more fully in xx. 9-36; a reference may also be made to Exod. iii. 1-18 and iv. 1-17. The time is when Moses (with his family) was travelling and grazing the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro, just before he got his commission from Allah. The place is somewhere near Mount Sinai (Jabal Mūsā). Moses sees a Fire in the distance, but when he goes there, he hears a voice that tells him it is sacred ground. Allah asked him to put off his shoes and to draw near, and when he went near, great mysteries were revealed to him. He was given his commission, and his brother Aaron was given to him to go with him and aid him. It is after that, that he and Aaron went and faced Pharaoh in Egypt, as narrated in vii. 103-144, etc. The right side of the mountain may mean that Moses heard the voice from the right side of the mountain as he faced it; or it may have the figurative meaning of “right” in Arabic, i.e., the side which was blessed or sacred ground.

2505. Moses was diffident, and reluctant to go to Pharaoh as he had an impediment in his tongue, and he asked that his brother Aaron should be associated with him in his mission. Allah in His Mercy granted his request; xx. 25-36.
He was (strictly) true
To what he promised,²⁵⁰⁶
And he was a messenger
(And) a prophet.

55. He used to enjoin
On his people Prayer
And zakat and he was
Most acceptable in the sight
Of his Lord.²⁵⁰⁷

56. Also mention in the Book
Idris:²⁵⁰⁸
He was a man of truth
(And sincerity), (and) a prophet:

57. And We raised him
To a lofty station.

58. Those were some
Of the prophets on whom
Allah did bestow His Grace,—
Of the posterity of Adam,
And of those whom We
Carried (in the Ark)

²⁵⁰⁶. Ismā'īl was Az-zabih i.e., the chosen sacrifice for Allah in Muslim tradition. When Abraham told him of the sacrifice, he voluntarily offered himself for it, and never flinched from his promise, until the sacrifice was redeemed by the substitution of a ram under Allah’s commands. He was the fountain-head of the Arabian Ummat, and in his posterity came the Prophet of Allah. The Ummat and the Book of Islam reflect back the prophethood on Ismā'īl.

²⁵⁰⁷. An acceptable sacrifice: see last note.

²⁵⁰⁸. Idris is mentioned twice in the Qur-ān, viz.; here and in xxi. 85, where he is mentioned among those who patiently persevered. His identification with the Biblical Enoch, who “walked with God” (Gen. v. 21-24), may or may not be correct. Nor are we justified in interpreting verse 57 here as meaning the same thing as in Gen. v. 24 (“God took him”), that he was taken up without passing through the portals of death. All we are told is that he was a man of truth and sincerity, and a prophet, and that he had a high position among his people. It is this point which brings him in the series of men just mentioned; he kept himself in touch with his people, and was honoured among them. Spiritual progress need not cut us off from our people, for we have to help and guide them. He kept to truth and piety in the highest station.
59. But after them there followed
A posterity who missed
Prayers and followed after lusts
Soon, then, will they
Face Destruction, -2\textsuperscript{511}

60. Except those who repent
And believe, and work
Righteousness: for these
Will enter the Garden
And will not be wronged
In the least,-

61. Gardens of Eternity, those
Which (Allah) Most Gracious
Has promised to His servants
In the Unseen: for His promise
Must (necessarily) come to pass.

2509. The earlier generations are grouped into three epochs from a religious point of view: (1) from Adam to Noah, (2) from Noah to Abraham, and (3) from Abraham to an indefinite time, say to the time when the Message of Allah was corrupted and the need arose for the final Messenger of Unity and Truth. Israel is another name for Jacob.

2510 The original is in the Aorist tense, implying that the “Posterity” alluded to includes not only the messengers but their worthy followers who are true to Allah and uphold His standard.

2511. This selfish godless posterity gains the upper hand at certain times, but even then there is always a minority who see the error of their ways, repent and believe, and live righteous lives. They are not penalised in the Hereafter because they were associated with the ungodly in time. They reap the full reward of their faith and righteousness.
62. They will not there hear
Any vain discourse, but
Only salutations of Peace:2512
And they will have therein
Their sustenance,2513 morning
And evening.

63. Such is the Garden which
We give as an inheritance
To those of Our Servants
Who guard against evil.

64. (The angels say:)2514
"We descend not but
By command of thy Lord:
To Him belongeth what is
Before us and what is
Behind us, and what is
Between: and thy Lord
Never doth forget,-

65. Lord of the heavens
And of the earth,
And of all that is
Between them: so worship Him,

2512. Salām, translated “Peace”, has a much wide signification. It includes (1) a sense
of security and permanence, which is unknown in this life; (2) soundness, freedom from
defects, perfection as in the word salīm; (3) preservation, salvation, deliverance, as in the
word sallama; (4) salutation, accord with those around us; (5) resignation, in the sense that
we are satisfied and not discontented; besides (6) the ordinary meaning of Peace, i.e.,
freedom from any jarring element. All these shades of meaning are implied in the word
Islām.

2513. Rizq: literally sustenance or means of subsistence, the term covers all the
means of perfect satisfaction of body and soul. Morning and evening, i.e., early and late,
all the time, always.

2514. We are apt to be impatient of the evils we see around us. We may give of
our best service to Allah, and yet see no results. In our human short-sightedness we may
complain within ourselves. But we must not be impatient. The angels of Grace come not
haphazard, but by command of Allah according to His Universal Will and Purpose. Allah
does not forget. If things are delayed, it is in accordance with a wise providence, which
cares for all. Our plain duty is to be patient and constant in His service.
And be constant and patient
In His worship: knowest thou
Of any who is worthy
Of the same Name as He?²⁵¹⁵

SECTION 5.

66. Man says: "What!
When I am dead, shall I
Then be raised up alive?"

67. But does not man
Call to mind that We
Created him before
Out of nothing?

68. So, by thy Lord,
Without doubt, We shall gather
Them together, and (also)
Satans (with them),²⁵¹⁶
Then shall We bring them
Forth on their knees
Round about Hell;²⁵¹⁷

69. Then shall We certainly
Drag out from every sect

²⁵¹⁵ The more we taste of the truth and mystery of life, the more do we realise that there is no one to be mentioned in the same breath as Allah. He is above all names. But when we think of His beautiful qualities, and picture them to ourselves by names which give us some idea of Him, we can search the whole wide world of our imagination, and we shall not find another to be compared with Him in name or quality. He is the One: praise be to Him!

²⁵¹⁶ The disbelief in a future life is not merely a philosophic doubt, but a warped will, a disingenuous obstinacy in face of our inner spiritual instincts and experiences. We were nothing before. Cannot the same Allah, Who created us out of nothing also continue our personality? But if we refuse to accept His light and guidance, our state will grow worse and worse. We shall be deprived of His grace. We shall be herded with satans. In utter humiliation we shall be faced with all the consequences of our refusal of Truth.

²⁵¹⁷ Round about Hell: There are many ways leading to evil, and people get to it from all round. Hence the mention of the seven Gates to Hell: see xv. 44. and n. 1977.
All those who were worst
In obstinate rebellion
Against (Allah) Most Gracious.

70. And certainly We know best
Those who are most worthy
Of being burned therein.

71. Not one of you but will pass over it: this is,
With thy Lord, a Decree
Which must be accomplished.

72. But We shall save those
Who guarded against evil,
And We shall leave
The wrong-doers therein,
(Humbled) to their knees.

73. When Our Clear Signs
Are rehearsed to them,
The Unbelievers say to those
Who believe, “Which of the two Sides is best in point of Position and fairer in assembly?”

74. But how many (countless) Generations before them Have We destroyed, Who were even better In equipment and in glitter To the eye?

2518. Three interpretations are possible, (1) The general interpretation is that every person must pass through or by or over the Fire. Those who have had Taqwa (see. n. 26 to ii. 2) will be saved by Allah’s Mercy, while unrepentant sinners will suffer the torments in ignominy, (2) If we refer the pronoun “you” to those “in obstinate rebellion” in verse 69 above, both leaders and followers in sin, this verse only applies to the wicked, (3) Some refer this verse to the Bridge over Hell, the Bridge Sīrāt, over which all must pass to their final Destiny. This Bridge is not mentioned in the Qurān.

2519. The Unbelievers may, for a time, make a better show in worldly position, or in people’s assemblages where things are judged by the counting of heads. But Truth must prevail even in this world, and ultimately the positions must be reversed.
2520. Allah's warning is that every evil deed must have its punishment, and that there will be a Hereafter, the Day of Judgment, or the Hour, as it is frequently called. The punishment of evil often begins in this very life. For instance, over-indulgence and excesses of all kinds bring on their Nemesis quite soon in this very life. But some subtler forms of selfishness and sin will be punished—as every evil will be punished—in its own good time, as the Hour approaches. In either case, the arrogant boasting sinners will realise that their taunt—who is best in position and in forces? (xix. 73)—is turned against themselves.

2521. These lines are the same as xviii. 46 (second clause), (where see n. 2387), except that the word maradd (eventual returns) is here substituted for amal (hope). The meaning is practically the same: but “hope” is more appropriate in the passage dealing generally with this world’s goods, and “eventual returns” in the passage dealing with the sinner’s specific investments and commitments in worldly position and organised cliques.
78. Has he penetrated to The Unseen, or has he Taken a promise with The Most Gracious?

79. Nay! We shall record What he says, and We Shall add and add To his punishment.  

80. To Us shall return All that he talks of, And he shall appear Before Us bare and alone.

81. And they have taken (For worship) gods other than Allah, to give them Power and glory!

82. Instead, they shall reject Their worship, and become Adversaries against them.

2522. Besides the man who boasts of wealth and power in actual possession, there is a type of man who boasts of getting them in the future and builds his worldly hopes thereon. Is he sure? He denies Allah, and His goodness and Mercy. But all good is in the hands of Allah. Can such a man then bind Allah to bless him when he rejects faith in Allah? Or does he pretend that he has penetrated to the mysteries of the future? For no man can tell what the future holds for him.

2523. Such a man deserves double punishment—for rejecting Allah, and for his blasphemies with His holy name.

2524. Literally, “We shall inherit”, Cf. xix. 40 and n. 2492. Even if the man had property and power, it must go back to the Source of all things, and the man must appear before the Judgment-seat, alone and unaccompanied, stripped of all the things from which he expected so much!

2525. ‘Izz=exalted rank, glory, power, might, the ability to impose one’s will or to carry out one’s will.

2526. Cf. x. 28-30, where the idols deny that they knew anything of their worship, and leave their worshippers in the lurch; and v. 119, where Jesus denies that he asked for worship, and leaves his false worshippers to the punishment of Allah.
SECTION 6.

83. Seest thou not that We Have set Satans on Against the Unbelievers, To incite them with fury?  

84. So make no haste Against them, for We But count out to them A (limited) number (of days).

85. The day We shall gather The righteous to (Allah) Most Gracious, like a band (Presented before a king for honours.)

86. And We shall drive The sinners to hell, (Like thirsty cattle Driven down to water,-) 

87. None shall have the power Of intercession, but such a one As has received permission (or promise) From (Allah) Most Gracious.

88. They say: “The Most Gracious Has betaken a son!”

2527. Under the laws instituted by Allah, when evil reaches a certain stage of rebellion and defiance, it is left to gather momentum and to rush with fury to its own destruction. It is given a certain amount of respite, as a last chance: but failing repentance, its days are numbered. The godly therefore should not worry themselves over the apparent worldly success of evil, but should get on with their own duties in a spirit of trust in Allah.

2528. Note the contrast between the saved and the doomed. The one march with dignity like honoured ones before a king, and the other rush in anguish to their punishment like a herd of cattle driven down by thirst to their watering place. Note the metaphor of the water. They rush madly for water but are plunged into the Fire!
89. Indeed ye have put forth
A thing most monstrous!\(^{2529}\)

90. At it the skies are about
To burst, the earth
To split asunder, and
The mountains to fall down
In utter ruin,

91. That they attributed
A son to The Most Gracious.

92. For it is not consonant
With the majesty of The Most Gracious that He
Should beget a son.\(^{2530}\)

93. Not one of the beings
In the heavens and the earth
But must come to The Most Gracious as a servant.

94. He does take an account
Of them (all), and hath
Numbered them (all) exactly.\(^{2531}\)

2529. The belief in Allah begetting a son is not a question merely of words or of speculative thought. It is a stupendous blasphemy against Allah. It lowers Allah to the level of an animal. If combined with the doctrine of vicarious atonement, it amounts to a negation of Allah’s justice and man’s personal responsibility. It is destructive of all moral and spiritual order, and is condemned in the strongest possible terms.

2530. This basic principle was laid down early in the argument (xix. 35). It was illustrated by a reference to the personal history of many messengers, including Jesus himself, who behaved justly as men to their kith and kin and humbly served Allah. The evil results of such superstitions were pointed out in the case of many previous generations which went to their ruin by dishonouring Allah. And the argument is now rounded off towards the close of the Sura.

2531. Allah has no sons or favourites or parasites, such as we associate with human beings. On the other hand every creature of His gets His love, and His cherishing care. Everyone of them, however humble, is individually marked before His Throne of Justice and Mercy, and will stand before Him on his own deserts.
95. And everyone of them
Will come to Him singly
On the Day of Judgment.

96. On those who believe
And work deeds of righteousness,
Will The Most Gracious
Bestow Love. 2532

97. So have We made
The (Qur-an) easy
In thine own tongue,
That with it thou mayest give
Glad tidings to the righteous,
And warnings to people
Given to contention.

98. But how many (countless)
Generations before them 2533
Have We destroyed? Canst thou
Find a single one of them
(Now) or hear (so much
As) a whisper of them?

2532. His own love, and the love of man's fellow-creatures, in this world and in the
Hereafter. Goodness breeds love and peace, and sin breeds hatred and contention.

2533. Cf. xix. 74, from which this sentence is brought up as a reminiscence, showing
the progress of sin, the Guidance which Allah gives to the good, the degradation of
blasphemy, the respite granted, and the final End, when personal responsibility will be
enforced.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ṭā Ḥā, 20.

The chronology of this Sūra has some significance: it has some relation to the religious lessons which it teaches.

It was used with great effect in that remarkable scene which resulted in Ḥadhrat ‘Umar’s conversion, and which took place about the seventh year before the Hijrat.

The scene is described with dramatic details by Ibn Hishām, ‘Umar had previously been one of the greatest enemies and persecutors of Islam. Like his blood-thirsty kinsmen the Quraysh, he meditated slaying the Prophet, when it was suggested to him that there were near relations of his that had embraced Islam. His sister Fāṭima and her husband Sa‘ād were Muslims, but in those days of persecution they had kept their faith secret. When ‘Umar went to their house, he heard them reciting this Sūra from a written copy they had. For a while they concealed the copy. ‘Umar attacked his sister and her husband, but they bore the attack with exemplary patience, and declared their faith. ‘Umar was so struck with their sincerity and fortitude that he asked to see the leaf from which they had been reading. It was given to him: his soul was touched, and he not only came into the Faith but became one of its strongest supporters and champions.

The leaf contained some portion of this Sūra, perhaps the introductory portion. The letters Ṭā Ḥā are prefixed to this Sūra. What do they mean? The earliest tradition is that they denote a dialectical interjection meaning “O man!”. It takes up the story from the last Sūra, of man as a religious being and illustrates it in further details. It tells the story of Moses in the crisis of his life when he received Allah’s Commission and in his personal relations with his mother, and how he came to be brought up in the Pharaoh’s house, to learn all the wisdom of the Egyptians, for use in Allah’s service, and in his personal relations with Pharaoh, whom we take to be his adoptive father (xxviii. 9). It further tells the story of a fallen soul who misled the Israelites into idolatry, and recalls how man’s Arch-enemy Satan caused his fall. Prayer and praise are necessary to man to cure his spiritual blindness and enable him to appreciate Allah’s revelation.

Summary.—The revelation of Allah (the Qur-ān) is not an occasion of distress, but is a gift of mercy from Allah Most Gracious (xx. 1-8)

How Moses was first chosen, and led to his mission to Pharaoh with his brother Aaron (xx. 9-36).
How the mother of Moses was directed to cast the infant Moses into the river, to be brought up in Pharaoh's house under Allah's own supervision, in order to preach to Pharaoh and declare Allah's glory (xx. 37-76).

How Moses was directed to lead his people and quell their rebellious spirit, and how that spirit was stirred up by Sāmīrī (xx. 77-104).

On the Day of Judgment personal responsibility will be enforced, and Allah's Truth acknowledged: man should guard against Adam's enemy, Satan, and should renounce vanities, purify himself with prayer and praise, and await the call to Allah (xx. 105-135).
1. Ta-Ha.  

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

2. We have not sent down The Qur-an to thee to be (An occasion) for thy distress,

3. But only as an admonition To those who fear (Allah),

4. A revelation from Him Who created the earth And the heavens on high.

5. The Most Gracious Is firmly established On the throne.

6. To Him belongs what is In the heavens and on earth, And all between them, And all beneath the soil.

7. If thou pronounce the word Aloud, (it is no matter):

2534. For an explanation see the Introduction to this Sura.

2535. Allah’s revelation may cause some human trouble for two reasons: (1) it checks man’s selfishness and narrowness of view, and (2) it annoys the wicked and causes them to jeer and persecute. These are mere incidental things, due to man’s own shortcomings. As far as the trouble is concerned, the revelation is meant to give a warning, so that persecutors may be reclaimed, (and of course for men of faith it is comfort and consolation, though that point does not arise in this context).

2536. Cf. x. 3. n. 1386. If things seem to be wrong in our imperfect vision on this earth, we must remember Allah, Who encompasses all Creation and sits on the throne of Grace and Mercy, is in command, and our Faith tells us that all must be right. Allah’s authority is not like an authority on earth, which may be questioned, or which may not last. His authority is “firmly established”.

2537. An exhaustive definition of everything we can conceive of—what is in the heavens, on the earth, or between, or within the bowels of the earth.
For verily He knoweth
What is secret and what
Is yet more hidden.\[2538\]

8. Allah! there is no god
But He! To Him belong
The Most Beautiful Names.\[2539\]

9. Was the story of Moses\[2540\]
Reached thee?

10. Behold, he saw a fire:\[2541\]
So he said to his family,
"Tarry ye; I perceive
A fire; perhaps I can
Bring you some burning brand

\[\text{2538. There are two or three implications. (1) Whatever you profess, or say aloud, gives no information to Allah: He knows not only what is secret and perhaps unknown to others, but what people take special care to conceal. (2) It does you no good to make insincere professions: your hidden motives are known to Him, Who alone matters. (3) If you read the Word of Allah, or if you pray to Allah, it is not necessary to raise your voice: in either case, Allah will judge you by your inner thoughts which are like an open book to Him.}\]

\[\text{2539. Cf. xvii. 110 and n. 2322. Allah is The One and the most beautiful things we can think of are referable to Him. His names refer to His attributes which are like titles of Honour and Glory.}\]

\[\text{2540. The story of Moses in its different incidents is told in many places in the Qur-an, and in each case the phase most appropriate in the context is referred to or emphasised. In ii. 49-61, it was a phase from the religious history of mankind; in vii. 103-162, it was a phase from the story of the Ummat (or nation) of Israel, and the story was continued to the times after Moses, in xvii. 101-103, we have a picture of the decline of a soul in the arrogance of Pharaoh; here, in xx. 9-24, we have a picture of the rise of a soul in the commission given to Moses from Allah; in xx. 25-36, we have his spiritual relationship with his brother Aaron; in xx. 37-40, we have his spiritual relation with his mother and sister, and his upbringing; in xx. 41-76, we have his spiritual combat with Pharaoh; and in xx. 77-98, we have his spiritual combat with his own people, the Israelites. For other incidents, consult the Index.}\]

\[\text{2541. A fire: It appeared like an ordinary fire, which always betokens the presence of men in a desert or a lonely place. Moses made for it alone, to fetch the wherewithal for making a fire for his family, and perhaps to find some direction as to the way, from the people he should meet there. But it was not an ordinary fire. It was a Burning Bush: a Sign of the Glory of Allah.}\]
11. But when he came
   To the fire, He was
   Called "O Moses!"

12. "Verily I am thy Lord!
   Therefore
   Put off thy shoes: thou art
   In the sacred valley Ṭuwā. 

13. "I have chosen thee:
   Listen, then to the inspiration
   (Given to thee).

14. "Verily, I am Allah:
   There is no god but I:
   So serve thou Me (only),
   And establish regular prayer
   For My remembrance.

15. "Verily the Hour is coming—
   I have almost kept it
   Hidden— for every soul

2542. The spiritual history of Moses begins here. It was the beginning of his mission. His physical life, infancy, and upbringing are referred to later on, to illustrate another point. Moses, when he grew up, left the palace of Pharaoh and went to the Midianite people, in the Sinai peninsula. He married among them, and was now travelling with his family, when he was called to his mission by Allah. He went to look for a fire for comfort and guidance. He found a higher and holier comfort and guidance. The whole passage is full of portent meaning, which is reflected in the short rhymed verses in the original.

2543. The shoes are to be put off as a mark of respect. Moses was now to put away his mere worldly interests, he having been chosen by Allah, the Most High.

2544. This was the valley just below Mount Sinai, where subsequently he was to receive the Torah.

2545. The first need is to mend our lives and worship and serve Allah, as in the last verse. The next is to realise the meaning of the Hereafter, when every soul will get the meed of its conduct in this life.

2546. *Ukhf* may mean either "keep it hidden", or "make it manifest", and the Commentators have taken, some one meaning and some the other. If the first is taken, it means that the exact hour or day when the Judgment comes is hidden from man; if =
To receive its reward
By the measure of
Its Endeavour.

16. "Therefore let not such as
Believe not therein
But follow their own
Lusts, divert thee therefrom, 2547
Lest thou perish!"

17. "And what is that
In thy right hand,
O Moses?"

18. He said, "It is 2548
My rod: on it
I lean; with it
I beat down fodder
For my flocks; and
In it I find
Other uses."

19. (Allah) said, "Throw it,
O Moses!"

20. He threw it, and behold!
It was a snake,
Active in motion. 2549

= the second, it means that the fact of the Judgment to come is made known, that man may remember and take warning. I think that both meanings are implied.

2547. Moses had yet to meet the formidable opposition of the arrogant, Pharaoh and his proud Egyptians, and latter, the rebellion of his own people. In receiving his commission, he is warned of both dangers. This relates to man’s own soul: when once the light reaches him, let him hold fast to it lest he perish. He will be beset with dangers of all kinds around him; the worst will be the danger of unbelieving people who seem to thrive on their selfishness and in following their own vain desires!

2548. Now comes the miracle of the rod. First of all, the attention of Moses himself is drawn to it, and he thinks of the ordinary uses to which he puts it in his daily life.

2549. Cf. vii. 107, where a different word (thu’bân) is used for “snake”, and the qualifying adjective is “plain (for all to see)”. The scene there is before Pharaoh and his magicians and people: the object is to show the hollowness of their magic by a miracle: the rod appears before them as a long and creeping writhing serpent. Here there is a =

2547. فَلا يَصْدَّكُ وَأَتْبِعِ هُوَاتِهُ فَتَرْدَهُ
2548. وَمَاذَا فِي يَدُكُّ يَا مُوسَى
2549. فَأَلْقِهَا إِلَيْهِ كَيْنَةَ فَرَجَاً
21. (Allah) said, “Seize it, And fear not: We Shall return it at once To its former condition”...

22. “Now draw thy hand\textsuperscript{2550} Close to thy side: It shall come forth white (And shining), without harm (Or stain),—as another Sign,—

23. “In order that We May show thee Of our Greater Signs.

24. “Go thou to Pharaoh,\textsuperscript{2551} For he has indeed Transgressed all bounds.”

SECTION 2.

25. (Moses) said: “O my Lord! Expand me my breast;\textsuperscript{2552}

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\begin{itemize}
\item sign to present Allah’s power to Moses’s mind and understanding: the rod becomes a Hait (a live snake), and its active motion is what is most to be impressed on the mind of Moses, for there were no other spectators.

\textsuperscript{2550} The second of the greater Miracles shown to Moses was the “White (shining) Hand”. Ordinarily, when the skin becomes white, it is a sign of disease, leprosy or something loathsome. Here there was no question of disease: on the contrary, the hand was glorified, and it shone as with a divine light. Such a miracle was beyond Egyptian or human magic.

\textsuperscript{2551} Moses, having been spiritually prepared now gets his definite commission to go to Pharaoh and point out the error of his ways. So inordinate was Pharaoh’s vanity that he had it in his mind to say: “I am your Lord Most High!” (lxxix. 24).

\textsuperscript{2552} The breast is reputed to be the seat of knowledge and affections. The gift of the highest spiritual insight is what he prays for first. Cf. xciv. 1. This was the most urgent in point of time. There are three other things he also asks for: viz. (1) Allah’s help in his task, which at first appears difficult to him, (2) the gift of eloquence, and the removal of the impediment from his speech; and (3) the counsel and constant attendance with him of his brother Aaron, whom he loved and trusted, for he would otherwise be alone among the Egyptians.
26. "Ease my task for me;
27. "And remove the impediment\textsuperscript{2553} From my speech,
28. "So they may understand What I say:
29. "And give me a Minister From my family,
30. "Aaron, my brother;
31. "Add to my strength\textsuperscript{2554} Through him.
32. "And make him share My task:
33. "That we may celebrate\textsuperscript{2555} Thy praise without stint,
34. "And remember Thee Without stint:
35. "For Thou art ever seeing\textsuperscript{2556}
36. (Allah) said: "Granted Is thy prayer, O Moses!"
37. "And indeed We conferred A favour on thee Another time (before).

\textsuperscript{2553} Literally, "Loosen a knot from my tongue".

\textsuperscript{2554} Literally, "Strengthen my back with him". A man's strength lies in his back and backbone so that he can stand erect and boldly face his tasks.

\textsuperscript{2555} The requests that Moses makes are inspired, not by earthly but by spiritual motives. The motive, expressed in the most general terms, is to glorify Allah, not in an occasional way, but systematically and continuously, "without stint". "The clauses in this verse and the next, taken together, govern all the requests he makes, from verse 25 to verse 32.

\textsuperscript{2556} The celebration of Allah's praise and remembrance is one form of showing gratitude on the part of Moses for the Grace which Allah has bestowed upon him.
2557. The story is not told, but only those salient points recapitulated which bear on the upbringing and work of Moses. Long after the age of Joseph, who had been a Wazir to one of the Pharaohs, there came on the throne of Egypt a Pharaoh who hated the Israelites and wanted them annihilated. He ordered Israelite male children to be killed when they were born. Moses's mother hid him for a time, but when further concealment was impossible, a thought came into her mind that she should put her child into a chest and send the chest floating down the Nile. This was not merely a foolish fancy of hers. It was Allah's Plan to bring up Moses in all the learning of the Egyptians, in order that that learning itself should be used to expose what was wrong in it and to advance the glory of Allah. The chest was floated into the river Nile. It flowed on into a stream that passed through Pharaoh's Garden. It was picked up by Pharaoh's people and the child was adopted by Pharaoh's wife. See xxviii. 4-13.

2558. Pharaoh was an enemy to Allah, because he was puffed up and he blasphemed, claiming to be God himself. He was an enemy to the child Moses, because he hated the Israelites and wanted to have their male children killed; also because Moses stood for Allah's revelation to come.

2559. Allah made the child comely and lovable, and he attracted the love of the very people who, on general grounds, would have killed him.

2560. See n. 2558 above. By making the child Moses so attractive as to be adopted into Pharaoh's household, not only was Moses brought up in the best way possible from an earthly point of view, but Allah's special Providence looked after him in bringing his mother to him, as stated in the next verse, and thus nourishing him on his mother's milk and keeping him in touch with his family.
2561. We may suppose that the anxious mother, after the child was floated on the water, sent the child's sister to follow the chest from the bank and see where and by whom it was picked up. When it was picked up by Pharaoh's own family and they seemed to love the child, she appeared like a stranger before them, and said, "Shall I search out a good wet-nurse for the child, that she may rear the child you are going to adopt?" That was exactly what they wanted. She ran home and told her mother. The mother was delighted to come and fold the infant in her arms again and feed it at her own breast, and all openly and without any concealment.

2562. The mother's eyes had, we may imagine, been sore with scalding tears at the separation from her baby. Now they were cooled: a phrase meaning that her heart was comforted.

2563. Years passed. The child grew up. In outward learning he was of the house of Pharaoh. In his inner soul and sympathy he was of Israel. One day, he went to the Israelite colony and saw all the Egyptian oppression under which Israel laboured. He saw an Egyptian smiting an Israelite, apparently with impunity. Moses felt brotherly sympathy and smote the Egyptian. He did not intend to kill him, but in fact the Egyptian died of the blow. When this became known, his position in Pharaoh's household became impossible. So he fled out of Egypt, and was only saved by Allah's grace. He fled to the Sinai Peninsula, to the land of the Midianites, and had various adventures. He married one of the daughters of the Midianite chief, and lived with the Midianites for many years, as an Egyptian stranger. He had many trials and temptations, but he retained his integrity of character.
5.20. A.40-43

A of years
With the people of Midian.\textsuperscript{2564}
Then didst thou come hither
As ordained, O Moses!

41. “And I have prepared thee
For Myself (for service)”...

42. Go, thou and thy brother,\textsuperscript{2565}
With My signs,
And slacken not,
Either of you, in keeping
Me in remembrance.

43. “Go, both of you, to Pharaoh,\textsuperscript{2566}
For he has indeed
Transgressed all bounds;\textsuperscript{2567}

\textsuperscript{2564} See last note. After many years spent in a quiet life, grazing his father-in-law’s flocks, he came one day to the valley of Tuwā underneath the great mountain mass of Sinai, called Ṭūr (in Arabic). The peak on the Arabian side (where Moses was) was called Horeb by the Hebrews. Then was fulfilled Allah’s Plan: he saw the fire in the distance, and when he went up, he was addressed by Allah and chosen to be Allah’s Messenger for that age.

\textsuperscript{2565} We may suppose that Moses had fled alone to the land of Midian, and that he had now come alone (with his family but not with his brother) to Tuwā, as described in n. 2542 above. When he was honoured with his mission, and was granted his request that his brother Aaron should accompany him, we may suppose that he took steps to get Aaron to come to him, and their meeting was in Tuwā. Some time may be supposed to have elapsed before they were in Egypt, and then they prayed, and received these directions in their Egyptian home.

Aaron was either an elder or a younger brother,—we are not told which. In either case he was born when the ban on Israelite new-born babes was not in operation. Moses had been out of touch with him, and it speaks greatly for his family affection that he remembered him and prayed for his comradeship in the most serious spiritual work of his life.

\textsuperscript{2566} Their mission was in the first instance to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians, and then to lead Israel out of Egypt.

\textsuperscript{2567} Compare the same phrase in xx. 24. Having glanced at the early life of Moses we come back now to the time when Moses’s actual ministry begins. The earlier personal story of Moses is rounded off.
44. “But speak to him mildly;  
Perchance he may take  
Warning or fear (Allah).”

45. They (Moses and Aaron) said:  
“Our Lord! We fear lest  
He hasten with insolence  
Against us, or lest he  
Transgress all bounds.”

46. He said: “Fear not:  
For I am with you:  
I hear and see (everything).

47. “So go ye both to him,  
And say, ‘Verily we are  
Messengers sent by thy Lord:  
Send forth, therefore, the Children  
Of Israel with us, and  
Afflict them not:  
With a Sign, indeed,  
Have we come from thy Lord!  
And Peace to all  
Who follow guidance!”

2568. So far Pharaoh in his inordinate vanity had forgotten himself and forgotten how small a creature he was before Allah. This was to be brought to his recollection, so that he might perhaps repent and believe, or at least be deterred by fear from “transgressing all bounds”. Some men eschew wrong from sincere love of Allah and understanding of their fellow-men, and some (of coarser minds) from the fear of consequences. Even the latter conduct may be a step to the former.

2569. They were now in Egypt (see n. 2565 above) and therefore in the power of the Pharaoh. The local atmosphere called for the greatest courage and firmness on their part to carry out the dangerous mission which had been entrusted to them.

2570. The Children of Israel were subjected to all sorts of oppression and indignities. They were given hard tasks; their leaders were unjustly beaten; they were forced to make bricks without straw; and they “groaned in bondage” (Exod. v. 6-19. vi. 5).

2571. Allah, in His infinite Mercy, always offers Peace to the most hardened sinners, even those who are warring against Him. But, as stated in the next verse, their defiance cannot go on with impunity indefinitely. The punishment must inevitably come for sin, whether the sinner is great or small.
48. "Verily it has been revealed 
To us that the Chastisement 
(Awaits) those who reject 
And turn away."

49. (When this message was delivered).
(Pharaoh) said: "Who then, 
O Moses, is the Lord of you two?"

50. He said: "Our Lord 
He Who gave to each 
(Created) thing its form 
Then, 
Gave (it) guidance."

51. (Pharaoh) said: "What then 
Is the condition 
Of previous generations?"

2572. Notice how subtly Pharaoh rejects the implication in Moses’s speech, in which Moses had referred to “thy Lord” (verse 47). Pharaoh implicitly repudiates the suggestion that the God who had sent Moses and Aaron could possibly be Pharaoh’s Lord. He asks insolently, “Who is this Lord of yours, of Whom ye speak as having sent you?”

2573. The answer of Moses is straightforward, dignified, and illuminating. He will not dispute about “my Lord” or “your Lord,” the God of Israel, or the God of Egypt. He and his brother were proud to serve “our Lord,” but He was the universal Lord and Cherisher, the One and Only God, Who had created all beings and all things. It was from Him that each created thing derived its form and nature, including such free-will and power as man had got. He, Pharaoh, was subject to the same condition. In order that the free-will should be rightly exercised, Allah had given guidance through His Messengers, and His Signs. Moses and Aaron stood as such Messengers, with such Signs. Will Pharaoh now understand and do right?

2574. But Pharaoh was not the man to accept teaching from the despised Israelite—one, too, who in his eyes was a renegade from the higher Egyptian civilisation. “If,” he says in effect, “there is only one God, to Whom all things are referred, this is a new religion. What of the religion of our ancestors? Were they wrong in worshipping the Egyptian gods? And if they were wrong, are they in misery now? He wanted to trap Moses into a scathing denunciation of his ancestors, which would at once have deprived him of the sympathy or the hearing of the Egyptian crowd.
52. He replied: "The knowledge of that is with my Lord,\textsuperscript{2575}
Duly recorded: my Lord
Never errs, nor forgets,—

53. "He Who has made for you
The earth like a carpet
Spread out; has enabled you
To go about therein by roads\textsuperscript{2576}
(And channels); and has sent
Down water from the sky."
With it have We produced\textsuperscript{2577}
Diverse pairs of plants\textsuperscript{2578}
Each separate from the others.

54. Eat (for yourselves) and pasture
Your cattle: verily, in this
Are Signs for men
Endued with understanding.

\textsuperscript{2575} Moses did not fall into the trap. He remembered the injunction given to him to speak mildly (xx. 44). He speaks mildly, but does not in any way whittle down the truth. He said in effect: 'Allah's knowledge is perfect, as if, with men, it were a record. For men may make mistakes or may not remember, but Allah never mistakes and never forgets. But Allah is not only All-Knowing: He is also All-Good. Look around you: the whole earth is spread out like a carpet. Men go to and fro in it freely. He sends abundance of water from the skies, which comes down in Nile floods and fertilises the whole soil of Egypt, and feeds men and animals.'

\textsuperscript{2576} Sabil means not only a road, but would include water-roads or channels, and in modern conditions, airways—in fact all means of communication.

\textsuperscript{2577} This seems to be outside the speech of Moses, and connects itself with the following verses 54-56, as part of the Word of Allah, expanding the speech of Moses and explaining the working of Allah's Providence in nature.

\textsuperscript{2578} Azwāj: we might translate here (as in xv. 88) by "classes" instead of "pairs"; but as sex in plants seems to be referred to elsewhere (see xiii. 3, and n. 1804), I translate "pairs".

- 890 -
SECTION 3.

55. From the (earth) did We Create you, and into it Shall We return you, And from it shall We Bring you out once again.  

56. And We showed Pharaoh All Our Signs, but he Did reject and refuse  

57. He said: "Hast thou come To drive us out Of our land with thy magic, O Moses?"  

58. "But we can surely produce Magic to match thine! So make a tryst Between us and thee, Which we shall not fail To keep—neither we nor thou—In a place where both Shall have even chances."  

2579. The verse ought really to go into the last Section.  

2580. This is a sort of general introduction to the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh. The Signs are not only the countering of the fraudulent magic of Egypt with real miracles, but the subsequent Plagues (not mentioned here) and the Crossing of the Red Sea by Israel.  

2581. The Egyptians accused Moses of a design to deprive them of their land, and of exercising black magic. Both charges were palpably false. What Moses wanted to do was to free his people from bondage. The Egyptians had all the power in their possession. As to magic, the Egyptians judged Moses by themselves. They accused the Prophet of Allah of doing the same, though both his outlook and the source of his strength were altogether different.  

2582. Suwan: literally, ‘equal, even’. It has been construed to mean: (1) a place equally distant for both sides, a central place, or (2) equally convenient to both sides, or (3) an open level plain, where the people can collect with ease. All these are possible meanings, but the one I have adopted is more comprehensive, and includes the others, viz.: (4) a place where both sides shall have even chances. “a fair place,” as Palmer loconically translates it.
2583. A great day of a Temple Festival, when the temples and streets were decorated, and people were on holiday, free from work. Moses makes this appointment in order to collect as large a number as possible, for his first duty is to preach the Truth. And he apparently did it with some effect with some Egyptians (xx. 70, 72-76), though the Pharaoh and his high and mighty officers rejected the Truth and afterwards paid the Penalty.

2584. Pharaoh was apparently taken aback at Moses appointing a solemn day of public Festival, when there would be a large concourse and there would be sure to be some people not in the Court clique, who might be critical of Pharaoh’s own sorcerers. But probably there was something more in their dark counsels, something unfair and wicked, to which Moses refers in his speech in the next verse.

2585. Moses had some idea of their trickery and deceit. They would palm off their fraudulent magic as coming from Allah or from their gods! He warns them that their tricks will stand exposed, and their hopes will be defeated.

2586. They knew that they had here to deal with no ordinary man, but a man with powers above what they could conceive of. But evil always thinks evil. Judging Moses and Aaron by their own standards, they thought that these two were also tricksters, with some tricks superior to their own. All they had to do was to stand together, and they must win. I construe xx. 63-64 to be private talk among themselves, followed by their open challenge to Moses in xx. 65.
63. They said: "These two
Are certainly (expert) magicians:
Their object is to drive you
Out from your land
With their magic, and
To do away with your
Most cherished way.  

64. "Therefore concert your plan,
And then assemble
In (serried) ranks:
He wins (all along) to-day
Who gains the upper hand."  

65. They said: "O Moses!
Whether wilt thou
That thou throw (first)
Or that we be the first
To throw?"

66. He said, "Nay, throw ye
First!" Then behold
Their ropes and their rods—
So it seemed to him
On account of their magic—
Began to be in lively motion!

2587. Cf. xx. 104. 'Your most cherished institutions,' i.e., 'your ancestral and time-honoured religion and magic'. Muthāli, feminine of Amthali, most distinguished, honoured, cherished. Tarīqat=way of life, institutions, conduct.

2588. Presumably Pharaoh was in this secret conference, and he promises the most lavish rewards to the magicians if they overcome Moses. See vii. 114. That—but I think more than that—is implied. That day was to be the crisis: if they won then, they would win all along, and Moses and his people would be crushed.

2589. Their bag of tricks was so clever that it imposed upon all beholders. Their ropes and their rods were thrown, and seemed to move about like snakes. So realistic was the effect that even Moses felt the least bit of doubt in his own mind. He of course had no tricks, and he relied entirely on Allah.
67. So Moses conceived
   In his mind
   A (sort of) fear.²⁵⁹⁰

68. We said: “Fear not!
   For thou hast indeed
   The upper hand:
69. “Throw that which is
   In thy right hand:
   Quickly will it swallow up
   That which they have faked:
   What they have faked
   Is but a magician’s trick:
   And the magician
   Succeeds not.”²⁵⁹¹

70. So the magicians were
   Thrown down to prostration:
   They said, “We believe
   In the Lord of Aaron and
   Moses”.²⁵⁹²

71. (Pharaoh) said: “Believe ye
   In Him before I give
   You permission? Surely
   This must be your leader.
   Who has taught you magic?²⁵⁹³

²⁵⁹⁰. The concerted attack of evil is sometimes so well contrived from all points that falsehood appears and is acclaimed as the truth. The believer of truth is isolated, and a sort of moral dizziness creeps over his mind. But by Allah’s grace Faith asserts itself, gives him confidence, and points out the specific truths which will dissipate and destroy the teeming brood of falsehood.

²⁵⁹¹. The meaning may be either (1) that falsehood and trickery may have their day, but they cannot win everywhere, especially in the presence of Truth, or (2) that trickery and magic must come to an evil end.

²⁵⁹². Cf. this passage with vii. 120-126 and the notes thereon.

²⁵⁹³. Pharaoh accuses his sorcerers who have been converted, of having been in league with Moses all the time, and in fact of having been led and taught by him! So arrogance and evil cannot conceive of Allah’s worlds and worlds of beauty and truth beyond its own narrow vision! It is truly blind and its very cleverness deludes it to wander far from the truth.
Be sure I will cut off
Your hands and feet
On opposite sides, and I
Will have you crucified
On trunks of palm-trees:
So shall ye know for certain,
Which of us can give
The more severe and the more
Lasting Punishment!"

72. They said: “Never shall we
Prefer thee to what has
Come to us of
The Clear Signs2594
Him Who created us!
So decree whatever thou
Desirest to decree: for thou
Canst only decree (touching)
The life of this world.2595

73. “For us, we have believed
In our Lord: may He
Forgive us our faults,
And the magic to which
Thou didst compus us:2596

2594. Clear Signs: the miracles, the personality of the Messengers of Allah, the logic of events as they unfolded themselves, and the light of inner conviction in their own conscience. There are in addition the Signs and Proofs of Allah in nature, which are referred to in many places, e.g., xx. 53-54.

2595. Thus was the first part of the mission of Moses—that to the Egyptians—fulfilled. See n. 1083 to vii. 126.

2596. The magic mummery, and deceptions which pertained to Egyptian Pagan religion became a creed, a State article of faith, to which all citizens were compelled to bow, and which its priests were compelled actively to practise. And Pharaoh was at the head of the whole system—the high priest or the supreme god. With justice, therefore, do the converted magicians lay the blame on Pharaoh, effectively negating Pharaoh’s disingenuous charge that they had been in league with Moses.

These falsehoods and deceptions—combined in many cases with horrid cruelties, open and secret,—were common to many Pagan systems. Some of them have been investigated in detail in Sir John G. Frazer’ Golden Bough.
For Allah is Best
And Most Abiding.”

74. Verily he who comes⁵⁹⁷
To his Lord as a sinner
(At Judgment),—for him
Is Hell: therein shall he
Neither die nor live.

75. But such as come
To Him as Believers
Who have worked righteous
deeds,—
For them are ranks exalted,—

76. Gardens of Eternity,
Beneath which flow rivers:
They will dwell therein
For aye: such is the reward
Of those who purify
Themselves (from evil).⁵⁹⁸

SECTION 4.

77. We sent an inspiration⁵⁹⁹
To Moses: “Travel by night
With My servants, and strike
A dry path for them

2597. The verses xx. 74-76 are best construed as comments on the story of the converted Egyptians who had “purified themselves (from evil)”. But some construe them as a continuation of their speech.

2598. As the Egyptian magicians had done when they confessed the One True God.

2599. Time passes, and at last Moses is commanded to leave Egypt with his people by night. They were to cross the Red Sea into the Sinai Peninsula. They were told to have no fear of Pharaoh or of the sea or of the unknown desert country of Sinai into which they were going. They crossed dry-shod, while Pharaoh who came in pursuit with his troops was overwhelmed by the sea. He and his men all perished. There is no emphasis on this episode here. But the emphasis is laid on the hard task which Moses had with his own people after he had delivered them from the Egyptian bondage.
2600. It is the duty of kings and leaders to give the right lead of their people. Instead of that, the evil ones among them lead them astray and are the cause of the whole of the people perishing.

2601. Right side: Cf. xix. 52, and n. 2504, towards the end. The Arabian side of Sinai (Jabal Mūsā) was the place where Moses first received his commission before going to Egypt, and also where he received the Torah after the Exodus from Egypt.

2602. Cf. ii. 57 and n. 71; and vii. 160. I should like to construe this not only literally but also metaphorically. ‘Allah has looked after you and saved you. He has given you ethical and spiritual guidance. Enjoy the fruits of all this, but do not become puffed up and rebellious (another meaning in the root ṭaqā); otherwise the Wrath of Allah is sure to descend on you.’
This gives the key-note to Moses's constant tussle with his own people, and introduces immediately afterwards the incident of the golden calf. This was when Moses was up on the Mount for forty days and forty nights: ii. 51, and n. 66. Moses had left the elders of Israel with Aaron behind him: Exod. xxiv. 14. While he was in a state of ecstatic honour on the Mount, his people were enacting strange scenes down below. They were tested and tried, and they failed in the trial. They made a golden calf for worship, as described below. See also vii. 148-150 and notes.

Who was this Samiri? If it was his personal name, it was sufficiently near the meaning of the original root-word to have the definite article attached to it: Cf. the name of the Khalifa Mu'tasim (Al-Mu'tasim). What was the root for “Samiri”? If we look to old Egyptian, we have Shemer=A stranger, foreigner (Sir E.A. Wallis Budge's Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary, 1920, p. 815 b). As the Israelites had just left Egypt, they might quite well have among them an Egyptianised Hebrew bearing that nickname. That the =
86. So Moses returned to his people
In a state of anger
And sorrow. He said:
"O my people! did not
Your Lord make a handsome promise to you? Did then
The promise seem to you
Long (in coming)? Or did ye Desire that Wrath should Descend from your Lord on you,
And so ye broke your promise To me?"

87. They said: "We broke not
The promise to thee, as far
As lay in our power:
But we were made to carry
The weight of the ornaments

= name Shemer was subsequently not unknown among the Hebrews is clear from the Old Testament. In I Kings, xvi. 21 we read that Omri, king of Israel, the northern portion of the divided kingdom, who reigned about 903-896 B.C., built a new city, Samaria, on a hill which he bought from Shemer, the owner of the hill, for two talents of silver. See also Renan: History of Israel, ii. 210. For a further discussion of the word, see n. 2608 below.

2606. There are two promises referred to in this verse, the promise of Allah and the promise of the people of Israel. They form one Convenant, which was entered into through their leader Moses. See xx. 80, and ii. 63, n. 78. Allah’s promise was to protect them and lead them to the Promised Land, and their promise was to obey Allah’s Law and His commandments.

2607. Cf. Exod. xii. 35-36: the Israelites, before they left Egypt, borrowed from the Egyptians “jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment”; and “they spoiled the Egyptians” i.e., stripped them of all their valuable jewellery. Note that the answer of the backsliders is disingenuous in various ways. (1) The Sāmiri was no doubt responsible for suggesting the making of the golden calf, but they could not on that account disclaim responsibility for themselves: the burden of the sin is on him who commits it, and he cannot pretend that he was powerless to avoid it. (2) At most the weight of the gold they carried could not have been heavy even if one or two men carried it, but would have been negligible if distributed. (3) Gold is valuable, and it is not likely that if they wanted to disburden themselves of it, they had any need to light a furnace, melt it, and cast it into the shape of a calf.
Of the (whole) people, and we
Threw them (into the fire),
And that was what
The Sāmirī suggested.2608

88. “Then he brought out
(Of the fire) before the (people)
The image of a calf;2609
It seemed to loə."2610
So they said: ‘This is
Your god, and the god
Of Moses, but (Moses)
Has forgotten!’”2611

89. Could they not see that
It could not return them
A word (for answer), and that
It had no power either
To harm them or
To do them good?2612

2608. See n. 2605 about the Sāmirī. If the Egyptian origin of the root is not accepted
we have a Hebrew origin in “Shomer” a guard, watchman, sentinel. The Sāmirī may have
been a watchman, in fact or by nickname.

2609. See. n. 1113 to vii. 148, where the same words are used and explained.

2610. See n. 1114 to vii. 148.

2611. Moses has forgotten: i.e., ‘forgotten both us and his god. He has been gone
for so many days. He is searching for a god on the Mount when his god is really here!’
This is spoken by the Sāmirī and his partisans, but the people as a whole accepted it,
and it therefore, becomes their speech.

2612. This is a parenthetical comment. How blind the people were! They had seen
Signs of the true living God, and yet they were willing to worship this dead image! The
true living God had spoken in definite words of command, while this calf could only emit
some sounds of lowing, which were themselves contrived by the fraud of the priests. This
image could do neither good nor harm, while Allah was the Cherisher and Sustainer of
the Universe, Whose Mercy was unbounded and Whose Wrath was terrible.
SECTION 5.

90. Aaron had already, before this
Said to them: “O my people!
Ye are being tested in this.”2613
For verily your Lord is (Allah)
Most Gracious: so follow me
And obey my command.”2614

91. They had said:2615 “We will not
Cease to worship it,
Will devote ourselves to it
Until Moses returns to us.”2616

92. (Moses) said: “O Aaron!
What kept thee back, when
Thou sawest them going wrong.

93. “From following me? Didst thou
Then disobey my order?”2617

94. (Aaron) replied: “O son
Of my mother! Seize (me) not
By my beard nor by
(The hair of) my head!2618

2613. “Resist this temptation: you are being tested in this. Do not follow after the semi-Egyptian Sâmirî, but obey me.”

2614. The Bible story makes Aaron the culprit, which is inconsistent with his office as the high priest of Allah and the right hand of Moses. See n. 1116 to vii. 150. Our version is more consistent, and explains in the Sâmirî the lingering influences of the Egyptian cult of Osiris the bull-god.

2615. Obviously Aaron’s speech in the last verse, and the rebels’ defiance in this verse, were spoken before the return of Moses from the Mount.

2616. The rebels had so little faith that they had given Moses up for lost, and never expected to see him again.

2617. Moses, when he came back, was full of anger and grief. His speech to Aaron is one of rebuke, and he was also inclined to handle him roughly: see next verse. The order he refers to is that stated in vii. 142, “Act for me amongst my people: do right, and follow not the way of those who do mischief.”

2618. Cf. vii. 150.
Truly I feared lest thou
Shouldst say, 'Thou hast caused
A division among the Children
Of Israel, and thou didst not
Observe my word!'”

95. (Moses) said: “What then
Is thy case, O Sâmiri?”

96. He replied: “I saw what
They saw not: so I took
A handful (of dust) from
The footprint of the Messenger,
And threw it (into the calf):
Thus did my soul suggest
To me.”

2619. This reply of Aaron’s is in no way inconsistent with the reply as noted in vii. 150. On the contrary there is a dramatic aptness in the different points emphasised on each occasion. In S. vii. we were discussing the Ummat of Israel, and Aaron rightly says, “The people did indeed reckon me as naught, and went near to slay me!” In addition, “Let not the enemies rejoice over my misfortune” he is referring by implication to his brother’s wish to maintain unity among the people. Here the unity is the chief point to emphasise: we are dealing with the Sâmiri as mischief-monger, and he could best be dealt with by Moses, who proceeds to do so.

2620. Moses now turns to the Sâmiri, and the Sâmiri’s reply in the next verse sums up his character in a few wonderful strokes of character-painting. The lesson of the whole of this episode is the fall of a human soul that nominally comes to Allah’s Truth in a humble position but makes mischief when and as it finds occasion. It is no less dangerous and culpable than the arrogant soul, typified by Pharaoh, which gets into high places and makes its leadership the cause of ruin of a whole nation.

2621. This answer of the Sâmiri is a fine example of unblushing effrontery, careful evasion of issues, and invented falsehoods. He takes upon himself to pretend that he had far more insight than anybody else: he saw what the crowd did not see. He saw something supernatural. “The Messenger” is construed by many Commentators to mean the angel Gabriel. Rasul (plural, rasul) is used in several places for “angels” e.g., in xi. 69, 77; xix. 19; and xxxv. 1. But if we take it to mean the Messenger Moses, it means that the Sâmiri saw something sacred or supernatural in his footprints: perhaps he thinks a little flattery would make Moses forgive him. The dust became sacred, and his throwing it into the calf made the calf utter a lowing sound! As if that was the point at issue! He does not answer the charge of making an image for worship. But finally, with arrogant effrontery, he says, “Well, that is what my soul suggested to me, and that should be enough!”
97. (Moses) said: “Get thee gone! But thy (punishment) in this life will be that thou wilt say, ‘Touch me not’; and moreover (For a future penalty) thou hast a promise that will not fail. Now look at thy god, of whom thou hast become a devoted worshipper: We will certainly burn it in a blazing fire and scatter it broadcast in the sea!”

98. But the God of you all is Allah: there is no god but He: all things He comprehends in His knowledge.

2622. He and his kind were to become social lepers, untouchables; perhaps also sufficiently arrogant to hold others at arm’s length, and say “Noli me tangere” (touch me not).

2623. Namely, the promised Wrath of Allah: see xx. 81. lxxxix. 25.

2624. The cast effigy was destroyed. Thus ends the Sāmīrī’s story, of which the lessons are indicated in n. 2620 above. It may be interesting to pursue the transformations of the word Sāmīrī in later times. For its origin see notes 2605 and 2608 above. Whether the root of Sāmīrī was originally Egyptian or Hebrew does not affect the later history. Four facts may be noted. (1) There was a man bearing a name of that kind at the time of Moses, and he led a revolt against Moses and was cursed by Moses. (2) In the time of King Omri (903-896 B.C.) of the northern kingdom of Israel, there was a man called Shemer, from whom, according to the Bible, was bought a hill on which was built the new capital of the kingdom, the town of Samaria. (3) The name of the hill was Shomer (= watchman, vigilant guardian), and that form of the name also appears as the name of a man (see II Kings xii. 21); some authorities think the town was called after the hill and not after the man (Hastings’s Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics), but this is for our present purposes immaterial. (4) There was and is a dissenting community of Israelites called Samaritans, who have their own separate Pentateuch and Targum, who claim to be the true Children of Israel, and who hold the Orthodox Jews in contempt as the latter hold them in contempt; they claim to be the true guardians (Shomerim) of the Law, and that is probably the true origin of the name Samaritan, which may go further back in time than the foundation of the town of Samaria. I think it probable that the schism originated from the time of Moses, and that the curse of Moses on the Sāmīrī explains the position.
2625. Thus superseding previous revelations; for this (the Qur-ān) is direct from Allah, and is not a second-hand exposition on other men's authority.

2626. Cf. vi. 31. If people are so immersed in the evanescent falsehoods of this life as to turn away from the True and the Eternal, they will have a rude awakening when the Judgment comes. These very things that they thought so enjoyable here—taking advantage of others, material self-indulgence, nursing grievances instead of doing good, etc., etc.—will be a grievous burden to them that day, which they will not be able to escape or lighten.

2627. Zurq=having eyes different from the normal colour, which in the East is black and white; having blue eyes, or eyes afflicted with dimness or blindness, or squint; hence metaphorically, blear-eyed (with terror).

2628. Faced with eternity they will realise that their life on this earth, or the interval between their sin and their punishment, had a duration which practically amounted to nothing. They express this by the phrase “ten days”, but their wiser heads think that even this is an over-estimate. It was but a brief day!
104. We know best what they
Will say, when the best of them
In judgment\(^{2629}\)
Will say: "Ye tarried not
Longer than a day!"

SECTION 6.

105. They ask thee concerning\(^{2630}\)
The Mountains: say, "My Lord
Will uproot them and scatter
Them as dust;\(^{2631}\)
106. "He will leave them as plains
Smooth and level;
107. "Nothing crooked or curved
Wilt thou see in their place."
108. On that Day will they follow
The caller\(^{2632}\) (straight): no
crookedness
In him:
And the voices will be hushed

\(^{2629}\) Cf. xx. 63 and n. 2587. Note that it is the shrewdest and most versed in Life who will say this, because they will be the first to see the true situation.

\(^{2630}\) In the last verse, it was the deceptiveness and relativity of Time that was dealt with. Here we come to the question of space, solidity, bulk. The question was actually put to the holy Prophet: what will become of the solid Mountains, or in the English phrase, "the eternal hills"? They are no more substantial than anything else in this temporal world. When the "new world", (xiii. 5) of which Unbelievers doubted, is actually in being, the mountains will cease to exist. We can imagine the scene of judgment as a level plain, in which there are no ups and downs and no places of concealment. All is straight and level, without corners, mysteries, or lurking doubts.

\(^{2631}\) The one word nasafa carries the ideas of (1) tearing up by the roots, (2) scattering like chaff or dust, and (3) winnowing. Its twofold repetition here intensifies its meaning.

\(^{2632}\) The Caller: the angel whose voice will call and direct all souls.
To The Most Gracious:
So that thou hearest not
But murmuring.  

109. On that Day shall no
Intercession avail
Except for those for whom
Permission has been granted
By The Most Gracious
And whose word is
Acceptable to Him.

110. He knows what is before
Or after or behind them:
But they shall comprehend Him
not.

111. (All) faces shall be humbled
Before- the Living,
The Self-Subsisting, The Sustainer
Hopeless indeed will be
The man that carries
Iniquity (on his back).  

2633. A beautiful personification of hushed Sound. First there is the loud blast of the Trumpet. Then there is the stillness and hush of awe and reverence: only the tramp of the ranks marching along will be heard.

2634. Cf. ii. 255 in the Verse of the Throne. Here man is in the accusative case governed by tanfa’u, and it is better to construe as I have done. That is, intercession will benefit no one except those for whom Allah has granted permission, and whose word (of repentance) is true and sincere, and therefore acceptable to Allah. Others construe: no intercession will avail, except by those to whom Allah has granted permission, and whose word (of intercession) is acceptable to Allah. In that case the two distinct clauses have no distinct meanings.

2635. Cf. ii. 255 and n. 297. The slight difference in phraseology (which I have tried to preserve in the Translation) will be understood as a beauty when we reflect that here our attention is directed to the Day of Judgment, and in ii. 255 the wording is general, and applies to our present state also.

2636. The metaphor of the burden of sin which the unjust carry on their backs is referred to in xx. 100-101 (see n. 2626), in vi. 31, and in other passages. Note that all faces, those of the just as well as of the unjust, will be humble before Allah: the best of us can claim no merit equal to Allah’s Grace. But the just will have Hope: while the unjust, now that the curtain of Reality has risen, will be in absolute Despair!
112. But he who works deeds
Of righteousness, and has faith,
Will have no fear of harm
Nor of any curtailing (of what is his due).

113. Thus have We sent this
Down—an Arabic Qur'ān—
And explained therein in detail
Some of the warnings,
In order that they may
Fear Allah, or that it may
Cause their remembrance
(of Him).

114. High above all is Allah,
The King, the Truth!
Be not in haste
With the Qur'ān before
Its revelation to thee
Is completed, but say,
"O my Lord! increase me
In knowledge."

2637. See the last note. Unlike the unjust, the righteous, who have come with Faith, will now find their Faith justified: not only will they be free from any fear of harm, but they will be rewarded to the full, or, as has been said in other passages, where His bounty rather than His justice is emphasised, they will get more than their due reward (iii. 27; xxxix. 10).

2638. The Qur'ān is in clear Arabic, so that even an unlearned people like the Arabs might understand and profit by its warnings, and the rest of the world may learn through them, as they did in the first few centuries of Islam and may do again when we Muslims show ourselves worthy to explain and exemplify its meaning. The evil are warned that they may repent; the good are confirmed in their Faith and strengthened by their remembrance of Him.

2639. Allah is above every human event or desire. His purpose is universal. But He is the Truth, the absolute Truth; and His kingdom is the true kingdom, that can carry out its will. That Truth unfolds itself gradually, as it did in the gradual revelation of the Qur'ān to the holy Prophet. But even after it was completed in a volume, its true meaning and purpose only gradually unfold themselves to any given individual or nation. No one should be impatient about it. On the contrary, we should always pray for increase in our own knowledge, which can never at any given moment be complete.
115. We had already, beforehand,\textsuperscript{2640}

Taken the covenant of Adam,
But he forgot: and We found
On his part no firm resolve.

SECTION 7.

116. When We said to the angels,
"Prostrate yourselves to Adam",
They prostrated themselves, but not
Iblis: he refused.

117. Then We said: "O Adam!
Verily, this is an enemy
To thee and thy wife:
So let him not get you
Both out of the Garden,
So that thou art landed
In misery.\textsuperscript{2641}

118. "There is therein (enough
 provision)
For thee not to go hungry
Nor to go naked,
Nor to suffer from thirst,
Nor from the sun's heat."

\textsuperscript{2640} The spiritual fall of two individual souls, Pharaoh and the S\=amiri, having been referred to, the one through overweening arrogance, and the other through a spirit of mischief and false harking back to the past, our attention is now called to the prototype of Evil (satan) who tempted Adam, the original Man, and to the fact that though man was clearly warned that satan is his enemy and will only effect his ruin, he showed so little firmness that he succumbed to it at once at the first opportunity.

\textsuperscript{2641} See last note. The story is referred to in order to draw attention to man's folly in rushing into the arms of satan though he had been clearly forewarned.

\textsuperscript{2642} Not only had the warning been given that satan is an enemy to man and will effect his destruction, but it was clearly pointed out that all his needs were being met in the Garden of Happiness. Food and clothing, drink and shelter, were amply provided for.
120. But Satan whispered evil
   To him: he said, "O Adam!
   Shall I lead thee to
   The Tree of Eternity?2643
   And to a kingdom
   That never decays?"

121. In the result, they both
   Ate of the tree, and so
   Their nakedness appeared2644
   To them: they began to sew
   Together, for their covering,
   Leaves from the Garden:
   Thus did Adam disobey
   His Lord, and fell into error.2645

122. But his Lord chose him
   (For His Grace): He turned
   To him, and gave him guidance.

123. He said: "Get ye down,
   Both of you,-all together;2646
   From the Garden, with enmity
   One to another: but if.

2643. The suggestion of satan is clever, as it always is: it is false, and at the same
time plausible. It is false, because (1) that felicity was not temporary, like the life of this
world, and (2) they were supreme in the Garden, and a "kingdom" such as was dangled
before them would only add to their sorrows. It was plausible, because (1) nothing had
been said to them about Eternity, as the opposite of Eternity was not yet known, and
(2) the sweets of Power arise from the savour of Self, and Self is an alluring (if false)
attraction that misleads the Will.

2644. Hitherto they knew no evil. Now, when disobedience to Allah had sullied their
soul and torn off the garment, their sullied Self appeared to themselves in all its
nakedness and ugliness, and they had to resort to external things (leaves of the Garden)
to cover the shame.

2645. Adam had been given the will to choose, and he chose wrong, and was about
to be lost when Allah's Grace came to his aid. His repentance was accepted, and Allah
chose him for His Mercy, as stated in the next verse.

2646. The little variations between this passage and ii. 38 are instructive, as showing
how clearly the particular argument is followed in each case. Here *ihbîta* ('get ye down')
is in the dual number, and refers to the two individual souls, our common ancestors.
As is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever Follows My guidance, will not Lose his way, nor fall\textsuperscript{2647} into misery.

124. “But whosoever turns away From My Message, verily For him is a life narrowed Down, and We shall raise Him up blind on the Day\textsuperscript{2648} Of Judgment.”

125. He will say: “O my Lord! Why hast thou raised me Up blind, while I had Sight (before)?”\textsuperscript{2649}

126. (Allah) will say: “Thus Didst thou, when Our Signs Came unto thee, forgot Them: so wilt thou, This day, be forgotten.”\textsuperscript{2650}

\textsuperscript{2647}For the same reason as in the last note, we have here the consequences of Guidance to the individual, viz.: being saved from going astray or from falling into misery and despair. In ii. 38, the consequences expressed, though they apply to the individual, are also appropriate taken collectively: “on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”

\textsuperscript{2648}Again, as in the last two verses, there is a variation from the previous passage (ii. 39). The consequences of the rejection of Allah’s guidance are here expressed more individually: a life narrowed down, and a blindness that will persist beyond this life. “A life narrowed down” has many implications: (1) it is a life from which all the beneficent influences of Allah’s wide world are excluded; (2) in looking exclusively to the “good things” of this life, it misses the true Reality.

\textsuperscript{2649}Because Allah gave him physical sight in this life for trial, he thinks he should be favoured in the real world, the world that matters! He misused his physical sight and made himself blind for the other world.

\textsuperscript{2650}‘You were deliberately blind to Allah’s Signs: now you will not see Allah’s favours, and will be excluded from His Grace.”
127. And thus do We recompense Him who transgresses beyond bounds
And believes not in the Signs Of his Lord: and the Chastisement Of the Hereafter is far more Grievous and more enduring.\(^ {2651} \)

128. Is it not a guidance to such Men (to call to mind)
How many generations before them
We destroyed, in whose haunts They (now) move? Verily,
In this are Signs for men Endued with understanding.\(^ {2652} \)

SECTION 8.

129. Had it not been For a Word that went forth Before from thy Lord,\(^ {2653} \)
(Their punishment) must necessarily Have come; but there is A term appointed (for respite).

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2651. Blindness in the world of enduring Reality is far worse than physical blindness in the world of probation.

2652. Cf. xx. 54. This phrase concluded the argument of Moses with Pharaoh about Pharaoh’s blindness to Allah and the Signs of Allah. Now it concludes the more general argument about men, concerning whom the saying arose: ‘none are so blind as those who will not see.’

2653. Cf. x. 19 and n. 1407; also xi. 110. In Allah’s holy plan and Purpose, there is a wise adjustment of all interests, and a merciful chance and respite given to all, the unjust as well as the just, and His decree or word abides. The most wicked have a term appointed for them for respite. Had it not been so, the punishment must necessarily have descended on them immediately for their evil deeds.
130. Therefore be patient with what
They say, and celebrate
(constantly)\textsuperscript{2654}
The praises of thy Lord,
Before the rising of the sun.
And before its setting;
Yea, celebrate them
For part of the hours
Of the night, and at the sides\textsuperscript{2655}
Of the day: that thou
May be pleased.

131. Nor strain thine eyes in longing
For the things We have given
For enjoyment to parties
Of them, the splendour
Of the life of this world,

\textsuperscript{2654} All good men must be patient with what seems to them evil around them. That
does not mean that they should sit still and do nothing to destroy evil; for the fight
against evil is one of the cardinal points in Islam. What they are told is that they must
not be impatient: they must pray to Allah and commune with Him, so that their patience
and faith may be strengthened, and they may be able the better to grapple with evil. For
they thus not only get strength in this world but pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter as
well.

\textsuperscript{2655} Taraf, plural atraf, may mean sides, ends, extremities. If the day be compared
to a tubular figure standing erect, the top and bottom are clearly marked, but the sides
are not so clearly marked: they would be atraf (plural), not tarafain (dual). Now the
prayer before sunrise is clearly Fajr; that before sunset is ‘Asr: “part of the hours of the
night” would indicate Magrib (early night, just after sunset), and ‘Ishâ, before going to
bed. There is left Zuhr, which is in the indefinite side or middle of the day: it may
be soon after the sun’s decline from noon, but there is considerable latitude about the
precise hour. The majority of Commentators interpret in favour of the five Canonical
prayers, and some include optional prayers. But I think the words are even more
comprehensive. A good man’s life is all one sweet Song of Praise to Allah.
Through which We test them:
But the provision of thy Lord\textsuperscript{2656}
is better and more enduring.

132. Enjoin prayer on thy people,
And be constant therein.
We ask thee not to provide\textsuperscript{2657}
Sustenance: We provide it
For thee. But the (fruit of)
The Hereafter is for Righteousness.

133. They say: “Why does he not\textsuperscript{2658}
Bring us a Sign from
His Lord?” Has not
A Clear Sign come to them
Of all that was
In the former Books
Of revelation?

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\textsuperscript{2656} The good things of this life make a brave show, but they are as nothing compared with the good of the Hereafter. Both are provided by Allah. But the former are given to the just and the unjust as a test and trial, and in any case will pass away; while the latter come specially from Allah for His devoted servants, and are incomparably of more value and will last through eternity.

\textsuperscript{2657} Sustenance, in the sense of the ordinary needs of life, the man of Allah does not worry about. That is provided by Allah for all, the just and the unjust. But the special provision, the real Sustenance, the spiritual fruit, is for a righteous life in the service of Allah.

\textsuperscript{2658} The question or plea of the Unbelievers is disingenuous. Many Signs have come with this Revelation. But the one that should have appealed to those who believed in former revelations and should have convinced them was what was in their own books.
134. Had We destroyed them with a punishment before this.\textsuperscript{2659}

They would have said:

“Our Lord! If only thou hadst sent us a messenger, We should certainly have followed Thy Signs before we were Humbled and put to shame.”

135. Say: “Each one (of us) is waiting: wait ye, therefore,\textsuperscript{2660} And soon shall ye know Who it is that is On the straight and even\textsuperscript{2661} Way, and who it is That has received guidance.”

\textsuperscript{2659} If the Sign mentioned in the last note did not convince them, it would mean that they were not true to their own faith. They were not straight with themselves. In justice they should have been punished for their falsehood. But they were given further respite. Or they would again have argued in a circle, and said: “If only Allah had sent us a living messenger we should have believed!” The living messenger they flout because they want a Sign. The Sign they wish to ignore, because they want a living messenger!

\textsuperscript{2660} If people will not be true to their own lights, what further argument is left? The Prophet of Allah can only say: “Let us wait the issue: my faith tells me that Allah’s Truth must prevail.” Cf. ix. 52.

\textsuperscript{2661} Cf. xix. 43. The straight and even Way must endure, and show that the man who follows it has received true guidance. All falsehood and crookedness must ultimately disappear.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Anbiyya, 21.

The last Sūra dealt with the individual story of Moses and Aaron, and contrasted it with the growth of evil in individuals like Pharaoh and the Sāmirī, and ended with a warning against Evil, and an exhortation to the purification of the soul with prayer and praise. This Sūra begins with the external obstacles placed by Evil against such purification, and gives the assurance of Allah's power to defend men, illustrating this with reference to Abraham's fight against idolatry, Lot's fight against injustice and failure to proclaim Allah's glory by making full use of man's God-given faculties and powers, that of Job against impatience and want of self-confidence, that of Ismā'īl, Idrīs, and Zul-kifl against want of steady perseverance, that of Zūn-nūn against hasty anger, that of Zakariyya against isolation, and that of Mary against the lusts of this world. In each allusion there is a special point about the soul's purification. The common point is that the Prophets were not, as the disbelievers suppose, just irresistible men. They had to win their ground inch by inch against all kinds of resistance from evil.

The chronology of this Sūra has no particular significance. It probably dates from the middle of the Makkah period of inspiration.

Summary.—Man treats, as he has always treated, the serious things of life with jest or contempt; but the Judgment must come, and Truth must triumph (xxi. 1-29).

Unity of Design, and certainty of Allah's Promise: Allah's protection and mercy, and His justice (xxi. 30-50).

How Abraham triumphed over idols, as did others among Allah's chosen ones over various forms of evil (xxi. 51-93).

Work righteousness while it is yet time, for the Judgment will come, and only the righteous will inherit (xxi. 94-112).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Closer and closer to mankind\textsuperscript{2662} comes their reckoning: yet they heed not and they turn away.

2. Never comes (aught) to them of a renewed message\textsuperscript{2663} from their Lord, but they listen to it as in jest,-

3. Their hearts toying as with trifles. The wrong-doers conceal\textsuperscript{2664} their private counsels, (saying), "Is this (one) more than a man like yourselves? Will ye go to witchcraft with your eyes open?"\textsuperscript{2665}

2662. Every minute sees them nearer to their doom, and yet they are sadly heedless, and even actively turn away from the Message that would save them.

2663. In each age, when the Message of Allah is renewed, the very people who should have known better and welcomed the renewal and the sweeping away of human cobwebs, either receive it with amused self-superiority, which later turns to active hostility, or with careless indifference.

2664. Allah's Message is free and open, in the full light of day. His enemies plot against it in secrecy, lest their own false motives be exposed. Their jealousy prevents them from accepting a "man like themselves" as a teacher or warner or guide.

2665. Literally, "in a state in which you (actually) see (that it is witchcraft)". When Allah's Messenger is proved to be above them in moral worth, in true insight, in earnestness and power of eloquence, they accuse him of witchcraft, a word which may mean nothing, or perhaps some mysterious deceitful arts.
4. Say:2666 “My Lord
Knoweth (every) word (spoken)2667
In the heavens and on earth:
He is the One that heareth
And knoweth (all things).”

5. “Nay,” they say, “(these are)
Medleys of dreams!—Nay,
He forged it!—Nay,
He is (but) a poet!2668
Let him then bring us
A Sign like the ones
That were sent to
(Prophets) of old!”

6. (As to those) before them,
Not one of the towns
Which We destroyed believed:
Will these believe?2669

2666. Notice that in the usual Arabic texts (that is, according to the Qiraat of Hafs)
the word qāla is here and in xxi. 112 below, as well as in xxiii. 112, spelt differently
from the usual spelling of the word in other places (e.g. in xx. 125-126). Qul is the
reading of the Basra Qirāt, meaning, “Say thou” in the imperative. If we construe “he
says”, the pronoun refers to “this (one)” in the preceding verse, viz.: the Prophet. But
more than one Commentator understands the meaning in the imperative, and I agree
with them. The point is merely one of verbal construction. The meaning is the same in either
case. See n. 2948 to xxiii. 112.

2667. Every word, whether whispered in secret (as in xxi. 3 above) or spoken openly,
is known to Allah. Let not the wrong-doers imagine that their secret plots are secret to
the Knower of all things.

2668. The charges against Allah’s inspired Messenger are heaped up, “Magic!” says
one: that means, “We don’t understand it!” Says another, “Oh! but we know! he is a
mere dreamer of confused dreams!” If the “dreams” fit in with real things and vital
experiences, another will suggest, “Oh yes! why drag in supernatural agencies? he is clever
enough to forge it himself!” Or another suggests, “He is a poet! Poets can invent things
and say them in beautiful words!” Another interposes, “What we should like to see is
miracles, like those we read of in stories of the Prophets of old!”

2669. “If such miracles as you read of failed to convince Unbelievers of old, what
chance is there that these Unbelievers will believe? Miracles may come, but they are no
cures for Unbelief.
7. Before thee, also, the messengers We sent were but men, To whom We granted inspiration: If ye know this not, ask Of those who possess the Message.  

8. Nor did We give them Bodies that ate no food, Nor were they immortals.  

9. Then We fulfilled To them Our promise, And We saved them And those whom We willed But We destroyed those Who transgressed beyond bounds.  

10. We have revealed for you (O men!) a book which Will give you eminence. Will ye not then understand?  

SECTION 2.  

11. How many were the towns. We utterly destroyed because Of their iniquities, setting up In their places other peoples?  

2670. See xvi. 43 and n. 2069. This answers the Unbelievers' taunt, "he is just a man like ourselves!" True, but all messengers sent by Allah were men, not angels or another kind of beings, who could not understand men or whom men could not understand.  

2671. As men they were subject to all the laws governing the physical bodies of men. They ate and drank, and their bodies perished in death.  

2672. But, however difficult (or impossible) their mission may have appeared to them, or to the world at first, they won through eventually, even those who seemed to have been defeated. Examples are given in the latter part of this Sûra, especially in xxi. 51-93. They were delivered from the Wrath which overtook the Unbelievers, as were those with them who accepted Allah's Message and placed themselves in conformity with His Will and Plan. That is the meaning of "whom We willed."
12. Yet, when they felt
   Our Punishment (coming),
   Behold, they (tried to) flee
   From it.\(^{2673}\)

13. Flee not, but return to
   The good things of this life
   Which were given you,
   And to your homes,
   In order that ye may
   Be called to account.\(^{2674}\)

14. They said: "Ah! woe to us!
   We were indeed wrong-doers!"

15. And that cry of theirs
   Ceased not, till We made
   Them as a field
   That is mown, as ashes
   Silent and quenched.\(^{2675}\)

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\(^{2673}\) When they had every chance of repentance and reform, they rejected Allah's Message, and perhaps even put up an open defiance. When they actually began to feel the Wrath coming, they began to flee, but it was too late! Besides, where could they flee to from the Wrath of Allah? Hence the ironical appeal to them in the next verse: better go back to your luxuries and what you thought were your permanent homes! Cf. Christ's saying in the present Gospel of St. Matthew (iii. 7): "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come?"

\(^{2674}\) See last note. 'You thought your homes so comfortable: why don't you go back to them? You will be called to account. Perhaps there may be rewards to be given you, who knows? This irony is itself the beginning of the Punishment. But the ungodly now see how wrong they had been. But their signs and regrets now avail them nothing. It is too late. They are lost, and nothing can save them.

\(^{2675}\) The two similes present two different aspects of the lamentation of the ungodly. When they really see the Wrath to come, there is a stampede, but where can they go to? Their lamentation is now the only mark of their life. But it dies away, as corn vanishes from a field that is being mown, or as a dying fire is slowly extinguished! They do not die. They wish they were dead! (lxxviii. 40).
16. Not for (idle) sport did We
Create the heavens and the earth
And all that is between!

17. If it had been Our wish
To take (just) a pastime,
We should surely have taken
It from the things nearest
To Us, if We would
Do (such a thing).²⁶⁷⁷

18. Nay, We hurl the Truth
Against falsehood, and it knocks
Out its brain, and behold,
Falschood doth perish!
Ah! woe be to you
For the (false) things
Ye ascribe (to Us).²⁶⁷⁸

19. To Him belong all (creatures)
In the heavens and on earth:
Even those who are
With Him are not²⁶⁷⁹
Too proud to serve Him,
Nor are they (ever) weary
(Of His service):

²⁶⁷⁶. The Hindu doctrine of Lila, that all things were created for sport, is here negatived. But more: with Allah we must not associate any ideas but those of Truth, Righteousness, Mercy, Justice, and the other attributes implied in His Beautiful Names. He does not jest nor play with His creatures.

²⁶⁷⁷. If such an idea as that of play or pastime had been possible with regard to Allah, and if He had wished really to indulge in pastime, He would have done it with creatures of Light nearest to Him, not with the lowly material creation that we see around us.

²⁶⁷⁸. Such as that (1) Allah has partners (xxi.22), or (2) that He has begotten a son (xxi.26), or (3) has daughters (xvi. 57), or any other superstitions derogatory to the dignity and glory of Allah.

²⁶⁷⁹. The pure angelic hosts, whom we imagine to be glorious creatures of light, high in Heavens, near the Throne of Allah Himself, are yet His creatures, and serve Him without ceasing, and are proud to do so. Such is the majesty of Allah Most High.
20. They celebrate His praises 
Night and day, nor do they
Ever flag or intermit.

21. Or have they taken
(For worship) gods from the earth
Who can raise (the dead)?

22. If there were, in the heavens
And the earth, other gods
Besides Allah, there would
Have been ruin in both!
But glory to Allah,
The Lord of the Throne:
(High is He) above
What they attribute to Him!

23. He cannot be questioned
For His acts, but they
Will be questioned (for theirs).

24. Or have they taken
For worship (other) gods

2680. The different kinds of false gods whom people raise from their imagination are now referred to. In verses 21-23, the reference is to the gods of the earth, whether idols or local godlings, or deified heroes, or animals or trees or forces of the nature around us, which men have from time to time worshipped. These, as deities, have no life except what their worshippers give to them.

2681. The answer of course is “no”. No one but Allah can raise the dead to life. The miracle in the story of Jesus (iii. 49 and v. 113) was “by Allah’s leave”. It was a miracle of Allah, not one of Jesus by his own power or will.

2682. After the false gods of the earth (verse 21), are mentioned the false gods in the heavens and the earth, like those in the Greek Pantheon (verse 22), who quarrelled and fought and slandered each other and made their Olympus a perfect bear-garden!

2683. Allah is Self-Subsisting. All His creatures are responsible to Him and dependent on Him there is no other being to whom He can be responsible or on whom He can be dependent.

2684. See above. n. 2682, where two kinds of false worship are noted. Now we are warned against a third danger, the worship of false gods of any sort. Pagan man is prolific of creating abstract images for worship, including Self or abstract Intelligence or Power. In verse 26 below is mentioned a fourth kind of false worship, which imagines that Allah begets sons or daughters.
Besides Him? Say, “Bring Your convincing proof: this Is the Message of those With me and the Message Of those before me.”

But most of them know not The Truth, and so turn away.

25. Not a messenger did We Send before thee without This inspiration sent by Us To him: that there is No god but I; therefore Worship and serve Me.

26. And they say: “The Most Gracious has taken A son.” Glory to Him! They are (but) servants raised To honour.

27. They speak not before He speaks, and they act (In all things) by His command.

2685. This verse should be read with the next. All reason revolts against the idea of conflicting gods, and points to Unity in Creation and Unity in Godhead. This is not only the Message of Islam (“those with me”) but the message of all prophets who came before the holy Prophet Muhammad (“those before me”), and the line of prophets was closed with him. The Message given to every prophet in all ages was that of Unity as the fundamental basis of Order and Design in the world, material, moral, and spiritual.

2686. This refers both to the Trinitarian superstition that Allah has begotten a son, and to the Arab superstition that the angels were daughters of Allah. All such superstitions are derogatory to the glory of Allah. The prophets and the angels are no more than servants of Allah: they are raised high in honour, and therefore they deserve our highest respect, but not our worship.

2687. They never say anything before they receive Allah’s command to say it, and their acts are similarly conditioned. This is also the teaching of Jesus as reported in the Gospel of St. John (xii. 49-50): “For I have not spoken of myself: but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.” If rightly understood, “Father” has the same meaning as our “Rabb”, Sustainer and Cherisher, not Begetter or Progenitor.
28. He knows what is before them,  
And what is behind them,  
And they offer no intercession  
Except for those with whom  
He is well-pleased  
And they stand  
In awe and reverence  
Of His (glory).

29. If any of them should say,  
“I am a god besides Him”,  
Such a one We should  
Reward with Hell: thus  
Do We reward those  
Who do wrong.

SECTION 3.

30. Do not the Unbelievers see  
That the heavens and the earth  
Were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before  
We clove them asunder?

2688. Cf. xx. 109. Those who have conformed to the Will of Allah and obeyed His Law, thus winning the stamp of His approval.

2689. They: the usual interpretation refers the pronoun to the servants of Allah who intercede: it may also refer to those on whose behalf intercession is made: they do not take it as a matter of course, but stand in due awe and reverence of Allah's great glory and mercy.

2690. The evolution of the ordered worlds as we see them is hinted at. As man's intellectual gaze over the physical world expands, he sees more and more how Unity is the dominating note in Allah's wonderful Universe. Taking the solar system alone, we know that the maximum intensity of sun-spots corresponds with the maximum intensity of magnetic storms on this earth. The universal law of gravitation seems to bind all mass together. Physical facts point to the throwing off of planets from vast quantities of diffused nebular matter, of which the central condensed core is a sun.
We made from water\(^{2691}\) Every living thing. Will they Not then believe?

31. And We have set on the earth Mountains standing firm,\(^{2692}\) Lest it should shake with them, And We have made therein Broad highways (between mountains) For them to pass through: That they may find their way.\(^{2693}\)

32. And We have made The heavens as a canopy Well guarded:\(^{2694}\) yet do they

\(^{2691}\) About 72 per cent, of the surface of our Globe is still covered with water, and it has been estimated that if the inequalities on the surface were all levelled, the whole surface would be under water, as the mean elevation of land sphere-level would be 7,000–10,000 feet below the surface of the ocean. This shows the predominance of water on our Globe. That all life began in the water is also a conclusion to which our latest knowledge in biological science points. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the original basis of living matter, is liquid or semi-liquid and in a state of constant flux and instability, there is the fact that land animals, like the higher vertebrates, including man, show, in their embryological history, organs like those of fishes, indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The constitution of protoplasm is about 80 to 85 per cent of water.

\(^{2692}\) Cf. xvi. 15 and n. 2038. Lest it should shake with them: here “them” refers back to “they” at the end of the preceding verse, meaning “Unbelievers”. It might be mankind in general, but the pointed address to those who do not realise and understand Allah’s mercies is appropriate, to drive home to them the fact that it is Allah’s well-ordered providence that protects them normally from cataclysms like earthquakes, but that they could for their iniquities be destroyed in an instant, as the ‘Ad and the Thamûd were destroyed before them. As pointed out in n. 2691 above, if the surface of the earth were levelled up, it would all be under water, and therefore the firm mountains are a further source of security of life which has evolved in terrestrial forms. Though the mountains may seem impassable barriers, yet Allah’s providence has provided broad passes between them to afford highways for human communications.

\(^{2693}\) In both the literal and the figurative sense. Literally these natural mountain highways direct men in the way they should go. Figuratively, these wonderful instances of Allah’s providence should turn men’s thoughts to the true guidance of Allah in life.

\(^{2694}\) Canopy well guarded: the heavens form a canopy that is secure from falling down: they also form a sublime spectacle and a Mystery that man can only faintly reach. Cf. also xv. 17.
33. It is He Who created
   The Night and the Day,
   And the sun and the moon:
   All (the celestial bodies)
   Swim along, each in its\textsuperscript{2695}
   Rounded course.

34. We granted not to any man
   Before thee permanent life\textsuperscript{2696}
   (Here): if then thou shouldst die,
   Would they live permanently?

35. Every soul shall have
   A taste of death:\textsuperscript{2697}
   And We test you
   By evil and by good
   By way of trial.
   To Us must ye return.

36. When the Unbelievers see thee,
   They treat thee not except
   With ridicule. "Is this,"
   (They say), "The one who talks\textsuperscript{2698}

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\textsuperscript{2695} I have indicated, unlike most translators, the metaphor of swimming implied in the original words: how beautiful it is to contemplate the heavenly bodies swimming through space (or ether) in their rounded courses before our gaze!

\textsuperscript{2696} Life on this planet without death has not been granted to any man. The taunt of the Unbelievers at the holy Prophet was therefore futile. Could any of them live without death at some time or other? Could they name any one who did?

\textsuperscript{2697} Cf. iii. 185, and n. 491. The soul does not die, but when it separates from the body at the death of the body, the soul gets a taste of death. In our life of probation on this earth, our virtue and faith are tested by many things: some are tested by calamities, and some by the good things of this life. If we prove our true mettle, we pass our probation with success. In any case all must return to Allah, and then will our life be appraised at its true value.

\textsuperscript{2698} To the godly man the issue between false worship and true worship is a very serious matter. To the sceptics and unbelievers it is only a joke. They take it lightly, and laugh at the godly man. They not only laugh at him, but they blaspheme when the name of the One True God is mentioned. The reply to this is in the next verse.
2699. Haste is in the very bone and marrow of man. If he is granted respite for his own sake, in order that he may have a further chance of repentance and coming back to Allah, he says impatiently and incredulously: “Bring on the Punishment quickly, that I may see if what you say is true!” Alas. it is too true! When the Punishment actually comes near and he sees it, he will not want it hastened. He will want more time and further delay! Poor creature of haste!

2700. They would not be so unreasonable if they only realised the terrible future for them! The Fire will envelop them on all sides, and no help will then be possible. Is it not best for them now to turn and repent? The Punishment may come too suddenly, as is said in the next verse.

Of your gods?” And they Blaspheme at the mention Of The Most Gracious!

37. Man is a creature of haste: Soon (enough) will I show You My Signs; So Ask Me not To hasten them!

38. They say: “When will this Promise come to pass, If ye are telling the truth?”

39. If only the Unbelievers2700 Knew (the time) when they Will not be able To ward off the Fire From their faces, nor yet From their backs, and (when) No help can reach them!

40. Nay, it may come to them All of a sudden and confound Them: no power will they Have then to avert it, Nor will they (then) Get respite.
41. Mocked were (many) Messengers before thee; But their scoffers Were hemmed in By the thing that they mocked.  

SECTION 4.

42. Say, “Who can keep You safe by night and by day From (the Wrath of) The Most Gracious?” Yet they Turn away from the remembrance Of their Lord.

43. Or have they gods that Can guard them from Us? They have no power to aid Themselves, nor can they Be defended from Us.

44. Nay, We gave the good things Of this life to these men And their fathers until The period grew long for them; See they not that We  

2701. The same verse occurs at vi. 10, where see n. 843. ‘What they are mocking at now will be in a position to mock them in due time.’

2702. ‘Allah is most Gracious: if, in spite of His great mercy, you are so rebellious and depraved as to incur His Wrath, who is there who can save you? His Wrath can descend on you at any time, by night or by day.’

2703. Ashhaba: to join as companion: with ‘an or min’ it has also the meaning of to defend or remove from someone. The full signification can only be got by a long paraphrase: ‘they are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with Us, nor can they be defended from Us.’

2704. ‘Umur: age, generation, period, time, life. Here “period” is most appropriate, as it covers many generations, “these men and their fathers.”

2705. The particular signification is that Islam spread from the outer borders, social and geographical, gradually inwards. The social fringe was the humbler people, such as slaves and poor men. The geographical reference is to Madinah and tribes away from the =
Gradually reduce the land (In their control) from Its outlying borders? Is it Then they who will win?

45. Say, “I do but warn you According to revelation”: But the deaf will not hear The call, (even) when They are warned.2706

46. If but a breath of the Wrath Of thy Lord do touch them They will then say, “Woe To us! we did wrong indeed!”

47. We shall set up scales Of justice for the day Of Judgment, so that Not a soul will be dealt with Unjustly in the least. And if there be (No more than) the weight Of a mustard seed,2707

= Makkah centre. The proud and unbelieving Quraish were the last to come in when the circle was gradually drawn tighter and tighter around them. The general signification applies to all times. Allah’s Truth makes its way first among the poor and the lowly, those whose minds are unsoiled by prejudices of false pride or false knowledge, but it gradually hems in the obstinate, until it prevails in the end.

2706. According to the English saying, “none is so deaf as those who will not hear”. When they deliberately shut their ears to warning from the Merciful Allah, meant for their own good, the responsibility is their own. But their cowardice is shown in the next verse by their behaviour when the first breath of the Wrath reaches them.

2707. Not the smallest action, word, thought, motive, or predilection but must come into the account of Allah. Cf. Browning (in Rabbi Ben Ezra): “But all, the world’s coarse thumb And finger failed to plumb, So passed in making up the main account; All instincts immature. All purposes unsure. That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man’s account; Thoughts hardly to be packed Into a narrow act. Fancies that broke through language and escaped; All I could never be, All, men ignored in me, This, I was worth to God, Whose wheel the pitcher shaped.”
48. In the past We granted To Moses and Aaron The Criterion (for judgment). And a Light and a Message For those who would do right,—

49. Those who fear their Lord In their most secret thoughts, And who hold the Hour (Of Judgment) in awe.

2708. The literalism of Sale has here excelled itself: he translates, “and there will be sufficient accountants with us”! What is meant is that when Allah takes account, His accounting will be perfect: there will be no flaw in it, as there may be in earthly accountants, who require other people’s help in some matters of account which they do not understand for want of knowledge of that particular department they are dealing with. Allah’s knowledge is perfect, and therefore His justice will be perfect also; for He will not fail to take into account all the most intangible things that determine conduct and character. See last note. There is no contradiction between this and xviii. 104-105, where it is said that men of vain works, i.e., shallow hypocritical deeds, will have no weight attached to their deeds. In fact the two correspond.

2709. Cf. ii. 53 and n. 68, where the meaning of Furqân is discussed. Here three things are mentioned as given to Moses and Aaron: (1) The Criterion for judgment: this might well be the wonderful Proofs they saw of Allah’s goodness and glory from which they could have no doubt as to Allah’s will and command; (2) the Light; this was the inner enlightenment of their soul, such as comes from inspiration: and (3) the Message, the Book, the original Book of Moses, which Aaron as his lieutenant would also use as a guide for his people.

2710. Note the three kinds of fear mentioned in xxi. 48-49. Taqwâ is the fear of running counter to the will of Allah; it is akin to the love of Him; for we fear to offend those we love; it results in right conduct, and those who entertain it are “those who would do right”. Then there is Khashyat, the fear of Allah, lest the person who entertains it may be found, in his inmost thoughts, to be short of the standard which Allah wishes for him; this is also righteous but in a less high degree than Taqwâ which is akin to love. And thirdly, there is the fear of consequences on the Day of Judgment (ishfaq); this also may lead to righteousness, but is on a still lower plane. Perhaps the three correspond to the Criterion, the Light, and the Message (or Warning) of the last verse.
50. And this is a blessed Message which We have Sent down: will ye then Reject it?2711

SECTION 5.

51. We bestowed aforetime On Abraham his rectitude2712 Of conduct, and well were We Acquainted with him.2713

52. Behold! he said To his father and his people,2714 "What are these images, To which ye are (So assiduously) devoted?"

53. They said, "We found Our fathers worshipping them."

54. He said, "Indeed ye Have been in manifest Error-ye and your fathers."

55. They said, "Have you Brought us the Truth,

2711. Here is a Prophet and a Book, greater than Moses and his Book. Are you going to reject him and it?

2712. Rushd: right conduct, corresponding in action to the quality expressed in the epithet Hanif (sound or true in Faith) applied to Abraham in ii. 135 and elsewhere.


2714. Reference is made to Abraham in many places. In xix. 42-49 it was with reference to his relations to his father: the problem was how a righteous man should deal with his father, when his duty to his father conflicts with his duty to Allah. Here the problem is: how a righteous man should deal with evil and overcome it; how he should fight against evil, and if he is subjected to the fire of persecution, how his firmness draws Allah's Mercy, and the very troubles he is placed in become his comfort and joy.
2715. Abraham looked at life with a serious eye, and his people took it lightly. He was devoted to Truth, and they cared more for ancestral custom. In the conflict he seemed to be in their power. But he was fearless, and he triumphed by Allah’s Grace.

2716. For the various words for “creation” see n. 120 to ii. 117, where fatara is explained and differentiated from other words of similar meaning.

2717. He wants to convince them of the powerlessness of their idols. But he does not do it underhand. He tells them that he is going to do something when once they are gone and their backs are turned to the idols,—as much as to say that the idols are dependent on their care and attention. Apparently the people are amused and want to see what he does. So they leave him to his own devices.

2718. He was enacting a scene, to make the people ashamed of worshipping senseless stocks and stones. He left the biggest idol untouched and broke the others to pieces, as if a fight had taken place between the idols, and the biggest had smashed the others. Would they turn to the surviving idol and ask him how it all happened?
60. They said, “We heard
A youth talk of them:2719
He is called Abraham.”

61. They said, “Then bring him
Before the eyes of the people,
That they may bear witness:"

62. They said, “Art thou
The one that did this
With our gods, O Abraham?"2720

63. He said: “Nay, this
Was done by this
The biggest one!
Ask them, if they
Can talk.”

64. So they turned to themselves
And said, “Surely ye
Are the ones in the wrong!”2721

2719. Different groups of people are speaking. Those who were not present at Abraham’s speech in verse 57 ask, “who has done this?” Those who were, at once name him, whereupon a formal council of the people was held, and Abraham was arraigned.

2720. They asked him the formal question. There was no mystery about it. He had already openly threatened to do something to the idols, and people who had heard his threats were there. He now continues his ironic taunt to the idol-worshippers. ‘You ask me! Why don’t you ask the idols? Doesn’t it look as if this big fellow has smashed the smaller ones in a quarrel?’ If they do not ask the idols, they confess that the idols have not intelligence enough to answer! This argument is developed in verses 64-67. Note that while the false worshippers laughed at his earnestness, he pays them out by a grim practical joke, which at the same time advances the cause of Truth.

2721. Abraham’s biting irony cut them to the quick. What could they say? They turned to each other. Some among them thought he had the best of the argument. They were not keen on idolatry, and they told their fellows that it was useless arguing with Abraham. They all hung their heads in shame. But presently they thought they would face out Abraham, and take his words literally. They said, “You know quite well that idols do not speak!” This was precisely what Abraham wanted them to say, and he delivered his final blow! See n. 2723 below.
2722. Literally, "they were turned down on their heads" which may suggest a metaphorical somersault, *i.e.*, they recovered from their dawning shame for idolatry and were prepared to argue it out with the youth Abraham. But I think there is better authority for the interpretation I have adopted.

2723. As soon as they admitted in so many words that the idols could not speak, Abraham delivered his final attack: "Then why do you worship useless impotent creatures?" After that, there remains nothing but the argument of violence, which they proceed to exercise, being the party in power. 'Burn him at the stake' is an easy cry! But it was not Abraham that suffered: it was his persecutors (xxi. 70).

2724. The nature of fire, by all the physical laws of matter, is to be hot. The fire became cool, and a means of safety for Abraham.

2725. Can we form any idea of the place where he passed through the furnace, and the stage in his career at which this happened? He was born in Ur of the Chaldees, a place on the lower reaches of the Euphrates, not a hundred miles from the Persian Gulf. This was the cradle, or one of the cradles, of human civilisation. Astronomy was studied here in very ancient times, and the worship of the sun, moon, and stars was the prevailing form of religion. Abraham revolted against this quite early in life, and his argument is referred to in vi. 74-82. They also had idols in their temples, probably idols representing =

65. Then were they confounded 2722
With shame: (they said),
"Thou knowest full well that
These (idols) do not speak!"

66. (Abraham) said, "Do ye then
Worship, besides Allah,
Things that can neither
Be of any good to you
Nor do you harm?

67. "Fie upon you, and upon 2723
The things that ye worship
Besides Allah! Have ye
No sense?"

68. They said, "Burn him
And protect your gods,
If ye do (anything at all)!

69. We said, "O Fire! 2724
Be thou cool,
And (a means of) safety
For Abraham!" 2725
2726. As they could not get rid of him by open punishment, they tried secret plans, but were foiled throughout. It was not he that lost, but they. On the contrary he left them and prospered and became the progenitor of great peoples.

2727. The land of Aram or Syria, which in its widest connotation includes Canaan or Palestine. Syria is a well-watered fertile land, with a Mediterranean sea-coast, on which the famous commercial cities of Tyre and Sidon were situated. Its population is very mixed, as it has been a bone of contention between all the great kingdoms and empires of Western Asia and Egypt, and European interest in it dates from the most ancient times.

2728. "Nāfilat has many meanings: (1) booty; (2) extra work or prayer; (3) extra or additional gift; (4) grandson. The two last significations are implied here. Not only was Abraham given a son in his old age; he was given not only Isaac, but several sons, the chief being Ismā’īl and Isaac, who both joined in burying him (Gen. xxv. 9); and he also saw grandsons. Ismā’īl is specially mentioned later (xxi. 85) apart from Isaac’s line, on account of his special importance for Islam.
(A grandson), Jacob, and We Made righteous men of every one (Of them).

73. And We made them Leaders, guiding (men) by Our Command, and We Inspired them To do good deeds, To establish regular prayers, And to Give zakat And they constantly served Us (and Us only). 2729

74. And to Lūt, too, We gave Judgment and Knowledge, And We saved him From the town which practised Abominations: truly they were A people given to Evil, A rebellious people. 2730

75. And We admitted him To Our Mercy: for he Was one of the Righteous.

SECTION 6.

76. (Remember) Noah, when He cried (to Us) aforetime: 2730A

2729. The spiritual lesson from this passage may be recapitulated. The righteous man makes no compromise with evil. If the votaries of evil laugh at him he pays them in their own coin, but he stands firmly by his principles. His firmness causes some confusion among the followers of evil, and he openly declares the faith that is in him. They try, openly and secretly, to injure or kill him, but Allah protects him, while evil perishes from its own excesses.

2730. Lot's people were given to unspeakable abominations. His mission was to preach to them. He withstood Evil, but they rejected him. They were punished, but he and his followers were saved. See xv. 61-74; xi. 77-82; and vii. 80-84.

2730-A. The date of Noah was many centuries before that of Abraham.
We listened to his (prayer)
And delivered him and his
Family from great distress.\textsuperscript{2731}

77. We helped him against
People who rejected Our Signs:
Truly they were a people
Given to Evil: so We
Drowned them (in the Flood)
All together.

78. And remember David
And Solomon, when they
Gave judgment in the matter
Of the field into which
The sheep of certain people
Had strayed by night:
We did witness their judgment.

79. To Solomon We inspired\textsuperscript{2732}
The (right) understanding
Of the matter: to each

\textsuperscript{2731} The contemporaries of Noah were given to Unbelief, oppression of the poor,
and vain disputations. He carried Allah's Message to them, and standing fast in faith,
built the Ark, in which he was saved with his followers from the Flood, while the wicked
were drowned. See xi. 25-48.

\textsuperscript{2732} The sheep, on account of the negligence of the shepherd, got into a cultivated
field (or vineyard) by night and ate up the young plants or their tender shoots, causing
damage, to the extent of perhaps a whole year's crop. David was king, and in his seat
of judgment he considered the matter so serious that he awarded the owner of the field
the sheep themselves in compensation for his damage. The Roman law of the Twelve
Tables might have approved of this decision, and on the same principle was built up the
Deodand doctrine of English Law, now obsolete. His son Solomon, a mere boy of eleven,
thought of a better decision, where the penalty would better fit the offence. The loss was
the loss of the fruits or produce of the field of vineyard: the corpus of the property was
not lost. Solomon's suggestion was that the owner of the field or vineyard should not
take the sheep altogether but only detain them long enough to recoup his actual damage,
from the milk, wool, and possibly young of the sheep, and then return the sheep to the
shepherd. David's merit was that he accepted the suggestion, even though it came from
a little boy: Solomon's merit was that he distinguished between corpus and income, and
though a boy, was not ashamed to put his case before his father. But in either case it
was Allah Who inspired the true realisation of justice. He was present and witnessed the
affair, as He is present all the time.
(Of them) We gave Judgment
And Knowledge; it was
Our power that made
The hills and the birds
Celebrate Our praises.2733
With David: it was We
Who did (all these things).

80. It was We Who taught him2734
The making of coats of mail
For your benefit, to guard
You from each other’s violence:
Will ye then be grateful?2735

81. (It was Our power that
Made) the violent (unruly)
Wind flow (tamely) for Solomon,2736
To his order, to the land2737
Which We had blessed:
For We do know all things.

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2733. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth celebrates the praises of Allah: xvii. 44; lvii. 1; xvi. 48-50. Even the “thunder repeateth His praises": xiii. 13. All nature ever sings the praises of Allah. David sang in his Psalms, cxlviii. 7-10: “Praise the Lord from the earth, ye...mountains and all hills;...creeping things and flying fowl!” All nature sings to Allah’s glory, in unison with David, and angels, and men of God. Cf. xxxiv. 10 and xxxviii. 18-19.

2734. The making of coats of mails is attributed to David. It is defensive armour, and therefore its discovery and supply is associated with deeds of righteousness in xxxiv. 10-11, in contrast with the deadly weapons which man invents for offensive purposes. Indeed, all fighting, unless in defence of righteousness, is mere “violence.”

2735. David’s good work then was: (1) he was open to learn wisdom wherever it came from; (2) he sang the praises of Allah, in unison with all nature; (3) he made defensive armour. But all these things he did, because of the faculties which Allah had given him, and we must be grateful for this and for all things to Allah.

2736. Cf. xxxiv. 12, and xxxviii. 36-38. This has been interpreted to mean that Solomon had miraculous power over the winds, and he could make them obey his order. In any case the power behind was, and is, from Allah, Who has granted man intelligence and the faculties by which he can tame the more unruly forces of nature.

2737. Evidently Palestine, in which was Solomon’s capital, though his influence extended for north in Syria.
82. And of Satans
Were some who dived
For him, and did other work\(^{2738}\)
Besides; and it was We
Who guarded them.

83. And (remember) Job, when
He cried to his Lord
"Truly distress has seized me,\(^ {2739}\)
But Thou art the Most
Merciful of those that are
Merciful."

84. So We listened to him:
We removed the distress
That was on him,
And We restored his people
To him, and doubled
Their number,−as a Grace

2738. It was Allah's power ultimately, Who granted him wisdom. Solomon tamed the jinns with Wisdom.

2739. Job (Ayūb) was a prosperous man, with faith in Allah, living somewhere in the north-east corner of Arabia. He suffers from a number of calamities: his cattle are destroyed, his servants slain by the sword, and his family crushed under his roof. But he holds fast to his faith in Allah. As a further calamity he is covered with loathsome sores from head to foot. He loses his peace of mind, and he curses the day he was born.
His false friends come and attribute his afflictions to sin. These "Job's comforters" are no comforters at all, and he further loses his balance of mind, but Allah recalls to him all His mercies, and he resumes his humility and gives up self-justification. He is restored to prosperity, with twice as much as he had before; his brethren and friends come back to him; he had a new family of seven sons and three fair daughters. He lived to a good old age, and saw four generations of descendants. All this is recorded in the Book of Job in the Old Testament. Of all the Hebrew writings, the Hebrew of this Book comes nearest to Arabic. The account given in the Biblical sources and the image that it projects of Prophet Job is decidedly different from that found in the Qur'ān and the Hadith, which present him as a prophet and brilliant example of dignified patience becoming of a great Prophet of Allah ever trustful in Him and His promises. Nothing could be farther from truth than saying that he lost his peace of mind or resorted to curses during the period of his trial.
From Ourselves, and a thing
For commemoration, for all
Who serve Us.\(^\text{2740}\)

85. And (remember) Ismā‘īl,\(^\text{2741}\)
Idris,\(^\text{2742}\) and Zul-kifl,\(^\text{2743}\) all
(Men) of constancy and patience;

86. We admitted them to
Our Mercy: for they
Were of the Righteous ones.

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2740. Job is the pattern of humility, patience, and faith in Allah. It was with these
weapons that he fought and conquered evil.

2741. Ismā‘īl is mentioned specially, apart from the line which descended through
Isaac (xxi. 72), as he was the founder of a separate and greater Ummat. His sufferings
began in infancy (see n. 160 to ii. 158); but his steady constancy and submission to the
will of Allah were specially shown when he earned the title of “Sacrifice to Allah” (see
n. 2506 to xix. 54). That was the particular quality of his constancy and patience.

2742. For Idris see n. 2508 to xix. 56. He was in a high station in life, but that did
not spoil him. He was sincere and true, and that was the particular quality of his
constancy and patience.

2743. Zul-kifl would literally mean “possessor of, or giving, a double requital or
portion”; or else, “one who used a cloak of double thickness,” that being one of the
meanings of Kifl. The Commentators differ in opinion as to who is meant, why the title
is applied to him, and the point of his being grouped with Ismā‘īl and Idris for constancy
and patience. I think the best suggestion is that afforded by Karsten Niebuhr in his
Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien, Copenhagen, 1778, ii. 264-266, as quoted in the
Encyclopaedia of Islam under “Dhul-Kifl”. He visited Meshad ‘Ali in ‘Iraq, and also the
little town called Kefil, midway between Najaf and Hilla (Babylon). Kefil, he says, is the
Arabic form of Ezekiel. The shrine of Ezekiel was there, and the Jews came to it on
pilgrimage.

If we accept “Zul-kifl” to be not an epithet, but an Arabicised form of “Ezekiel”,
it fits the context, Ezekiel was a prophet in Israel who was carried away to Babylon by
Nebuchadnezzar after his second attack on Jerusalem (about B.C. 599). His Book is
included in the English Bible (Old Testament). He was chained and bound, and put into
prison, and for a time he was dumb (Ezekiel, iii. 25-26). He bore all with patience and
constancy, and continued to reprove boldly the evils in Israel. In a burning passage he
denounces false leaders in words which are eternally true: “Woe be to the shepherds of
Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat,
and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.
The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick,
neither have ye bound up that which was broken...”, etc. (Ezekiel, xxxiv. 2-4).

Zul-kifl is again mentioned in xxxviii. 48 along with Ismā‘īl and Elisha.
87. And remember Zun-nun,2744 When he departed in wrath:
   He imagined that We
   Had no power over him!
   But he cried through the depths
   Of darkness, “There is
   No god but Thou:
   Glory to Thee: I was
   Indeed wrong!”

88. So We listened to him:
   And delivered him from
   Distress: and thus do We
   Deliver those who have faith.

89. And (remember) Zakariyā,2745 When he cried to his Lord:

   2744. Zun-nun. “the man of the Fish or the Whale”, is the title of Jonah (Yūnus), because he was swallowed by a large Fish or Whale. He was the prophet raised to warn the Assyrian capital Nineveh. For Nineveh see n. 1478 to x. 98. His story is told in xxxvii. 139-149. When his first warning was unheeded by the people, he denounced Allah's wrath on them. But they repented and Allah forgave them for the time being. Jonah, meanwhile, departed in wrath, discouraged at the apparent failure of his mission. He should have remained in the most discouraging circumstances, and relied on the power of Allah; for Allah had power both over Nineveh and over the Messenger He had sent to Nineveh. He went away to the sea and took a ship, but apparently the sailors threw him out as a man of bad omen in a storm. He was swallowed by a big Fish (or Whale), but in the depth of the darkness, he cried to Allah and confessed his weakness. The “darkness” may be interpreted both physically and spiritually; physically, as the darkness of the night and the storm and the Fish's body; spiritually as the darkness in his soul, his extreme distress in the situation which he had brought on himself. Allah Most Gracious forgave him. He was cast out ashore; he was given the shelter of a plant in his state of mental and physical lassitude. He was refreshed and strengthened, and the work of his mission prospered. Thus he overcame all his disappointment by repentance and Faith, and Allah accepted him.

2745. See xix. 2-15, and iii. 38-41. Zakariyā was a priest; both he and his wife were devout and punctilious in their duties. They were old, and they had no son. He was troubled in mind, not so much by the vulgar desire to have a son to carry on his line, but because he felt that his people were not unselfishly devout, and there would be no sincere work for Allah unless he could train up someone himself. He was given a son Yahyā (John the Baptist), who added to the devout reputation of the family, for he is called “noble, chaste, and a prophet,” (iii. 39). All three, father, mother, and son, were made worthy of each other, and they repelled evil by their devout emulation in virtue.
"O my Lord! leave me not Without offspring, though Thou Art the best of inheritors."\textsuperscript{2746}

90. So We listened to him: And We granted him Yahyā: We cured his wife’s\textsuperscript{2747} (Barrenness) for him. These (three) Were ever quick in doing In good works: they used To call on Us in yearning and awe. And humble themselves Before Us.

91. And (remember) her who\textsuperscript{2748} Guarded her chastity: We breathed into her From Our spirit, and We Made her and her son A Sign for all peoples.

92. Verily, this Ummah Of yours is a single Ummah\textsuperscript{2749}

\textsuperscript{2746} ‘It is not that I crave a personal heir to myself: all things go back to Thee, and Thou art the best of inheritors: but I see no one around me sincere enough to carry on my work for Thee; wilt Thou give me one whom I can train?’

\textsuperscript{2747} \textit{Aslaha} = to improve to mend, to reform, to make better. Here, with reference to Zakariyyā’s wife, the signification is twofold: (1) that her barrenness would be removed, so that she could become a mother; and (2) her spiritual dignity should be raised in becoming the mother of John the Baptist; and by implication his also, in becoming the father of John.

\textsuperscript{2748} Mary the mother of Jesus. Chastity was her special virtue: with a son of virgin birth, she and Jesus became a miracle to all nations. That was the virtue with which they (both Mary and Jesus) resisted evil.

\textsuperscript{2749} \textit{Ummat}: this is best translated by Brotherhood here. “Community”, “race”, and “nation” and “people” are words which import other ideas and do not quite correspond to “Ummat”. “Religion” and “Way of Life” are derived meanings, which could be used in other passages, but are less appropriate here. Our attention has been drawn to people of very different temperaments and virtues, widely different in time, race, language, surroundings, history, and work to be performed, but forming the closest brotherhood as being men and women united in the highest service of Allah. They pre-figure the final and perfected Brotherhood of Islam.
And I am your Lord
And Cherisher: therefore
Serve Me (and no other).

93. But (later generations) cut off\textsuperscript{2750}
Their affair (of unity).
One from another: (yet)
Will they all return to Us.

SECTION 7.

94. Whoever works any act
Of Righteousness and has
Faith,-
His endeavour will not
Be rejected: We shall
Record it in his favour.\textsuperscript{2751}

95. But there is a ban
On any population which
We have destroyed: that they\textsuperscript{2752}
Shall not return.

96. Until the Gog and Magog (people)\textsuperscript{2753}
Are let through (their barrier).
And they swiftly swarm
From every hill.

\textsuperscript{2750.} Allah's Message was and ever is one; and HisMessengers treated it as one.
It is people of narrower views who come later and trade on the earlier names, that break up the Message and the Brotherhood into jarring camps and sects.

\textsuperscript{2751.} Allah gives credit for every act of righteousness, however small: when combined with sincere Faith in Allah, it becomes the stepping stone to higher and higher things. It is never lost.

\textsuperscript{2752.} But when wickedness comes to such a pass that the Wrath of Allah descends, as it did on Sodom, the case becomes hopeless. The righteous were warned and delivered before the Wrath descended. But those destroyed will not get another chance, as they flouted all previous chances. They will only be raised at the approach of the Day of Judgment.

\textsuperscript{2753.} For Gog and Magog see n. 2439 to xviii. 92. The name stands for wild and lawless tribes who will break their barriers and swarm through the earth. This will be one of the prognostications of the approaching Judgment.
97. Then will the True Promise
    Draw nigh (of fulfilment):
    Then behold! the eyes
    Of the Unbelievers will\textsuperscript{2754}
    Fixedly stare in horror: “Ah!
    Woe to us! we were indeed
    Heedless of this; nay; we
    Truly did wrong!”

98. Verily ye, (Unbelievers),
    And the (false) gods that
    Ye worship besides Allah,
    Are (but) fuel for Hell!
    To it will ye (surely) come!

99. If these had been gods,
    They would not have got there!\textsuperscript{2755}
    But each one will abide
    Therein.

100. There, sobbing will be
    Their lot, nor will they
    There hear (aught else).

101. Those for whom
    The Good from Us
    Has gone before, will be
    Removed far therefrom.\textsuperscript{2756}

102. Not the slightest sound
    Will they hear of Hell:
    What their souls desired,
    In that will they dwell.

\textsuperscript{2754. Cf. xiv. 42.}

\textsuperscript{2755. The ultimate proof of Truth and Falsehood will be that Truth will endure and come to its own, while Falsehood will be destroyed. And so the men who worshipped Truth will come to their own, while those who worshipped Falsehood will be in a Fire of Punishment they could scarcely have imagined before. In that state there will be nothing but regrets and sighs and groans, and these evil sounds will drown everything else.}

\textsuperscript{2756. In contrast to the misery of those who rejected Truth and Right, will be the happiness of those who accepted it. The good will not hear the least sound of the groans of evil. Their true soul's desires will be fulfilled—not temporarily as in this world, but in a permanent form.}
103. The Great Terror will
Bring them no grief:
But the angels will meet them
(With mutual greetings):
“This is your Day—
(The Day) that ye were promised.”

104. The Day that We roll up
The heavens like a scroll
Rolled up for books (completed):
Even as We produced
The first Creation, so
Shall We produce
A new one: a promise
We have undertaken:
Truly shall We fulfil it.

105. Before this We wrote
In the Psalms, after the Message
(Given to Moses): “My servants
The righteous, shall inherit
The earth.”

106. Verily in this (Qur-ān)
Is a Message for people

2757. The Judgment and balancing of accounts will be a mighty Terror to the evil-doers. But it will cause, to the righteous, not grief or anxiety, but hope and happiness, for now they will be in a congenial atmosphere, and will see the fulfilment of their ideals in the meeting and greeting of the angels, preparatory to their enjoyment of the supreme Bliss—seeing the Face of Allah.

2758. The world—the universe—as we know it, will be folded up like a scroll of parchment, for it will have done its work. If Allah created all this world out of nothing, He can create an entirely new heaven and a new earth, on a plane of which we can form no conception in our present life. And He will do so, for that is His promise.

2759. Zabūr: the Book of the Psalms of David. The name of David is expressly mentioned in connection with the Zabūr in iv. 163 and xvi. 55, although there the indefinite article is applied to the word as meaning a Book of Scripture. See Psalms xxi. 13, “his seed shall inherit the earth”; xxxvii. 11, “the meek shall inherit the earth” (quoted by Jesus in Matt. v.3); and xxxvii. 29, “the righteous shall inherit the land.”

2760. The same promise occurs in the Pentateuch, Exod. xxxii. 13.
2761. The culmination of Allah's Revelation is in the Qur'an, which confirms previous scriptures, corrects the errors which men introduced into them, and explains many points in detail for all who seek for right worship and service to Allah—whether they inherit the previous Books ("People of the Book") or not. It is a universal Message.

2762. There is no question now of race or nation, of a "chosen people" or the "seed of Abraham"; or the "seed of David"; or of Hindu Arya-varta; of Jew or Gentile, Arab or 'Ajam (non-Arab), Turk or Tājik, European or Asiatic, White or Coloured; Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian, or African; or American, Australian, or Polynesian. To all men and creatures other than men who have any spiritual responsibility, the principles universally apply.

2763. 'Not my God only, but also your God; for there is but One God, the Universal Lord, Who made and loves and cherishes all.'

2764. 'If you do not realise the significance of the Message, I at least have done my duty. I have given the Good News for the Righteous and the Warning for the Unjust, without favour or partiality, and without abating one jot of the truth, openly and squarely for all. Do not ask me when the Good News and the Warning will be fulfilled. That is for Allah to decide, not for me or for you to know.'
And what ye hide
(In your hearts). 2765

111. "I know not but that
It may be a trial
For you, and a grant
Of (worldly) livelihood
(To you) for a time." 2766

112. Say: 2767 "O my Lord!
Judge Thou in truth!" 2768
"Our Lord Most Gracious
Is the One Whose assistance
Should be sought against
The blasphemies ye utter! 2769

2765. The Messenger of Allah freely and impartially teaches all how to carry out Allah's Will and live a good life. If some of them are hypocrites and come into the Ummat (Brotherhood) from baser motives and not the pure motives of the love of Allah, their motives and conduct will be judged by Allah and not by men.

2766. In the same way if men who come into the Brotherhood from pure motives and yet feel aggrieved that those outside are better off from a worldly point of view, they are wrong. It may be that the fleeting enjoyment of this world's goods is but a trial, and they should be grateful for being saved from temptation.

2767. See above, n. 2666 to xxi. 4. The better reading is "Say" in the imperative, rather than "He (the Prophet) said (or says)" in the indicative mood. Note that, on that construction, there are three distinct things which the Prophet is asked to say: viz.: (1) the statement in verses 109-11, addressed to those who turn away from the Message; (2) the prayer addressed to Allah in the first part of verse 112; and (3) the advice given indirectly to the Believers, in the second part of verse 112. I have marked these divisions by means of inverted commas.

2768. That is, Allah's judgment as between the Teacher and those who refuse his Message, or between the righteous and those who taunt them for their poverty, will be the true one, and both the Teacher and the Ummat must leave the judgment to Allah.

2769. Blasphemy is a dreadful sin. We must guard ourselves from it. But as regards others, if we cannot prevent it, we must pray to Allah for assistance and not rely upon carnal weapons.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Hajj, 22.

We now come to a new series of four Sūras, dealing with the environments and methods contributing to our religious progress, as the last five Sūras dealt with the Messengers who came in various ways to proclaim the Truth and conquer evil. See Introduction to S. xvii.

The subject-matter of this particular Sūra is concerned mainly with the spiritual implications of the Sacred House, the Pilgrimage, the Sacrifices, Striving and Fighting in defence of Truth when attacked, and other acts that make for Unselfishness and uproot Falsehood.

On the chronology of this Sūra, opinion is divided. Some parts were probably revealed in the later Makkan period, and some in Madinah. But the chronological question has no significance here.

Summary.—Importance of the spiritual Future, and need of firmness in Faith: help for Truth and punishment for Evil (xxii. 1-25).

Purity, Prayer, Humility, and Faith are implied in the Pilgrimage; in solemn Sacrifice we express our gratitude and reverence to Allah, and our desire to share food with our poorer brethren; Striving and Fighting in defence of Truth when attacked are necessary as tests of self-sacrifice (xxii. 26-48).

The promptings of evil may hinder the work of Allah's Prophet, but that work must triumph, and the Mercy and Truth of Allah must be established; therefore serve Allah humbly, and He will protect and help you (xxii. 49-78).
Al-Ḥajj, or The Pilgrimage.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O mankind! Fear your Lord!
   For the convulsion of the Hour
   (Of Judgment) will be
   A thing terrible! 2770

2. The Day ye shall see it,
   Every mother giving suck
   Shall forget her suckling-babe,
   And every pregnant female
   Shall drop her load (unformed):
   Thou shalt see mankind
   As in a drunken riot, 2771
   Yet not drunk: but dreadful
   Will be the Chastisement of Allah.

3. And yet among men
   There are such as dispute
   About Allah, without knowledge,
   And follow every Satan
   Obstinate in rebellion!

4. About whom (Satan)
   It is decreed that whoever
   Turns to him for friendship,
   Him will he lead astray,

2770. The serious issues involved are indicated by showing how terrible the consequences will be for those who disobey Allah’s Will. The terror will only be for those who rebel and disobey: the righteous will not suffer from it, but on the contrary will be greeted by angels with joy (xxi. 103).

2771. Three metaphors are used for the extreme terror which the Awful Day will inspire, (1) No mother abandons the baby at her breast in the greatest danger; yet that will happen in this Dreadful Hour. (2) An expectant mother carries the young life within her with great pride and hope: yet the terror will overpower the hope at this “Hour”, and nature’s working will be reversed. (3) Men ordinarily retain their self-possession except under intoxication: here, without intoxication, they will be driven to frenzy with terror.
5. O mankind! if ye have
A doubt about the Resurrection,
(Consider) that We created you
Out of dust, then out of
Sperm, then out of a leech-like
Clot, then out of a morsel
Of flesh, partly formed
And partly unformed, in order
That We may manifest
(Our power) to you;
And We cause whom We will
To rest in the wombs
For an appointed term,
Then do We bring you out
As babes, then (foster you)
That ye may reach your age
Of full strength; and some
Of you are called to die,
And some are sent back
To the feeblest old age.

2772. Even after the warnings there are men who are such fools as to turn away from
Allah who created them and cherishes them with His love and care; they become outlaws
in His Kingdom, making friends with satan, which is a rebel in Allah's Kingdom.

2773. If they really have doubts in their minds about the life after death, they have
only to turn their attention either to their own nature, or to the nature around. How
wonderful is their own physical growth, from lifeless matter, to seed, fertilised ovum,
foetus, child youth, age, and death! How can they doubt that the Author of all these
wonderful stages in their life here can also give them another kind of life after the end
of this life? Or, if they look at external nature, they see the earth dead and barren and
Allah's fertilising showers bring it in to life, growth and beauty in various forms. The
Creator of this great pageant of Beauty can surely create yet another and a newer world.

2774. The stages of man's physical growth from nothing till he completes the cycle
of this life are described in words whose accuracy, beauty, and comprehensiveness can
only be fully understood by biologists. Parallel to the physical growth, may be understood
man's inner growth, also by stages and by Allah's creative artistry.

2775. That is, a male or a female child, a fair or an ugly child, a good or a rebellious
child, etc., involving countless mysteries of genetics and heredity.
So that they know nothing
    After having known (much).\textsuperscript{2776}

And (further), thou seest
The earth barren and lifeless,
But when We pour down
Rain on it, it is stirred
(To life), it swells,
And it puts forth every kind
Of beautiful growth (in pairs).\textsuperscript{2777}

6. This is so, because Allah
    Is the Reality: it is He
    Who gives life to the dead,
    And it is He Who has
    Power over all things.\textsuperscript{2778}

7. And verily the Hour will come:
    There can be no doubt
    About it, or about (the fact)
    That Allah will raise up
    All who are in the graves.

8. Yet there is among men
    Such a one as disputes
    About Allah, without knowledge,
    Without guidance, and without
    A Book of Enlightenment,—\textsuperscript{2779}

\textsuperscript{2776} Cf. xvi 70. In that passage the mystery of our life was used to illustrate Allah abundant mercies and favours to us. Here it is used to illustrate Allah's power in giving us a future Life of even greater promise.

\textsuperscript{2777} A beautiful nature passage so pregnant in meaning that the earnest student wonders what magic and truth have been conveyed in so few words. M.P.'s Egyptian colleague Prof. Ghamrawi (see M.P.'s note on this passage) was but expressing the feelings of every careful student of the Qur-ān. The "subtlety and wealth of meaning" are indeed marvellous.

\textsuperscript{2778} All these beautiful and well-articulated pageants of life and nature point to the Reality behind them i.e., Allah. They will perish, but He is eternal.

\textsuperscript{2779} For "Book of Enlightenment" see iii. 184 and n. 490. I understand "knowledge" to mean here their human knowledge or intelligence, "guidance" to mean divine guidance, such as comes from Allah or prophets of Allah or a revelation from Allah, and the "Book of Enlightenment" to mean the fundamental guide to good conduct. =
9. (Disdainfully) bending his side,
In order to lead (men) astray
From the Path of Allah:
For him there is disgrace.\(^{2780}\)
In this life, and on the Day
Of Judgment We shall
Make him taste the chastisement
Of burning (Fire).

10. (It will be said): “This is
Because of the deeds which
Thy hands sent forth,
For verily Allah is not
Unjust to His servents.”\(^{2781}\)

SECTION 2.

11. There are among men
Some who serve Allah,
As it were, on the verge:\(^{2782}\)
If good befalls them, they are,
Therewith, well content; but
If a trial comes to them,

= the clear rules laid down in all Dispensations to help men to lead good lives. The “Book of Enlightenment” may mean a revealed Book in which case “Guidance” would refer to divine guidance through a prophet of Allah.

2780. Some Commentators think this refers to Abū Jahl, but the words are perfectly general, and this type of man is common in all ages. The same may be said about verse 3 above: Commentators give the immediate reference to one Nadhar ibn Hārith.

2781. ‘What you suffer is the consequence of your own sinful deeds; Allah is just; He is not unjust in the least to any of His creatures’.

2782. They are men whose minds are not firm: they will have faith, if all goes well with them, but as soon as they are tried, they are found wanting. They are a different kind from hypocrites. It is not fraud or double dealing that is their sin: it is a weak mind, petty standards of judging right by success, a selfishness that gives nothing but asks for all, a narrow-mindedness that does not go beyond petty mundane calculations—a “nicely calculated less or more” of the good things of this world. They fail in both worlds, and their failure in this world is patent for every on-looker.
They turn on their faces:
They lose both this world
And the Hereafter: that
Is indeed the manifest loss.

12. They call on such deities,\textsuperscript{2783}
Besides Allah, as can neither
Hurt nor profit them:
That is straying far indeed
(From the Way)!

13. (Perhaps) they call on one
Whose hurt is nearer\textsuperscript{2784}
Than his profit: evil, indeed,
Is the patron, and evil
The companion (for help)!

14. Verily Allah will admit
Those who believe and work
Righteous deeds, to Gardens,
Beneath which rivers flow:
For Allah carries out
All that He desires.\textsuperscript{2785}

15. If any think that Allah
Will not help him
(His Messenger) in this world
And the Hereafter, let him
Stretch out a rope

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\textsuperscript{2783}. To such minds religion does not mean high endeavour, self-sacrifice for noble ends, the recognition of Allah's infinite world, but just a small concession to formalism, perhaps a present to an idol (literal or figurative), perhaps attendance at worship if it can be done without trouble! It is false gods they worship, and the more they worship, the more they stray.

\textsuperscript{2784}. Such false worship is not always neutral, bringing neither harm nor good. Perhaps the harm comes first, and there is no help from Allah. Such minds are themselves demoralised, and render themselves unfit for help!

\textsuperscript{2785}. Allah is both true to His promise, and He has power to give full effect to His Will and Plan.
To the ceiling and cut (himself)\textsuperscript{2786}
Off: then let him see
Whether his plan will remove
That which enrages (him)!

16. Thus have We sent down\textsuperscript{2787}
Clear Signs; and verily
Allah doth guide whom
He will!

17. Those who believe (in the Qur-\textsuperscript{\text{"a}}n),
Those who follow the Jewish
\textit{(scriptures)},
And the Sabians,\textsuperscript{2788} Christians,
Magians,\textsuperscript{2789} and Polytheists,—

\textsuperscript{2786.} There is some difference of opinion as to the interpretation of this verse. Most Commentators are agreed that the pronoun “him” in the second line (“will not help him”) refers to the holy Prophet, and that the “any” in the first line refers to his enemies, who wished to see him destroyed and removed from the scene of his labours. Ibn ’Abbas, whom I have followed here, and whom a great number of Commentators follow, construes the later clauses in the sense given in the text. Freely paraphrased, it means: if the enemies of Allah’s Messenger are enraged at his successes, let them fix a rope to their ceiling and hang themselves. \textit{Samiia} is thus rendered by the word ‘ceiling”. If \textit{Samiia} is rendered by the word “heaven” (the usual meaning), the paraphrase would be: if the enemies of Allah’s Messenger are enraged at the help he gets from heavens, let them stretch a rope to heavens, and see if they can cut off the help in that way!—in other words, they are fools if they think they can intercept Allah’s help by their petty devices!

\textsuperscript{2787.} Instead of plotting against Allah’s Messenger, the Unbelievers should observe the Clear Signs which he has brought, and obey and follow the Guidance which comes from Allah according to the Laws which He has fixed by His holy Will and Plan.

\textsuperscript{2788.} For Sabians, see n. 76 to ii. 62. They are also referred to in v. 72. In both those passages the Muslims are mentioned with the Jews, Christians, and Sabians, as receiving Allah’s protection and mercy. Here, besides the four religions, there is further mention of Magians and Polytheists: it is not said that they would receive Allah’s Mercy, but only that Allah will judge between the various forms of faith.

\textsuperscript{2789.} This is the only place where the Magians (\textit{Majās}) are mentioned in the Qur-\textsuperscript{\text{"a}}n. Their cult is a very ancient one. They consider Fire as the purest and noblest element, and worship it as a fit emblem of Allah. Their location was the Persian and Median uplands and the Mesopotamian valleys, their religion was reformed by Zardusht (date uncertain, about B.C. 600?). Their scripture is the Zend-Avesta, the bible of the Parsis. They were “the Wise men of the East” mentioned in the Gospels.
Allah will judge between them
On the Day of Judgment:
For Allah is witness
Of all things.

18. Seest thou not that
To Allah prostrate
All things that are
In the heavens and on earth,\textsuperscript{2790}
The sun, the moon, the stars;
The hills, the trees, the animals;
And a great number among
Mankind? But a great number
Are (also) such as
Unto whom the
Chastisement is justly due.
And such as Allah shall disgrace,--
None can raise to honour:
For Allah carries out
All that He wills.\textsuperscript{2791}

19. These two antagonists dispute\textsuperscript{2792}
With each other about their Lord:
But those who deny (their Lord),--
For them will be cut out
A garment of Fire:
Over their heads will be
Poured out boiling water.

\textsuperscript{2790.} Cf. xxi. 79, and n. 2733. All created things, animate and inanimate, depend on Allah for their existence, and this dependence can be construed as their \textit{Sajda} or bowing down in worship. Their very existence proclaims their dependence. How can they be objects of worship? For \textit{haqqa} in this verse. Cf. xv. 64, n. 1990.

\textsuperscript{2791.} Cf. xxii, 16. There the argument was that those who work in harmony with Allah's Law and Will will get their reward, for Allah always carries out His Plan. Here is the Parallel argument: those who defy Allah's Will must suffer pain and disgrace, for Allah is well able to carry out His Will.

\textsuperscript{2792.} Two antagonists: \textit{i.e.}, parties of antagonists, \textit{viz.}, Men of Faith, who confess \textit{their} Lord and seek to carry out His Will, and Men who deny their Lord and defy His Will.
20. With it will be melted
What is within their bodies,
As well as (their) skins.\textsuperscript{2793}

21. In addition there will be
Maces of iron (to punish) them.\textsuperscript{2794}

22. Every time they wish
To get away therefrom,
From anguish, they will be
Forced back therein, and
(It will be said). “Taste ye
The chastisement of Burning!”

SECTION 3.

23. Allah will admit those
Who believe and work righteous
deeds,
To Gardens beneath which\textsuperscript{2795}
Rivers flow: they shall be
Adorned therein with bracelets
Of gold and pearls; and
Their garments there
Will be of silk.

24. For they have been guided
(In this life) to the purest
Of speeches; they have been
Guided to the Path of Him
Who is Worthy of (all) Praise.

\textsuperscript{2793} The punishment, will be all-pervading, not merely superficial.

\textsuperscript{2794} Read this with the next verse. There will be no escape from the final Punishment adjudged after the time of repentance is past.

\textsuperscript{2795} In xxii. 14 above, was described the meed of the Righteous as compared with the time-servers and those who worshipped false gods (vv. 10-13): here we have the case of those who were persecuted, abused, prevented from entering the Ka'ba and deprived of all that makes life smooth, agreeable, and comfortable. For them the meed is described in a way that negative these afflictions: costly adornments (as against being stripped of home and property), purity of speech (as against the abuse they received), the Path of the Lord of Praise (as against the fierce and malignant persecution to which they were subjected).
25. As to those who have rejected (Allah), and would keep back (men) From the Way of Allah, and From the Sacred Mosque, which We have made (open) to (all) men— Equal is the dweller there And the visitor from the country— And any whose purpose therein Is profanity wrongfully.\textsuperscript{2796} They will We cause to taste Of a most grievous chastisement

\section*{SECTION 4}

26. Behold! We pointed the site,\textsuperscript{2797} To Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, (Saying): “Associate not anything (In worship) with Me; And sanctify My House For those who compass it round,\textsuperscript{2798} Or stand up, Or bow, or prostrate themselves (Therein in prayer).

27. “And proclaim the Pilgrimage Among men: they will come To thee on foot and (mounted) On every camel,

\textsuperscript{2796} All these were enormities of which the Pagan clique in power in Makkah before and during the Hijrat were guilty.

\textsuperscript{2797} The site of Makkah was granted to Abraham (and his son Isma’il) for a place of worship that was to be pure (without idols, the worship being paid to Allah, the One True God) and universal, without being reserved (like Solomon’s Temple of later times) to any one People or Race.

\textsuperscript{2798} Cf. ii. 125. Note that here the word qa’in (‘who stand up for prayer’) occurs in place of ‘ākifin (who use it as a retreat). In practice the meaning is the same. Those who go for a retreat to the Ka’ba stay there for the time being.
Lean (on account of journeys)
Through deep and distant
Mountain highways;\textsuperscript{2799}

28. “That they may witness
The benefits (provided) for them,\textsuperscript{2800}
And celebrate the name
Of Allah, through the Days\textsuperscript{2801}
Appointed, over the cattle\textsuperscript{2802}
Which He has provided for them
(For sacrifice): then eat ye
Thereof and feed the distressed
Ones in want.

29. “Then let them complete
The rites prescribed\textsuperscript{2803}
For them, fulfil their vows,\textsuperscript{2804}
And (again) circumambulate
The Ancient House.”

\textsuperscript{2799.} When the Pilgrimage was proclaimed, people came to it for every quarter, near and far, on foot and mounted. The “lean camel” coming after a fatiguing journey through distant mountain roads typifies the difficulties of travel, which Pilgrims disregard on account of the temporal and spiritual benefits referred to in the next verse.

\textsuperscript{2800.} There are benefits both for this our material life and for our spiritual life. Of the former kind are those associated with social intercourse which furthers trade and increases knowledge. Of the latter kind are the opportunities of realising some of our spiritual yearnings in sacred associations that go back to the most ancient times. Of both kinds may be considered the opportunities which the Pilgrimage provides for strengthening our international Brotherhood.

\textsuperscript{2801.} The three special days of Hajj are the 8th, 9th, and 10th of the month of Zul-hijjah, and the two or three subsequent days of Tashriq: see the rites explained in n. 217 to ii. 197. But we may ordinarily include the first ten days of Zul-hijjah in the term.

\textsuperscript{2802.} The great day of commemorative Sacrifice (‘Id-ul-Adhā) is the 10th of Zul-hijjah: the meat then killed is meant to be eaten for food and distributed to the poor and needy.

\textsuperscript{2803.} Tafah–the superfluous growth on one’s body, such as nails, hair, etc., which it is not permitted to remove in Ḥaram. These may be removed on the 10th day, when the Hajj is completed: that is the rite of completion.

\textsuperscript{2804.} The Pilgrimage is completed by the performance of these rites. The Pilgrim should carry in mind the purification he gained in performing his pilgrimage. Then comes the final Tawāf.
30. Such (is the Pilgrimage):
   Whoever honours the sacred
   Rites of Allah, for him
   It is good in the sight
   Of his Lord, Lawful to you
   (For food in Pilgrimage) are cattle,
   Except those mentioned to you
   (As exceptions): so shun
   The abomination of idols,
   And shun the word
   That is false,—

31. Being true in faith to Allah,
   And never assigning partners
   To Him: if anyone assigns
   Partners to Allah, he is
   As if he had fallen
   From heaven and been snatched up
   By birds, or the wind
   Had swooped (like a bird
   On its prey) and thrown him
   Into a far-distant place.

32. Such (is his state): and
   Whoever holds in honour
   The Rites of Allah,

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2805. The general food prohibitions will be found in ii. 173, v. 4-5, and vi. 121, 138-146. They are meant for health and cleanliness, but the worst abominations to shun are those of false worship and false speech. Here the question is about food during Pilgrimage. Lawful meat but not game is allowed.

2806. A parable full of meaning. The man who falls from the worship of Allah, The One True God, is like a man who falls from heaven. His being taken up with false objects of worship is like the falling man being picked up in the air by birds of prey. But the false objects of worship cannot hold him permanently in their grip. A fierce blast of wind—the Wrath of Allah—comes and snatches him away and throws him into a place far, far away from any place he could have imagined—into the hell of those who defied Allah.

2807. Sha‘ā‘ir, symbols, signs, marks by which something is known to belong to some particular body of men, such as flags. In ii. 158 the word was applied to Safā and Marwa: see n. 160 there. Here it seems to be applied to the rites of sacrifice. Such sacrifice is symbolical: it should betoken dedication and piety of heart. See below, xxii. 37.
(In the sacrifice of animals),
Such (honour) should come truly
From piety of heart.

33. In them ye have benefits
For a term appointed:
In the end their place
Of sacrifice is near
The Ancient House.

SECTION 5.

34. To every people did We
Appoint rites (of sacrifice),
That they might celebrate
The name of Allah over
The sustenance He gave them
From animals (fit for food)
But your God is One God:
Submit then your wills to Him
(In Islam): and give thou
The good news to those
Who humble themselves,—

2808. In them: in cattle, or animals offered for sacrifice. It is quite true that they are useful in many ways to man, e.g., camels in desert countries are useful as mounts or for carrying burdens, or for giving milk, and so for horses and oxen: and camels and oxen are also good for meat, and camel's hair can be woven into cloth; goats and sheep also yield milk and meat, and hair or wool. But if they are used for sacrifice, they become symbols by which men show that they are willing to give up some of their own benefits for the sake of satisfying the needs of their poorer brethren.

2809. Ilā=towards, near. The actual sacrifice is not performed in the Ka'ba, but at Minā, five or six miles off, where the Pilgrims encamp: see n. 217 to ii 197. Thumma = then, finally, in the end; i.e., after all the rites have been performed, Tawāf, Safā and Marwa, and 'Arafāt.

2810. This is the true end of sacrifice, not propitiation of higher powers, for Allah is One, and He does not delight in flesh or blood (xxii. 37), but a symbol of thanksgiving to Allah by sharing meat with fellow-men. The solemn pronunciation of Allah's name over the sacrifice is an essential part of the rite.

2811. The good news: i.e. the Message of Allah, that He will accept in us the sacrifice of self for the benefit of our fellow-men.
35. To those whose hearts,  
When Allah is mentioned,  
Are filled with fear,  
Who show patient perseverance  
Over their afflictions, keep up  
Regular prayer, and spend  
(In charity) out of what  
We have bestowed upon them.  

36. The sacrificial camels  
We have made for you  
As among the signs from  
Allah: in them is (much)  
Good for you: then pronounce  
The name of Allah over them  
As they line up (for sacrifice):  
When they are down  
On their sides (after slaughter),  
Eat ye thereof, and feed  
Such as (beg not but)  
Live in contentment,

2812. Some qualities of Allah’s devotees are mentioned here, in ascending order: (1) Humility before Allah makes them receptive, and prepares them to listen to Allah’s Message; (2) fear of Allah, which is akin to love, touches their heart, and penetrates through their inmost being; (3) they are not afraid of anything in mortal life; they take their trials patiently, and they go on in a course of righteousness with constancy; (4) their prayer now is not a matter of form, but a real communion with Allah, with a sense of confidence such as a faithful servant feels in the presence of a kind and loving master; and (5) gratitude to Allah, as shown by practical acts of charity to all fellow-creatures.

2813. See n. 2808 to xxii. 33 above. What was expressed in general terms is applied here more particularly to camels, the most precious and useful animals of Arabia, whose mode of slaughter for sacrifice is different from that of smaller animals: the special word for such sacrifice is Nahr (cviii.2).

2814. There are ethics in begging, as in charity. No approval is given to arrogant and insolent begging, though the relief of distress of all kinds, deserved and undeserved, is included in charity. But those who beg with humility and those who receive gifts with gratitude and contentment are both mentioned for special attention. Charity should not be given for show, or to get rid of importunate demands. It should find out real needs and meet them.
And such as beg
With due humility: thus have
We made animals subject
To you, that ye
May be grateful.

37. It is not their meat
Nor their blood, that reaches
Allah: it is your piety
That reaches Him: He
Has thus made them subject
To you, that ye may glorify
Allah for His guidance to you: 2815
And proclaim the Good News
To all who do good.

38. Verily Allah will defend
(From ill) those who believe:
Verily, Allah loveth not
Any that is unfaithful, ungrateful.

SECTION 6.

39. To those against whom 2816
War is made, permission

2815. The essence of sacrifice has been explained in n. 2810. No one should suppose
that meat or blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a Pagan fancy that Allah
could be appeased by blood sacrifice. But Allah does accept the offering of our hearts,
and as a symbol of such offer, some visible institution is necessary. He has given us power
over the brute creation, and permitted us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name
at the solemn act of taking life, for without this solemn invocation, we are apt to forget
the sacredness of life. By the invocation we are reminded that wanton cruelty is not in
our thoughts, but only the need of food. Now if we further deny ourselves the greater
part of the food (some theologians fix the proportion at three-quarters or two-thirds)
for the sake of our poorer brethren in solemn assembly in the precincts of the Haram (sacred
territory), our symbolic act finds practical expression in benevolence, and that is the virtue
sought to be taught. We should be grateful to Allah for His guidance in this matter, in
which many Peoples have gone wrong, and we should proclaim the true doctrine, so that
virtue and charity may increase among men.

2816. Several translators have failed to notice that yuqūtalūna (in the best-approved
texts) is in the passive voice, "against whom war is made", not "who take arms against
the unbelievers" as Sale translates it. The clause "and verily ...their aid" is parenthetical.
Is given (to fight), because They are wronged;—and verily, Allah is Most Powerful For their aid;—

40. (They are) those who have Been expelled from their homes In defiance of right,— (For no cause) except That they say, “Our Lord Is Allah”. Did not Allah Check one set of people By means of another,\(^2817\) There would surely have been Pulled down monasteries, churches, Synagogues, and mosques, in which The name of Allah is commemorated In abundant measure. Allah will Certainly aid those who Aid His (cause);— for verily Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might,\(^2818\) (Able to enforce His Will).

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= Verse 40 connects on with “they are wronged”. The wrong is indicated: ‘driven by persecution from their home, for no other reason than that they worshipped the One True God’. This was the first occasion on which fighting-in self-defence—was permitted. This passage therefore undoubtedly dates from Madinah.

2817. To allow a righteous people to fight against a ferocious and mischief-loving people was fully justified. But the justification was far greater here, when the little Muslim community was not only fighting for its own existence against the Makkkan Quraish, but for the very existence of the Faith in the One True God. They had as much right to be in Makkah and worship in the Ka’ba as the other Quraish; yet they were exiled for their Faith. It affected not the faith of one peculiar people. The principle involved was that of all worship, Jewish or Christian as well as Muslim, and of all foundations built for pious uses.

2818. ‘Aziz means Exalted in power, rank, dignity; Incomparable; Full of might and majesty; Able to enforce His Will. The last signification is the one that predominates here.
41. (They are) those who,
If We establish them
In the land, establish
Regular prayer and give
Zakat, enjoin
The right and forbid wrong; 2819
With Allah rests the end (And decision) of (all) affairs.

42. If they disbelieve you
So did the Peoples
Before them (with their
Prophets), 2820
The People of Noah,
And ‘Ad and Thamûd;

43. And those of Abraham and Lût;

44. And the Companions 2821
Of the Madyan people;
And Moses was rejected (In the same way). But I
Granted respite to the Unbelievers,
And (only) after that
Did I punish them:
But how (terrible) was
My punishment (of them)! 2822

2819. “Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong” is an essential duty of the Muslim Ummah and one of the main purposes for which it has been raised. (See iii. 104, 110; ix. 71, 111-112, xxii, 41).

2820. It is nothing new if the Prophet of Allah is accused of imposture. This was done in all ages; e.g., Noah (vii. 64); Hûd the prophet of the ‘Ad people (vii. 66); Sâlih the prophet of the Thamûd (vii. 76); Abraham (xxi. 55); Lût (vii. 82); Shu’âib the prophet of the Madyan people (vii. 85) and also of the Companions of the Wood (xv. 78). The case of Moses is mentioned apart, as his people survived to the time of our Prophet and survive to the present, and they frequently rebelled against Moses (ii. 49-61).

2821. Were they the same as the Companions of the Wood? See n. 2000 to xv. 78.

2822. My Wrath on them, and the complete reversal of their fortune in consequence.
45. How many populations have We Destroyed, which were given To wrong-doing? They tumbled down On their roofs. And how many Wells are lying idle and neglected, And castles lofty and well-built?

46. Do they not travel Through the land, so that Their hearts (and minds) May thus learn wisdom And their ears Thus learn to hear? Truly it is not the eyes That are blind, but the Hearts which are In their breasts.

47. Yet they ask thee To hasten on the Punishment! But Allah will not fail

2823. The roofs fell in first, and the whole structure, walls and all, came tumbling after, as happens in ruins. The place was turned upside down.

2824. In a dry country like Arabia, a well stands as a symbol for a living, flourishing population, and many place-names mean “the well of so-and-so” e.g., Bir ‘Ali, a village just south of Madinah the quality of whose drinking water is famous, or Abyar Ibn Hassân, a noted stopping place on the road from Makkah to Madinah about 92 miles from Madinah.

2825. The word for “heart” in Arabic speech imports both the seat of intelligent faculties and understanding as well as the seat of affections and emotions. Those who reject Allah’s Message may have their physical eyes and ears, but their hearts are blind and deaf. If their faculties of understanding were active, would they not see the Signs of Allah’s Providence and Allah’s Wrath in nature around them and in the cities and ruins if they travel intelligently?

2826. If Allah gives respite, those to whom it is given have a real chance of repentance and amendment. He will not curtail His promise of respite. But on the other hand He has promised to call everyone to account for his deeds, and this involves justice and punishment for sin. This promise will also come true. It is foolish to try to hasten =
In His promise. Verily
A Day in the sight of thy Lord
Is like a thousand years
Of your reckoning.

48. And to how many populations
Did I give respite, which\textsuperscript{2827}
Were given to wrong-doing?
In the end I punished them.
To Me is the destination (of all).

SECTION 7.

49. Say: O men! I am
(Sent) to you only to give
A clear warning:\textsuperscript{2828}

50. "Those who believe and work
Righteousness, for them
Is forgiveness and a sustenance
Most generous.\textsuperscript{2829}

51. "But those who strive
Against Our Signs, to frustrate\textsuperscript{2830}
Them,—they will be
Companions of the Fire."

\textsuperscript{2827} The argument begun in xxii. 45 is now rounded off and closed.

\textsuperscript{2828} It is the Messenger’s duty to convey the warning in the clearest terms to the wicked. It is no part of his duty to coerce them or judge them, or bring on the Punishment for them. That only rests with Allah. But the warning itself is full of Mercy: for it gives the highest hope to the repentant sinner who turns and comes to Allah.

\textsuperscript{2829} The “sustenance” must be construed in the widest sense, spiritual as well as intellectual and physical. The reward of righteousness is far more generous than any merit there may be in the creature following the Will of his Creator.

\textsuperscript{2830} It will not be in their power to frustrate Allah’s Plan; all they will do is to go further and further down in their spiritual state, deeper and deeper in their Hell.
52. Never did We send
A messenger or a prophet
Before thee, but, when he
Framed a desire, Satan
Threw some (vanity)\textsuperscript{2831}
Into his desire: but Allah
Will cancel anything (vain)
That Satan throws in,
And Allah will confirm
(And establish) His Signs:
For Allah is full of knowledge
And wisdom:\textsuperscript{2832}

53. That He may make
The suggestions thrown in
By Satan, but a trial\textsuperscript{2833}
For those in whose hearts
Is a disease and who are\textsuperscript{2834}
Hardened of heart: verily
The wrong-doers are in a schism
Far (from the Truth):

\textsuperscript{2831}. Prophets and messengers (the distinction is explained in n. 2503 to xix. 51) are but human. Their actions are righteous and their motives pure. But in judging things from a human point of view, the suggestion may come to their mind (from Satan) that it would be good to have power or wealth or influence for furthering Allah’s cause, or that it may be good to conciliate some faction which may be irreconcilable. In fact, in Allah’s Plan, it may be the opposite. Allah, in His mercy and inspiration, will cancel any false or vain suggestions of this kind, and confirm and strengthen His own Commands and make known His Will in His Signs or revelations.

\textsuperscript{2832}. This clause and the similar clause at the end of the next verse are parenthetical.

\textsuperscript{2833}. If any suggestion comes to the human mind that is not in accordance with Allah’s Will and Plan, it has two opposite effects: to evil minds it is a trial and temptation from the satan but to the mind well-instructed in Faith, it stands self-condemned at once, and becomes a means of strengthening the Faith and stimulating redoubled efforts to conform to the Will of Allah.

\textsuperscript{2834}. Cf. ii. 10. I understand the “disease in the heart” to be an earlier state of curse, which leads in an intensified form to a complete “hardening of the heart”.

- 966 -
54. And that those on whom Knowledge has been bestowed may learn That the (Qur-ān) is the Truth From thy Lord, and that they May believe therein, and their hearts May be made humbly (open) To it: for verily Allah is The Guide of those who believe, To the Straight Way.

55. Those who reject Faith Will not cease to be In doubt concerning (Revelation) Until the Hour (of Judgment) Comes suddenly upon them, Or there comes to them The Chastisement of a barren day.

56. On that Day the Dominion Will be that of Allah: He will judge between them: So those who believe And work righteous deeds will be In Gardens of Delight.

57. And for those who reject Faith And deny Our Signs, There will be a humiliating Punishment.

2835. The last clause in the last verse was parenthetical. Treat this clause as parallel with the first clause in verse 53, "that he may make", etc. Both will then connect with "Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs" in verse 52. See n. 2833 above.

2836. The penalty of deliberately rejecting Faith is that the person doing so closes the channels of Mercy that flow from Allah. He will always be subject to doubts and superstitions, until the time comes when all earthly scales fall from his spiritual eyes. But then there will be no time for Repentance: it will be too late to profit by the guidance of Allah given through Revelation.

2837. Such power as Evil has over those who yield to it (xvii. 62-64) will then be gone, as the respite granted to Satan be over, and Allah's Kingdom will be established.
SECTION 8.

58. Those who leave their homes
In the cause of Allah,
And are then slain or die,-
On them will Allah bestow verily
A goodly Provision: 2838
Truly Allah is He Who
Bestows the best Provision.

59. Verily He will admit them
To a place with which
They shall be well pleased:
For Allah is All-Knowing,
Most Forbearing. 2839

60. That (is so). And if one
Has retaliated to no greater
Extent than the injury he received,
And is again set upon
Inordinately. Allah will help
Him: for Allah is One
That blots out (sins)
And forgives (again and again). 2840

2838. *Rizq*: sustenance, provision. I have preferred the latter word here, because after death we can only think of *rizq* in a large metaphorical sense. *i.e.*, all the provision necessary to equip the person for a full and happy Future Life, and also, I think, a provision for his dependants and near and dear ones in this life.

2839. Martyrdom is the sacrifice of life in the service of Allah. Its reward is therefore even greater than that of an ordinarily good life. The martyr’s sins are forgiven by the very act of martyrdom, which implies service and self-surrender in the highest sense of the word. Allah knows all his past life but will forbear from calling him to account for things that should strictly come into his account.

2840. Ordinarily Muslims are enjoined to bear injuries with patience and return good for evil (xxiii. 96). But there are occasions when human feelings get the better of our wise resolutions, or when, in a state of conflict or war, we return “as good as we get”. In that case our retaliation is permissible, provided the injury we inflict is not greater than that we receive. After such retaliation we are even, but if the other side again acts aggressively and goes beyond all bounds in attacking us, we are entitled to protection from Allah in spite of all our faults; for Allah is One that blots out our sins, and forgives again and again.
61. That is because Allah merges Night into Day, and He Merges Day into Night, and Verily it is Allah Who hears And sees (all things).  

62. That is because Allah—He Is the Reality; and those Besides Him whom they invoke, They are but vain Falsehood: Verily Allah is He, Most High, Most Great.

63. Seest thou not that Allah Sends down rain from the sky, And forthwith the earth Becomes clothed with green? For Allah is All-subtle, All-Aware.

2841. To some it may appear strange or even irreconcilable that Allah should be both Merciful and Just; that He should both protect His devotees and yet ask for their self-sacrifice; that he should command them to return good for evil, and yet permit retaliation under certain restrictions. But such thoughts are short-sighted. Do they not see many inconsistencies in all Life, all Nature, and all Creation? Why, even in such simple phenomena as Night and Day, the one merges into the other, and no one can tell when precisely the one begins and the other ends. Yet we can see in a rough sort of way that the one gives rest and the other activity, that the one reveals the beauties of the starry heavens and the other the splendour of the sun. In countless ways we can see there the wisdom and the fine artistry of Allah. And there are subtle nuances and mergings in nature that our intelligence can hardly penetrate. Now human life and human relations are far more complicated, and it is Allah alone Who can see all the subtle distinctions and hear the cries of all His creatures, in a world which Tennyson described as “red in tooth and claw”.

2842. The emphatic construction calls attention to the fact that Allah is the only abiding Reality. All else is like shadows that will pass away.

2843. See n. 2841 above. Our vain imaginings, groundless doubts, foolish subtleties, and false worship should all give place to trust and faith in the one and only Reality.

2844. _Latif_, as a name of Allah, is as difficult to define in words as the idea it seeks to represent is difficult to grasp in our minds. It implies: (1) fine, subtle (the basic meaning); (2) so fine and subtle as to be imperceptible to human sight; (3) so pure as to be incomprehensible; (4) with sight so perfect as to see and understand the finest...
64. To Him belongs all that is
In the heavens and on earth:
For verily Allah—He is
Free of all wants,
Worthy of all praise.  

SECTION 9.

65. Seest thou not that Allah
Has made subject to you (men)
All that is on the earth,
And the ships that sail
Through the sea by His command?
He withholds the sky
From falling on the earth
Except by His leave:
For Allah is Most Kind
And Most Merciful to man.

---

2845. Each of the verses xxii. 61-63 mentioned two attributes of Allah with reference to the contents of that verse. This verse now sums up the whole argument, and the two attributes with which it closes sum up the idea by which we can understand Allah's goodness. Allah's loving kindness and mercies are not like those of human creatures who all depend upon one another, and often expect some kindness or recognition in return. Allah is above all wants and depends in no way whatever on His creatures. His mercies have therefore a special quality, which we cannot describe except by gratefully singing the praises of Allah. Cf. ii. 267.

2846. Land and sea have been made subject to man by Allah's command, so that man can develop his life freely on earth.

2847. Samā'a means (1) something high, (2) a roof, a ceiling, (3) the sky, the canopy of heaven. (4) cloud or rain. I understand the last meaning here, though most authorities seem to render it by some such words as "sky". If we understand rain here, we have a complete picture of the three elements in which man lives—land, air and sea. Rain is also appropriate for mention with Allah's kindness and mercy. He regulates the rain for man's benefit.
66. It is He Who gave you life,
    Will cause you to die,
    And will again give you
    Life: truly man is
    A most ungrateful creature!

67. To every People have We
    Appointed rites
    Which they must follow:
    Let them not then dispute
    With thee on the matter,
    But do thou invite (them)
    To thy Lord: for thou art
    Assuredly on the Right Way.

68. If they do wrangle with thee,
    Say, "Allah knows best
    What it is ye are doing."

69. "Allah will judge between you
    On the Day of Judgment
    Concerning the matters in which
    Ye differ."

70. Knowest thou not that
    Allah knows all that is
    In heaven and on earth?

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2848. Rites and ceremonies may appear to be an unimportant matter compared with
"weightier matters of the Law" and with the higher needs of man's spiritual nature. But
they are necessary for social and religious organisation, and their effect on the individual
himself is not to be despised. In any case, as they are visible external symbols, they give
rise to the most heated controversies. Such controversies are to be deprecated. That does
not mean that our rites and ceremonies are to be made light of. Those in Islam rest on
the highest social and religious needs of man, and if we are convinced that we are on
the Right Way, we should invite all to join us, without entering into controversies about
such matters.

2849. 'You are only wrangling about matters about which you have no knowledge
nor any deep religious feeling. The springs of your conduct are all open before Allah,
and He will judge you.'

2850. 'You not only find fault with the very few and simple rites and ceremonies in
Islam: you, outside Islam, have no rites and ceremonies which you are yourselves agreed
upon, either as Christians or as Jews, or one compared with the other.'
Indeed it is all
In a record, and that
Is easy for Allah. 2851

71. Yet they worship, besides Allah, Things for which no authority Has been sent down to them, And of which they have (Really) no knowledge: For those that do wrong There is no helper. 2852

72. When Our Clear Signs Are rehearsed to them, Thou wilt notice a denial 2853 On the faces of the Unbelievers! They nearly attack with violence Those who rehearse Our Signs To them. Say, “Shall I Tell you of something (Far) worse than that? 2854 It is the Fire (of Hell)! Allah has promised it To the Unbelievers! And evil is that destination!”

2851. We human beings can only think of knowledge being accurately and permanently preserved by means of a record. Allah’s knowledge has all the qualities of a perfect record, and it is moreover complete and comprehensive. This is not difficult for Him from whom flow all knowledge and intelligence.

2852. When plain common-sense shows the absurdity of false worship, behind which there is neither knowledge, intelligence, nor authority (quite the contrary), who or what can help the false misguided creatures who dishonour Allah by false worship?

2853. Munkar: (1) a refusal to accept something offered; (2) a denial of something stated or pointed out; (3) a feeling of disapproval or active aversion, or disgust.

2854. There is irony here. ‘You think Allah’s revelations and Signs are distasteful to you! There will be something far more distasteful to you if you do not repent! What do you say to the inevitable Punishment.'
SECTION 10.

73. O men! Here is
A parable set forth!
Listen to it! Those
On whom, besides Allah,
Ye call, cannot create
(Even) a fly, if they all
Met together for the purpose!
And if the fly should snatch
Away anything from them,
They would have no power
To release it from the fly.
Feeble are those who petition²⁸⁵⁵
And those whom they petition!

74. They do not have right
Estimate of Allah,
For Allah is Powerful
And Mighty.²⁸⁵⁶

75. Allah chooses Messengers²⁸⁵⁷
From angels and from men
For Allah is He Who hears
And sees (all things).²⁸⁵⁸

²⁸⁵⁵. Both idols and their worshippers are poor, foolish, feeble creatures!
²⁸⁵⁶. No one can have a true idea of Allah, who descends to the base forms of false worship. Allah has all power, and He is fully able to carry out every part of His Will and Plan. He is exalted above all in power and dignity. Cf. xxii. 40 and n. 2818 for the full meaning of 'Azîz.
²⁸⁵⁷. Men are chosen as Messengers to ordinary men; for ordinary men will not be able to understand and be in communion with beings so refined as angels. But angels are sent as Messengers to Allah's chosen prophets, to convey the Message from time to time. In either case they are chosen by Allah, are subject to Allah's Will, and should not be worshipped as gods.
²⁸⁵⁸. As Allah regards the humblest of His creatures and hears their prayer, He sends men messengers out of their own brethren (see last note), and to such messengers He communicates the highest spiritual Truths through His angels.
76. He knows what is before them
And what is behind them:
And to Allah go back
All affairs (for decision).\(^{2859}\)

77. O ye who believe!
Bow down, prostrate yourselves,
And adore your Lord;
And do good;
That ye may prosper.\(^{2860}\)

78. And strive in His cause
As ye ought to strive,
(With sincerity and under
discipline).\(^{2861}\)

He has chosen you, and has
Imposed no difficulties on you\(^{2862}\)
In religion; it is the religion
Of your father Abraham.
It is He Who has named
You Muslims, both before\(^{2863}\)
And in this (Revelation);

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\(^{2859}\) Time, before or behind, may be of some importance to men. They may dispute as to what was the first Message, and what is the last Message. To Allah, this question of priority and posteriority is of no consequence. All questions go back ultimately to Him and are judged on their merits.

\(^{2860}\) Prosper: in a spiritual sense, both in this life and the Hereafter.

\(^{2861}\) As far as the striving is concerned with Jihad in the narrow sense, see the limitations in n. 204 to ii. 190 and n. 205 to ii. 191. But the words are perfectly general and apply to all true and unselfish striving for spiritual good.

\(^{2862}\) The Jews were hampered by many restrictions, and their religion was racial. Christianity, as originally preached, was a hermit religion: “sell whatsoever thou hast” (Mark x. 21); “take no thought for the morrow” (Matt. vi. 34). Islam, as originally preached, gives freedom and full play to man’s faculties of every kind. It is universal, and claims to date from Adam: father Abraham is mentioned as the great Ancestor of those among whom Islam was first preached (Jews, Christians, and Arabs).

\(^{2863}\) Before: see Abraham’s prayer in ii. 128. In this revelation: in this very verse, as well as in other places.
That the Messenger may be
A witness for you, and ye
Be witnesses for mankind! 2864
So establish regular Prayer,
Give zakat
And hold fast to Allah!
He is your Protector—
The best to protect
And the Best to help!

2864. See ii. 143, and notes 143 and 144. As the Prophet is a guide and exemplar among us, so Muslims ought to be exemplars amongst mankind. The best witness to Allah’s Truth are those who show its light in their lives.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Māminūn, 23.

This Sūra deals with the virtues which are seed-bed of Faith, especially in an environment in which Truth is denied and its votaries insulted and persecuted. But Truth is One and must prevail. Those who do wrong will be filled with vain regrets when it is too late for repentance.

It belongs to the late Makkān period.

Summary.— Faith, coupled with humility in prayer, charity, abstinence from vanity and from indulgence in appetites, and strict probity, must lead to final success, even though people mock and accuse the righteous of false motives, as did the contemporaries of Noah, of Moses, and of Jesus (xxiii. 1-50).

The prophets of Allah and the righteous form one Brotherhood, but those who make schisms and refuse to believe have ample evidence pointing to Truth and the goodness and greatness of Allah (xxiii. 51-92).

Evil must be repelled by goodness and faith in Allah; for the future life is sure, and those who disbelieve will wish for another chance when it is too late (xxiii. 93-118).
1. Successful indeed are The Believers,\textsuperscript{2865}  
2. Those who humble themselves\textsuperscript{2866}  
   In their prayers;  
3. Who avoid vain talk;  
4. Who are active in giving zakat;  
5. Who guard their modesty,\textsuperscript{2867}  
6. Except with those joined  
   To them in the marriage bond,  
   Or (the captives) whom  
   Their right hands possess,\textsuperscript{2868}  
   For (in their case) they are Free from blame,  
7. But those whose desires exceed  
   Those limits are transgressors;—

\textsuperscript{2865} Afla\textit{ha}: win through, prosper, succeed, achieve their aims or obtain salvation from sorrow and all evil. This verse connects on with verses 10 and 11 below. The success or victory may come in this world, but is certain and lasting in the world to come.

\textsuperscript{2866} Humility in prayer as regards (1) their estimate of their own worth in Allah's presence, (2) as regards their estimate of their own powers or strength unless they are helped by Allah, and (3) as regards the petitions they offer to Allah.

\textsuperscript{2867} The Muslim must guard himself against every kind of sex abuse or sex perversion. The new psychology associated with the name of Freud traces many of our hidden motives to sex, and it is common knowledge that our refinement or degradation may be measured by the hidden workings of our sex instincts. But even the natural and lawful exercise of sex is restricted to the marriage bond, under which the rights of both parties are duly regulated and maintained.

\textsuperscript{2868} This is further explained and amplified in iv. 25.
8. Those who faithfully observe Their trusts and their covenants; 2869
9. And who (strictly) guard Their prayers;—
10. These will be the heirs, 2871
11. Who will inherit Paradise: They will dwell therein (For ever).
12. Man We did create From a quintessence (of clay); 2872

2869. Trusts may be express or implied. Express trusts are those where property is entrusted or duties are assigned by some one to some other whom he trusts, to carry out either immediately or in specified contingencies, such as death. Implied trusts arise out of power, or position, or opportunity; e.g., a king holds his kingdom on trust from Allah for his subjects. The subject of covenants, express and implied, has been discussed in n. 682 to v.1. Covenants create obligations, and express and implied trusts and covenants taken together cover the whole field of obligations.

2870. In verse 2 we were directed to the spirit of humility and earnestness in our prayers. Here we are told how necessary the habit of regular prayer is to our spiritual well-being and development, as it brings us closer to Allah, and thus sums up the light of the seven jewels of our Faith, viz.: (1) humility, (2) avoidance of vanity, (3) charity, (4) sex purity, (5) fidelity to trusts, and (6) to covenants, and (7) an earnest desire to get closer to Allah.

2871. Cf. xxi. 105, where it is said that the righteous will inherit the earth. In the first verse of this Sūra, the final success or victory is referred to. Truth will prevail even on this earth, but it may not be for any individual men of righteousness to see it: it may be in the time of their heirs and successors. But in the life to come, there is no doubt that every man will see the fruit of his life here, and the righteous will inherit heaven, in the sense that they will attain it after their death here.

2872. In this beautiful passage, Allah’s creative work, as far as man is concerned, is recapitulated, in order to show man’s real position in this life, and the certainty of the future: to which he was referred for his reward in verses 10-11 above. For the various stages of creation, see n. 120 to ii. 117. Here we are not concerned with the earliest stage, the creation of primeval matter out of nothing. It is also a process of creation when inorganic matter becomes living matter. Thus inorganic constituents of the earth are absorbed into living matter by way of food and living matter reproduces itself by means of sperm. This is deposited in the ovum and fertilises it and rests for a time in security in the mother’s womb. The first change in the fertilised ovum is the conversion into a sort of clot of thickly congealed blood; the zygote cells grow by segmentation; then the mass gradually assumes shape in its growth as a foetus. From the lump develop bones =
13. Then We placed him
   As (a drop of) sperm
   In a place of rest, 2873
   Firmly fixed;

14. Then We made the sperm
    Into a clot of congealed blood;
    Then of that clot We made
    A (foetus) lump; then We
    Made out of that lump
    Bones and clothed the bones
    With flesh; then We developed
    Out of it another creature. 2874
    So blessed be Allah,
    The Best to create!

15. After that, at length
    Ye will die. 2875

16. Again, on the Day
    Of Judgment, will ye be
    Raised up.

And flesh and organs and a nervous system. So far man's growth is like that of an animal, but a further process takes place which makes the infant animal into the infant man. This is the breathing from Allah's spirit into him (xv. 29). It may be a continuous process parallel to that of physical growth. The child is born; it grows; it decays and dies; but after death another chapter opens for the individual, and it is to remind us of this most momentous chapter that the previous stages are recapitulated.

2873. The growth in the foetal stage is silent and unseen. The foetus is protected in the mother's womb like a king in a castle; it is firmly fixed, and gets the protection of the mother's body, on which it depends for its own growth until birth.

2874. From a mere animal, we now consider man as man. Is it not a Sign of wonder in itself that from dry dust (turâb, xxii. 5) or inorganic matter should be made protoplasm (moist clay or organic matter); from it should grow a new animal life; and out of it should grow human life, with all its capacities and responsibilities? Man carries within himself Signs of Allah's wisdom and power, and he can see them every day in the universe around him.

2875. Our physical death in this mortal life seems to make a break. But if it were the end of all, our life becomes meaningless. Our own instinct tells us that it cannot be so, and Allah assures us that there will be a resurrection for judgment.
17. And We have made, above you, Seven tracts; and We Are never unmindful Of (Our) Creation.

18. And We send down water From the sky according to (Due) measure, and We cause it To soak in the soil; And We certainly are able To drain it off (with ease).

19. With it We grow for you Gardens of date-palms And vines: in them have ye Abundant fruits: and of them Ye eat (and have enjoyment).

2876. Tarâiq: literally tracts, roads, orbits or paths. Here it means: seven heavens. The assurance given in the next clause, that Allah cares for us and all His Creation, calls out attention to Allah's goodness, which is further illustrated in the subsequent verses.

2877. Allah's care for His Creation is ceaseless. A few examples of His care for our physical well-being are given in verses 18-22, and for our spiritual well-being, in Sections 2 to 5.

2878. Normally the rain comes well distributed; it soaks into the soil; the moisture is retained for a long time in all high grounds; it soaks and penetrates through many layers of soil and forms the architecture of physical geography; the retentive powers of higher soil enable rivers to flow perennially even where, as in India, the rainfall is seasonal and confined to a few months in the year. Another form in which water comes down from the sky according to due measure is in snow and hail: these also have their place in the economy of air and soil. Were it not for snow and glaciers in the higher mountain regions, some of the rivers would fail in their abundant flow. As wonderful as the supply of water and moisture is its drainage. It returns to the sea and air in all sorts of ways, and the formation of mist and clouds repeats the cycle. Were it not for the drainage and the clearance of the waters, we should have floods and waterlogging, as happens when the normal processes of nature are temporarily obstructed. The same thing happens when the rain comes down in other than due measure. These abnormal conditions also have their value. But how grateful should man be for Allah's gifts in the ceaseless processes of nature on such an enormous scale!

2879. Cf. vii. 19 and n. 776 to v. 69.
20. Also a tree springing
   Out of Mount Sinai,\(^\text{2880}\)
   Which produces oil,
   And relish for those
   Who use it for food.

21. And in cattle (too) ye
   Have an instructive example:\(^\text{2881}\)
   From within their bodies
   We produce (milk) for you
   To drink; there are, in them,
   (Besides), numerous (other)
   Benefits for you;
   And of their (meat) ye eat;

22. And on them, as well as
    In ships, ye ride.

SECTION 2.

23. And certainly we sent\(^\text{2882}\)
    Noah to his people:\(^\text{2883}\)

\(^{2880}\). For Arabia the best olives grow round about Mount Sinai. The fig, the olive, Mount Sinai, and the sacred city of Makkah are mentioned together in association in xciv. 1-3, where we shall consider its meaning. Olive oil is an ingredient in medicinal ointments. If used for food, the olive has a delicious flavour. Cf. also xxiv. 35, where the olive is called a Blessed Tree, and n. 3000.

\(^{2881}\). 'Ibrat: the root meaning of the verb is "to interpret, or expound, or instruct", as in xii. 43; the noun means, an interpretation, or example or Sign that instructs, as here and in xvi. 66, or gives warning, as in iii. 13. From cattle we get milk and meat; also from their skins we make leather for shoes, boots, straps, saddlery, and numerous other uses; from camel's hair and sheep's wool we weave cloth, hangings, carpets, etc.; from the horns of cattle we make cups and articles of ornament or use; and camels, horses, donkeys, mules, etc., are used for riding, carrying loads, or drawing vehicles.

\(^{2882}\). The material gifts having been mentioned, which we receive from a wise and kindly Providence, our attention is now directed to Allah's Providence in spiritual matters. He sent Teachers to instruct and guide us, and though they were mocked, rejected, and accused of falsehood and selfishness, they were protected by Allah, and Allah's Truth at length prevailed.

\(^{2883}\). "People" here is almost equivalent to "contemporaries".
24. The chiefs of the Unbelievers
Among his people said:
“He is no more than a man
Like yourselves: his wish is
To assert his superiority
Over you: if Allah had wished (To send messengers),
He could have sent down
Angels: never did we hear
Such a thing (as he says),
Among our ancestors of old.”

25. (And some said): “He is
Only a man possessed:
Wait (and have patience)
With him for a time.”

26. (Noah) said: “O my Lord!
Help me: for that they
Accuse me of falsehood!”
So We inspired him
(With this message); “Construct
The Ark within Our sight”

2884. Cf. vii. 59. To fear Allah is to lead righteous lives and eschew evil.

2885. They attribute altogether wrong motives to him (such as would have actuated them themselves), in saying that he was trying to establish his own personal superiority over them by his preaching. Then they accuse him of falsehood in claiming to bring a message of Allah. “If”, they say, “Allah had wished to send us messengers, He would have sent angels, not a man like ourselves and from among ourselves. Our ancestors did not worship One God: why should we?”

2886. I construe this to be a speech of another group among them. They thought he was mad, and best left alone. His madness would run out, or he would come to an evil end.

2887. Cf. this whole passage with xi. 35-48, and notes thereon.
And under Our guidance: then
When comes Our command,
And the oven Gushes forth, take thou on board
Pairs of every species, male And female, and thy family—
Except those of them
Against whom the Word
Has already gone forth:
And address Me not
In favour of the wrong-doers:
For they shall be drowned
(In the Flood).

28. And when thou hast embarked On the Ark—thou and those
With thee,—say: “Praise be To Allah, Who has saved us
From the people who do wrong.”

29. And say: “O my Lord! Enable me to disembark
With Thy blessing: for Thou Art the Best to enable (us)
To disembark.”

30. Verily in this there are
Signs (for men to understand); Lo! We put (men) to test.

2888. See n. 1533 to xi. 40.
2889. See. 1534 to xi. 40.
2890. See n. 1535 to xi. 40.
2891. For istawā see 1386 to x. 3. Here the meaning is: mounted on board, ascended, embarked.
2892. This second prayer was inspired when the Flood subsided, and the time came for disembarkation.
2893. Noah’s contemporaries had all sorts of chances and warnings. But they refused to believe and perished. But Allah’s Truth survived, and it went to the next and succeeding generations. Will not mankind understand?
31. Then We raised after them  
Another generation.

32. And We sent to them  
A messenger from among  
themselves,2894  
(Saying), “Worship Allah!  
Ye have no other god  
But Him. Will ye not  
Fear (Him)?”

SECTION 3

33. And the chiefs  
Of his people, who disbelieved  
And denied the Meeting  
In the Hereafter, and on whom  
We had bestowed the good things  
Of this life, said: “He is  
No more than a man  
Like yourselves: he eats  
And drinks of what ye drink.

34. “If ye obey a man  
Like yourselves, behold,  
It is certain ye will be lost.2895

35. “Does he promise that  
When ye die and become dust

2894. If this refers to any particular prophet, it must be Hûd whose mission was to  
the ‘Ad people, or to Sâlih, whose mission was to the Thamûd people. That is the  
sequence after Noah in S. xi. 50-60 and 61-68. But I think that as the name is not  
mentioned, we are to understand in general the type of the post-Flood prophets until we  
come later on to Moses and Jesus. The object here is not to recount the stories, but to  
show that the resistance of the wicked made no difference to the triumph of Allah’s holy  
Truth.

2895. The type of the narrow Sybarite, who enjoys the good things of this life, denies  
a future life, and is jealous of any one who presumes to widen his horizon, is here  
described in a few masterly strokes. He is bored by any mention of the serious things  
beyond his ken. What good is it, he says, to talk about the future? Enjoy the present.  
The gain is all in the present: the loss is all in the future.
And bones, ye shall be brought forth (again)?

36. "Far, very far is that Which ye are promised!

37. "There is nothing but Our life in this world! We shall die and we live! We shall never be raised up again!

38. "He is only a man Who invents a lie Against Allah, but we are not the ones to believe in him!"

39. (The prophet) said: "O my Lord help me: For that they accuse me of falsehood."

40. (Allah) said: "In but a little while, they are sure to be sorry!"

41. Then the Blast overtook them With justice, and We made them as rubbish of dead leaves So away with the people who do wrong!

2896. They seem to say: "There is no future life: that we shall die is certain; that we have this life is certain: some die, some are born, some live: and so the cycle continues: but how can dead men be raised to life?"

2897. "He is only a fool, and invents things, and attributes them to Allah's inspiration! We are too wise to believe such things!"

2898. See above, xxiii. 26. Every prophet is maligned and persecuted: it is always the same story with them, told in different ways.

2899. When the Punishment comes, they will be sorry for themselves, but it will be too late then.

2900. See xi. 66, and notes 1563 and 1561.

2901. Guthā-un: rubbish of dead leaves, or scum floating on a torrent.
42. Then We raised after them
Other generations.

43. No people can hasten
Their term, nor can they
Delay (it).

44. Then sent We Our messengers
In succession: every time
There came to a people
Their messenger, they accused him
Of falsehood: so We made
Them follow each other
(In punishment): We made them
As a tale (that is told):2902
So away with a people
That will not believe!

45. Then We sent Moses
And his brother Aaron,
With Our Signs and
Authority manifest,2903

46. To Pharaoh and his Chiefs:
But these behaved insolently:
They were an arrogant people.

47. They said: “Shall we believe
In two men like ourselves?
And their people are subject2904
To us!”

2902. Their habitations and their organisation have been wiped out. What remains is merely a vague story of their existence, a tale that is told. Where their name remains, which is not always the case, it is only a by-word, suggesting all that is unstable and ephemeral,—“to point a moral and adorn a tale”.

2903. Moses and Aaron had a twofold mission: (1) to Pharaoh and his Court, which failed because of Egyptian arrogance; (2) to the Israelites, for whom the Law was received on Mount Sinai, but they repeatedly rebelled against Allah. In both cases there were miracles (“Clear Signs”) and other proofs which showed that they came at Allah’s command and were inspired by His authority.

2904. Racial arrogance made the Egyptians say, ‘These men belong to a race which we hold in subjection as our slaves: how can we accept them as messengers of Allah?’
48. So they rejected them
   And they became
   Of those who were destroyed.

49. And We gave Moses
   The Book, in order that
   They might receive guidance.\(^{2905}\)

50. And We made
   The son of Mary
   And his mother
   As a Sign:\(^{2906}\)
   We gave them both
   Shelter on high ground,
   Affording rest and security
   And furnished with springs.\(^{2907}\)

SECTION 4.

51. O ye messengers! enjoy\(^{2908}\)
   (All) things good and pure,
   And work righteousness:
   For I am well-acquainted
   With (all) that ye do.

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\(^{2905}\) Here the reference is to the second part of the mission of Moses, that to the
Israelites, which the Israelites rendered ineffective by their want of faith. See n. 2903
above.

\(^{2906}\) The virgin birth of Jesus was a miracle both for him and his mother. She was
falsely accused of unchastity, but the child Jesus triumphantly vindicated her by his own
miracles (xix. 27-33), and showed by his life the meanness of the calumny against his
mother.

\(^{2907}\) There is no need to look far for the place where mother and child were given
secure shelter. It is described in xix. 22-26. It was the place to which she withdrew to
be delivered when the time drew near. There was a fruitful palm-tree, evidently on high
ground, for beneath it flowed a spring. She retired there in seclusion, and she and her
child rested there until it was time for her to go to her people with her child.

\(^{2908}\) Literally, "eat". See n. 776 to v. 69. The prophets of Allah do not pose as
ascetics, but receive gratefully all Allah’s gifts, and show their gratitude by their righteous
lives.
52. And verily this Ummah
    Of yours is a single Ummah
    And I am your Lord
    And Cherisher: therefore
    Fear Me (and no other).

53. But people have cut off
    Their affair (of unity),
    Between them, into sects:
    Each party rejoices in that
    Which is with itself.

54. But leave them
    In their confused ignorance
    For a time.

55. Do they think that because
    We have granted them abundance
    Of wealth and sons,
    We would hasten them
    On in every good? Nay
    They do not perceive.

56. Verily those who live
    In awe for fear of their Lord;
    Those who believe
    In the Signs of their Lord;
    Those who join not (in worship)
    Partners with their Lord;

2909. Cf. xxi. 92-93. All prophets form one Brotherhood: their message is one, and
    their religion and teaching are one; they serve the One True God, Who loves and
    cherishes them; and they owe their duty to Him and Him alone.

2910. The people who began to trade on the names of the prophets cut off that unity
    and made sects; and each sect rejoices in its own narrow doctrine, instead of taking the
    universal teaching of Unity from Allah. But this sectarian confusion is of man’s making.
    It will last for a time, but the rays of Truth and Unity will finally dissipate it.

2911. Worldly wealth, power, and influence may be but trials. Let not their
    possessors think that they are in themselves things that will necessarily bring them
    happiness.
60. And those who dispense
Their charity with their hearts2912
Full of fear, because
They will return to their Lord;—
61. It is these who hasten
In every good work,
And these who are
Foremost in them.
62. On no soul do We
Place a burden greater
Than it can bear:2913
Before Us is a record
Which clearly speaks the truth.2914
They will never be wronged.
63. But their hearts are
In confused ignorance2915
Of this; and there are,
Besides that, deeds of theirs,2916
Which they will (continue)
To do,—
64. Until, when We seize
In Punishment those of them

2912. Their hearts are full of reverence for Allah and fear lest their charity or their hearts be not good enough for acceptance before their Lord; for they have the certainty of a future life, in which they will stand before the Judgment Seat. They fear for their own worthiness, but they hope in Faith.

2913. Cf. ii. 286 and n. 339.

2914. The record speaks clearly, and shows exactly what each soul has done and thought, and what is due to it in justice. The worst will receive full justice. The best will receive far more than their due: xxviii. 84.

2915. This is said of the Unbelievers who rejected Faith and rejoiced in the vanities of this world. In spite of the proclamation of Truth, they are doubtful of the future Life and Judgment.

2916. In addition to their rejection of Faith, they have against them positive deeds of wrong-doing, from which, on account of their contempt of the Light from Allah, they will not desist until they are sharply pulled up for punishment: and then repentance will be too late!
Who received the good things
Of this world, behold,
They will groan in supplication!

65. (It will be said):
“Groan not in supplication
This day; for ye shall
Certainly not be helped by Us.

66. “My Signs used to be
Rehearsed to you, but ye
Used to turn back
On your heels–

67. “In arrogance: talking nonsense
About the (Qur-ān), like one
Telling fables by night.”

68. Do they not ponder over
The Word (of Allah), or
Has anything (new) come
To them that did not
Come to their fathers of old?

69. Or do they not recognise
Their Messenger, that they
Deny him?

70. Or do they say, “he is
Possessed”? Nay, he has
Brought them the Truth,
But most of them
Hate the Truth.

71. If the Truth had been
In accord with their desires,
Truly the heavens and the earth,

2917. Sāmir: one who remains awake by night, one who passes the night in talk or in the recital of stories of romances, a favourite amusement of the Days of Ignorance.

2918. If they ponder over the matter, they will find that Allah’s Message to humanity is as old as Adam. It is good for all ages. It never grows old, and it is never new.
And all beings therein
Would have been in ruin
Nay, We
Have sent them their admonition,
But they turn away
From their admonition.

72. Or is it that thou
Asked them for some Recompense? But the recompense Of thy Lord is best:
He is the Best of those Who give sustenance.

73. But verily thou callest them To the Straight Way;

74. And verily those who Believe not in the Hereafter Are deviating from that Way.

75. If We had mercy on them And removed the distress Which is on them, they Would obstinately persist In their transgression, Wandering in distraction To and fro.

2919. Allah is All-Wise and All-Good, and His architecture of the universe is on a perfect Plan. If these poor, low, selfish, ignorant creatures were to plan it according to their hearts' desires, it would be a dreadful world, full of confusion and corruption.

2920. This is the last of the questions, beginning with xxiii. 68 above, showing the absurdity of the position taken up by the Unbelievers. (1) The Message of Allah is as old as humanity: why do they fight shy of it? (2) They have known their Prophet to be true and righteous: why do they deny him? (3) Is it madness to bring the bitter Truth before them? (4) Does the Prophet ask any worldly reward from them? If not, why do they reject his unselfish efforts for their own good?

2921. The reference is to a very severe famine felt in Makkah, which was attributed by the Unbelievers to the presence of the holy Prophet among them and his preaching against their gods. As this is a Makkah Sūra, the famine referred to must be that described by Ibn Kathīr as having occurred in the 8th year of the Mission, say about four years before the Hijra. There was also a post-Hijra famine, which is referred to by Bukhārī, but that was a later event.
76. We inflicted Punishment\textsuperscript{2922} On them, but they Humbled not themselves To their Lord, nor do they Submissively entreat (Him)!-

77. Until We open on them A gate leading to A severe Punishment: then Lo! they will be plunged In despair therein!\textsuperscript{2923}

SECTION 5.

78. It is He Who has created For you (the faculties of) Hearing, sight, feeling\textsuperscript{2924} And understanding: little thanks It is ye give!

79. And He Has multiplied you Through the earth, and to Him Shall ye be gathered back.

80. It is He Who gives Life and death, and to Him

\textsuperscript{2922} Some Commentators understand the battle of Badr to be meant here; if so, this particular verse would be of the Madinah period. But it is better to understand it as referring to the same “distress” as in the preceding verse, or to punishments in general, which obstinate sinners refuse to take as warnings given to them to mend their ways and turn in repentance to Allah.

\textsuperscript{2923} Cf. vi. 44. If the little trials in the present life will not open their eyes, will great trials do so? Unfortunately they only cause in the wicked a feeling of despair. In the final Punishment after the Judgment, it will be too late for them to repent, and despair will be their only lot.

\textsuperscript{2924} As elsewhere, “heart” is to be understood as the seat both of feeling and intelligence. ‘All the means by which knowledge can be gathered, judgment formed, and goodness cultivated, are provided for you by Allah. If you were grateful, you would use those in His service, which is expressed in your service to your fellow men. But instead you ignore these gifts, question Allah’s Providence, and blaspheme against Him!’
(Is due) the alternation\textsuperscript{2925} Of Night and Day:
Will ye not then understand?

81. On the contrary they say
Things similar to what
The ancients said.\textsuperscript{2926}

82. They say: "What! When we
Die and become dust and bones,
Could we really be
Raised up again?

83. "Such things have been promised
To us and to our fathers
Before! They are nothing
But tales of the ancients!"

84. Say: "To whom belong
The earth and all beings therein?
(Say) if ye know!"

85. They will say, "To Allah!"
Say: "Yet will ye not
Receive admonition?\textsuperscript{2927}

86. Say: "Who is the Lord
Of the seven heavens,
And the Lord of the Mighty
Throne

\textsuperscript{2925}. The alternation of Night and Day stands here as a symbol for all the beneficent processes of Nature provided by Allah for the comfort and growth of man's outer and inner life.

\textsuperscript{2926}. And they are the more culpable, as they have received a later and completer revelation. Why should they now stand on the primitive ideas of their ancestors?

\textsuperscript{2927}. If their argument is that such things about a future life cannot be known or proved, they are referred to the things which are actually before them. The tangible things of the earth—can they postulate their order or government except by a Power or Force or Energy outside them? They will admit that there is such a Power or Force or Energy. We call it Allah. Go a step further. We see a sublime Universe in the heavens above, stretching far, far beyond our ken. They will admit its existence and its grandeur. We ask them to entertain a feeling of reverence for the Power behind it, and to understand their own littleness and their dependence upon that Power.

\textsuperscript{2928}. Cf. ix. 129.
87. They will say, "(They belong) To Allah." Say: "Will ye then fear?"

88. Say: "Who is it in whose Hands is the sovereignty Of all things,—Who protects (All), but is not protected (Of any)? (Say) if ye know.”

89. They will say, "(It belongs) To Allah.” Say: "Then how Are ye deluded?"

90. We have sent them the Truth: But they indeed are liars.

91. No son did Allah beget, Nor is there any god Along with Him: (if there were Many gods), behold, each god Would have taken away What he had created, And some would have Lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! (He is free) From the (sort of) things They attribute to Him!

92. He knows what is hidden And what is open: too high

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2929. See n. 2927 above. 'If this great and glorious Universe inspires you with awe, surely the Power behind is more worthy of your awe, especially if you compare your dependence and its dependence upon Him.'

2930. 'The order and unity of purpose in the Universe argue unity of design and goodness in its Maker. Is it not then sheer madness for you to run after fancies and fail to understand and obey His Will? It is delusion in you to seek other than Allah.'

2931. Cf. xvi. 42. The multiplicity of gods is intellectually indefensible, considering the unity of Design and Purpose in His wonderful Universe.
SECTION 6.

93. Say: “O my Lord! If Thou wilt show me (In my lifetime) that which They are warned against,—

94. “Then, O my Lord! put me not Amongst the people Who do wrong!”

95. And We are certainly able To show thee (in fulfilment) That against which they are warned.

96. Repel evil with that Which is best: We are Well acquainted with The things they say.

97. And say “O my Lord! I seek refuge with Thee

2932. To suppose that Allah has a son or family or partners or companions is to have a low idea of Allah, Who is high above all such relationships. He is the One True God, and there can be none to compare with Him.

2933. In the first instance, this applied to the holy Prophet. His subsequent Hijrat from Makkah and the eventual overthrow of the Makkan oligarchy amply prove the fulfilment of the prophecy. But in general meaning it applies to all. We are taught that evil will be visited with a terrible punishment, not only in a future life, but in this very life when its cup is full and the time comes for punishment in Allah's Plan. If it has to come while we are still on the scene of this life, we are asked to pray that we may not be found in the company of those who draw such punishment on themselves. In other words we must eschew the society of evil ones.

2934. Whether people speak evil of you, in your presence or behind your back, or they do evil to you in either of those ways, all is known to Allah. It is not for you to punish. Your best course is not to do evil in your turn, but to do what will best repel the evil. Two evils do not make a good. Cf. xli. 34, n. 4504.
From the suggestions
Of the Satans.\textsuperscript{2935}

98. “And I seek refuge with Thee
O my Lord! lest they
Should come near me.”

99. Until, when death comes\textsuperscript{2936}
To one of them, he says:
“O my Lord! send me back\textsuperscript{2937}
(To life),–

100. “In order that I may
Work righteousness in the
things\textsuperscript{2938}
I neglected.”—“By no means!
It is but a word he says.”\textsuperscript{2939}
Before them is a Partition\textsuperscript{2940}
Till the Day they are
Raised up.

\textsuperscript{2935} But in any case, shun evil for yourself, and you cannot do this without seeking the help and protection of Allah. Not only must you shun all promptings of evil, but you must shun its proximity. It may be that in retaliating on evil, or even in your curiosity to discover what evil is, you may fall into evil yourself. You should avoid going near it or anything which brings it near to you. And in this matter you should seek Allah’s help.

\textsuperscript{2936} This verse I think connects on with xxiii. 90 above. Though Allah proclaims His Truth everywhere, the wicked cling to Falsehood until they face the reality of Death.

\textsuperscript{2937} The verb for “send me back” is in the plural in Arabic, which is construed either (1) as an emphatic form, as if the singular were repeated, or (2) as a plural of respect, though such a plural is not ordinarily used in addressing Allah, or (3) as a plural addressed to the angels, after the address to Allah in “O my Lord!”

\textsuperscript{2938} The unrighteous will ask for another chance. But it will be too late then. The time for repentance will then have passed.

\textsuperscript{2939} Their request will mean nothing. It will be treated merely as an empty word of excuse. They had plenty of chances in this life. Not only did they reject them, but they did not even believe in Allah or ask for His assistance.

\textsuperscript{2940} Barzakh: a partition, a bar or barrier; the place or state in which people will be after death and before Judgment. Cf. xxv. 53 and lv. 20. Behind them is the barrier of death, and in front of them is the Barzakh, partition, a quiescent state until the judgment comes.
101. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that day, nor will one ask after another.  

102. Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful.  

103. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide.  

104. The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with their lips displaced.  

105. “Were not My Signs rehearsed to you, and ye did but treat them as falsehoods?”  

106. They will say: “Our Lord! Our misfortune overwhelmed us, and we became a people astray!  

2941. The old relationships of the world will then be dissolved. Each soul will stand on its merits.  

2942. Good and evil deeds will be weighed against each other. If the good deeds prevail, the soul will attain falâh, i.e., prosperity, well-being, bliss, or salvation; if the contrary, there will be the misery and anguish of Hell.  

2943. The loss or perdition will not mean that they will die and feel no more: xiv. 17. The punishment will mean nothing, if there was no sensibility, but total annihilation.  

2944. That is to say, their faces will be disfigured with anguish, and their lips will quiver and fall out of place, exposing their teeth.  

2945. ‘The evil in us conquered us; it was our misfortune that we surrendered to evil, and went astray.’ They forget that it was by their own deliberate choice that they surrendered to evil, and they are reminded in verses 109-110 of the ridicule with which they covered godly men in their life on earth.
107. “Our Lord! Bring us out Of this: if ever we return (To evil), then shall we be Wrong-doers indeed!”

108. He will say: “Be ye Driven into it (with ignominy)! And speak ye not to Me!”

109. “A part of My servants There was, who used to pray, ‘Our Lord! we believe; Then do Thou forgive us, And have mercy upon us: For Thou art the Best Of those who show mercy!’

110. “But ye treated them With ridicule, so much so That (ridicule of) them made you Forget My Message while Ye were laughing at them!

111. “I have rewarded them This day for their patience And constancy: they are indeed The ones that have achieved Bliss…”

112. He will say: “What number Of years did ye stay On earth?”

2946. After their flouting of Allah’s Signs and their mockery of godly men on earth, they have forfeited their right to plead for mercy before Allah’s Throne.

2947. Literally, ‘they made you forget My Message’. The ungodly were so occupied in the backbiting and ridicule of the godly that the godly themselves became the unconscious cause of the ungodly forgetting the warnings declared by Allah against those who do not treat His Signs seriously. Thus evil often brings about its own ruin through the instrumentality of those whom it would make its victims.

2948. The Hafs reading is “Qala”, “He will say”. This follows the Kufa Qirât. The Basra Qirât reads “Qul”, “Say” (in the imperative). The point is only one of grammatical construction. See n. 2666 to xxi. 4.
113. They will say: “We stayed
   A day or part of a day: But ask those who
   Keep account.”

114. He will say: “Ye stayed
   Not but a little,—
   If ye had only known!

115. “Did ye then think
   That We had created you
   In jest, and that ye
   Would not be brought back
   To Us (for account)?”

116. Therefore exalted be Allah,
   The King, the Reality:
   There is no god but He,
   The Lord of the Throne
   Of Honour!

2949. The question and answer about Time imply two things. (1) The attention of
   the ungodly is drawn to the extremely short time of the life in this world, compared to
   the eternity which they face: they are made to see this, and to realise how mistaken they
   were in their comparative valuation of things spiritual and things material. (2) Time,
   as we know it now, will have faded away and appear as almost nothing. It is just a matter
   relative to this life of temporary probation. Cf. the experience of the Companions of the
   Cave: xviii. 19.

2950. Allah's Creation is not without a high serious purpose. It is not vain, or for
   mere play or sport. As far as man is concerned, the highest issues for him hang on his
   behaviour in this life. “Life is real, life is earnest, And the grave is not its goal”, as
   Longfellow truly says. We must therefore earnestly search out Allah’s Truth, encouraged
   by the fact that Allah’s Truth is also, out of His unbounded mercy, searching us out and
   trying to reach us.
117. If anyone invokes, besides Allah,
   Any other god, he has
   No authority thereof;
   And his reckoning will be
   Only with his Lord!\footnote{2951}
   And verily the Unbelievers.
   Shall not prosper\footnote{2952}

118. So say: “O my Lord!
   Grant Thou forgiveness and mercy!
   For Thou art the Best
   Of those who show mercy!”

\footnote{2951}{Not with any one else whatever, as Allah is the Eternal Reality. If men, out of the figments of their imagination, fancy other gods, they will be rudely undeceived. And Allah is Lord, \textit{i.e.}, our Cherisher as well as our Creator. In spite of all our shortcomings and our rebellions, He will forgive us if we go to Him not on our merits but on His grace.}

\footnote{2952}{See the same word used in describing the contrast with the Believers, in the first verse of this Sûra. Righteousness must win and all opposition to it must fail. Thus the circle of the argument is completed.}
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT ʿAN-NūR, 24.

The environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck our moral ideals have to do with sex, and especially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour, of false charges or scandals, or breach of the refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Our complete conquest of all pitfalls in such matters enables us to rise to the higher regions of Light and of God-created Nature. This subject is continued in the next Sūra.

As the reprobation of false slanders about women (xxiv. 11-20) is connected with an incident that happened to Ḥadhrat ʿĀisha in A.H. 5-6 that fixes the chronological place of this Madinah Sūra.

Summary.—Sex offences should be severely punished, but the strictest evidence should be required, and false slanderers are also worthy of punishment. Light talk about women reprobated (xxiv. 1-26).

Privacy should be respected, and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners (xxiv. 27-34).

Parable of Light and Darkness: order and obedience in Nature point to the religious duty of man (xxiv. 35-37).

Domestic manners and manners in public or collective life all contribute to the highest virtues, and are part of our spiritual duties leading up to Allah (xxiv. 58-64).
An-Nūr, or Light.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. A Sūra which We
Have sent down and
Which We have ordained:
In it have We sent down
Clear Signs, in order that
Ye may receive admonition.

2. The woman and the man
Guilty of fornication,
Flog each of them
With a hundred stripes:
Let not compassion move you
In their case, in a matter
Prescribed by Allah, if ye believe
In Allah and the Last Day:
And let a party
Of the Believers
Witness their punishment.

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2953. It must not be thought that the checking of sex offences or of minor improprieties, that relate to sex or privacy, are matters that do not affect spiritual life in the highest degree. These matters are intimately connected with spiritual teaching such as Allah has sent down in this Sūra. The emphasis is on “We”: these things are not mere matters of convenience, but Allah has ordained them for our observance in life.

2954. Zinā includes sexual intercourse between a man and a woman not married to each other. It therefore applies both to adultery (which implies that one or both of the parties are married to a person or persons other than the ones concerned) and to fornication, which, in its strict signification, implies that both parties are unmarried. The law of marriage and divorce is made easy in Islam, so that there may be the less temptation for intercourse outside the well-defined incidents of marriage. This makes for greater self-respect for both man and woman. Other sex offences are also punishable, but this Section applies strictly to Zinā as above defined. Although zinā covers both fornication and adultery, in the opinion of Muslim jurists, the punishment laid down here applies only to un-married persons. As for married persons, their punishment, according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him), is stoning to death.

2955. Cf. iv. 15, and n. 523.

2956. The punishment should be open, in order to be deterrent.
3. The adulterer cannot have
   Sexual relations with any but an
   Adulteress or an idolatress,
   And the adulteress, none can have
   Sexual relations with her but an
   Adulterer or an idolater;
   To the Believers such a thing
   Is forbidden. 2957

4. And those who launch
   A charge against chaste women,
   And produce not four witnesses
   (To support their allegations).­
   Flog them with eighty stripes;
   And reject their evidence 2958
   Ever after: for such men
   Are wicked transgressors;­

5. Except those who repent thereafter 2959
   And mend (their conduct);
   For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
   Most Merciful.

2957. Islam commands sex purity, for men and for women, at all times,—before
   marriage, during marriage, and after the dissolution of marriage. Those guilty of illicit
   practices are shut out of the marriage circle of chaste men and women.

2958. The most serious notice is taken of people who put forward slanders or
   scandalous suggestions about women without adequate evidence. If anything is said against
   a woman’s chastity, it should be supported by evidence twice as strong as would ordinarily
   be required for business transactions, or even in murder cases. That is, four witnesses
   would be required instead of two. Failing such preponderating evidence, the slanderer
   should himself be treated as a wicked transgressor and punished with eighty stripes. Not
   only would he be subjected to this disgraceful form of punishment, but he would be
   deprived of the citizen’s right of giving evidence in all matters unless he repents and
   reforms, in which case he can be readmitted to be a competent witness. The verse lays
   down the punishment for slandering “chaste women”, which by consensus of opinion also
   covers slandering chaste men. Chaste women have been specifically mentioned, according
   to Commentators, because slandering them is more abhorrent.

2959. The punishment of stripes is inflicted in any case for unsupported slander. But
   the deprivation of the civic right of giving evidence can be cancelled by the man’s
   subsequent conduct, if he repents, shows that he is sorry for what he did, and that he
   would not in future support by his statement anything for which he has not the fullest
   evidence. Secular courts do not enforce these principles, as their standards are lower than
6. And for those who launch
   A charge against their wives,
   And have (in support)
   No evidence but their own, \(^{2960}\)
   Let one of them
   Testify four times
   By Allah that he is
   Of those who speak
   The Truth.

7. And the fifth (oath)
   (Should be) that he solemnly
   Invokes the curse of Allah
   On himself if he
   Tells a lie.

8. But it would avert
   The punishment from the wife,
   If she bears witness
   Four times (with an oath)
   By Allah, that (her husband)
   Is telling a lie;

   = those which good Muslims set for themselves, but good Muslims must understand and act
   on the underlying principles, which protect the honour of womanhood.

2960. The case of married persons is different from that of outsiders. If one of them
accuses the other of unchastity, the accusation partly reflects on the accuser as well.
Moreover, the link which unites married people, even where differences supervene, is sure
to act as a steadying influence against the concoction of false charges of unchastity
particularly where divorce is allowed (as in Islam) for reasons other than unchastity.
Suppose a husband catches a wife in adultery. In the nature of things four witnesses—or
even one outside witness—would be impossible. Yet after such an experience it is against
human nature that he can live a normal married life. The matter is then left to the honour
of the two spouses. If the husband can solemnly swear four times to the fact, and in
addition invoke a curse on himself if he lies, that is *prima facie* evidence of the wife's
guilt. But if the wife swears similarly four times and similarly invokes a curse on herself,
she is in law acquitted of the guilt. If she does not take this step, the charge is held
proved and the punishment follows. In either case the marriage is dissolved, as it is
against human nature that the parties can live together happily after such an incident.
9. And the fifth (oath)
    Should be that she solemnly
    Invokes the wrath of Allah
    On herself if (her accuser)
    Is telling the truth.

10. If it were not
    For Allah's grace and mercy
    On you, and that Allah
    Is Oft-Returning,
    Full of Wisdom,—
    (Ye would be ruined indeed).  

SECTION 2.

11. Those who brought forward
    The lie are a body
    Among yourselves: think it not
    To be an evil to you;
    On the contrary it is good
    For you: to every man
    Among them (will come
    The punishment) of the sin

2961. Cf. xxiv. 11-14, and n. 2962, which illustrates the matter by a concrete instance.

2962. The particular incident here referred to occurred on the return from the expedition to the Banū Mustalīq, A.H. 5-6. When the march was ordered, Ḥādhārat ʿAisha was not in her tent, having gone to search for a valuable necklace she had dropped. As her litter was veiled, it was not noticed that she was not in it, until the army reached the next halt. Meanwhile, finding the camp had gone, she sat down to rest, hoping that some one would come back to fetch her when her absence was noticed. It was night, and she fell asleep. Next morning she was found by Safwān, a Muhājir, who had been left behind the camp expressly to pick up anything inadvertently left behind. He put her on his camel and brought her, leading the camel on foot. This gave occasion to enemies to raise a malicious scandal. The ringleader among them was the chief of Madinah Hypocrites, ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubai, who is referred to in the last clause of this verse. He had other sins and enormities to his debit, and he was left to the punishment of an unrepentant sinner, for he died in that state. The minor tools were given the legal punishment of the law, and after penitence mended their lives. They made good.

2963. It is worse for a scandal to be whispered about with bated breath, than that it should be brought into the light of day and disproved.
That he earned, and to him\textsuperscript{2964} Who took on himself the lead Among them, will be A Chastisement grievous.

12. Why did not the Believers— Men and women\textsuperscript{2965}—when ye Heard of the affair,— Thought well of their people And say, “This (charge) Is an obvious lie”?

13. Why did they not bring Four witnesses to prove it?\textsuperscript{2966} When they have not brought The witnesses, such men, In the sight of Allah, (Stand forth) themselves as liars!

14. Were it not for the grace And mercy of Allah on you, In this world and the Hereafter, A grievous chastisement would have Seized you in that ye rushed Glibly into this affair.\textsuperscript{2967}

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\textsuperscript{2964} The ringleader: see n. 2962 above.

\textsuperscript{2965} Both men and women were involved in spreading the scandal. Their obvious duty was to put the best, not the worst, construction on the acts of one of the “mothers of the Believers”.

\textsuperscript{2966} If any persons took it seriously, it was their duty to search for and produce the evidence, in the absence of which they themselves became guilty of slander.

\textsuperscript{2967} Cf. xxiv. 10 above. It was Allah’s mercy that saved them from many evil consequences, both in this life and in the Hereafter, —in this life, because the Prophet’s wise measures nipped in the bud any incipient estrangement between those nearest and dearest to him, and from a spiritual aspect in that the minor agents in spreading the scandal repented and were forgiven. No doubts and divisions, no mutual distrust, were allowed to remain in their hearts after the whole matter had been cleared up.
15. Behold, ye received it
   On your tongues,
   And said out of your mouths
   Things of which ye had
   No knowledge; and ye thought
   It to be a light matter,
   While it was most serious
   In the sight of Allah. 2968

16. And why did ye not,
   When ye heard it, say?—
   “It is not right of us
   To speak of this:
   Glory to Thee (our Lord) this
   Is a most serious slander!” 2969

17. Allah doth admonish you,
   That ye may never repeat
   Such (conduct), if ye
   Are (true) Believers.

18. And Allah makes the Signs
   Plain to you: for Allah
   Is full of knowledge and wisdom.

19. Those who love (to see)
   Scandal circulate
   Among the Believers, will have
   A grievous Chastisement in this life.

2968. There are three things here reprobated by way of moral teaching: (1) if others speak an evil word, that is no reason why you should allow it to defile your tongue; (2) if you get a thought or suspicion which is not based on your certain knowledge, do not give it currency by giving it expression; and (3) others may think it is a small matter to speak lightly of something which blast a person’s character or reputation: in the eyes of Allah it is a most serious matter in any case, but specially when it involves the honour and reputation of pious women.

2969. The right course would have been to stop any further currency of false slanders by ignoring them and at least refusing to help in their circulation. The exclamation “Subhānaka”, “Praise to Thee (O Allah)”, or “Glory to Allah!” is an exclamation of surprise and disavowal as much as to say, “We do not believe it! And we shall have nothing to do with you, O false slanderers!”
And in the Hereafter: Allah Knows, and ye know not. 2970

20. Were it not for the grace And mercy of Allah on you, And that Allah is Full of kindness and mercy, (Ye would be ruined indeed). 2971

SECTION 3.

21. O ye who believe! Follow not Satan's footsteps: If any will follow the footsteps Of Satan, he will (but) command What is indecent and wrong: And were it not for the grace And mercy of Allah on you, Not one of you would ever Have been pure: but Allah

2970. What mischiefs can be planned by Evil to delude simple folk who mean no harm in their own minds but who by thoughtlessness are deluded step by step to become the instruments of Evil, may not be known to the most instructed of men, but it is all known to Allah. Man should therefore always be on his guard against the traps of Evil, and it is only Allah's grace that can save him.

2971. Note the refrain that comes four times in this passage, "Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah ....". Each time it has a different application. (1) In xxiv. 10, it was in connection with the accusation of infidelity by the man against his wife, they were both reminded of Allah's mercy and warned against suspicion and untruth. (2) In xxiv. 14, the Believers were told to be wary of false rumours lest they should cause pain and division among themselves: it is Allah's grace that keeps them united. (3) Here is an admonition for the future: there may be conspiracies and snares laid by evil against simple people; it is Allah's grace that protects them. (4) In xxiv. 21, the general warning is directed to the observance of purity in act and in thought, concerning one’s self and concerning others: it is only Allah's grace that can keep that purity spotless, for He hears prayers and knows of all the snares that are spread in the path of the good.

2972. See last note.
22. Let not those among you
Who are endued with grace
And amplitude of means
Resolve by oath against helping
Their kinsmen, those in want,
And those who have left
Their homes in Allah's cause:
Let them forgive and overlook,
Do you not wish
That Allah should forgive you?
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

23. Those who slander chaste,
Indiscreet and believing women
Are cursed in this life
And in the Hereafter:
For them is a grievous Chastisement-

2973. Spotless purity in thought, word, and deed, includes the disposition to put the best construction on the motives of others, so that we ascribe no evil motive to the seeming indiscretions of virtuous people. Such a high standard can only come by the grace of Allah, Who hears all prayers and knows all the temptations to which human nature is subject. His Will and Plan make both for spiritual protection and spiritual peace, and we must place ourselves trustingly in His hands.

2974. The immediate reference was to Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr, the father of Ḥadhrat ‘Āisha. He was blessed both with spiritual grace from Allah and with ample means, which he always used in the service of Islam and of Muslims. One of the slanderers of Ḥadhrat ‘Āisha turned out to be Mīsāḥ, a cousin of Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr, whom he had been in the habit of supporting. Naturally Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr wished to stop that aid, but according to the highest standards of Muslim ethics he was asked to forgive and forget, which he did, with the happiest results to the peace and unity of the Muslim community. But the general application holds good for all time. A generous patron should not, in personal anger, withdraw his support even for serious faults if the delinquent repents and mends his ways. If Allah forgives us, who are we to refuse forgiveness to our fellows?

2975. Good women are sometimes indiscreet because they think of no evil. But even such innocent indiscretion lands them, and those who hold them dear, in difficulties. Such was the case with Ḥadhrat ‘Āisha, who was in extreme pain and anguish for a whole month because of the slanders spread about her. Her husband and her father were also...
24. On the Day when their tongues,
Their hands, and their feet
Will bear witness against them⁴⁷⁶⁶
As to their actions.

25. On that Day Allah
Will pay them back
(All) their just dues,
And they will realise
That Allah is
The (very) Truth,
That makes all things manifest.⁴⁷⁷⁷

26. Women impure are for men impure,
And men impure for women impure,
And women of purity
Are for men of purity,
And men of purity
Are for women of purity:
These are innocent of
All what people say:⁴⁷⁷⁸
For them there is forgiveness,
And a provision honourable.⁴⁷⁷⁹

= placed in a most awkward predicament, considering their position and the great work in
which they were engaged. But unprincipled people, who start false slanders, and their
unthinking tools who help in spreading such slanders, are guilty of the gravest spiritual
offence, and their worst punishment is the deprivation of Allah's grace, which is the
meaning of a state of Curse.

⁴⁷⁶. Our own limbs and faculties are the strongest witnesses against us if we misuse
them for evil deeds instead of using them for the good deeds for which they were given
to us.

⁴⁷⁷. All that we thought of hiding will be clear as day before Allah's Judgment
Seat, because He is the very essence of Truth and Reality. He is the true Light (xxiv.
35), of which all physical light is merely a type or reflection.

⁴⁷⁸. The pure consort with the pure, and the impure with the impure. If the
impure, out of the impurity of their thoughts, or imaginations, impute any evil to the
pure, the pure are not affected by it, but they should avoid all occasions for random talk.

⁴⁷⁹. Forgiveness for any indiscretion which they may have innocently committed,
and spiritual provision or protection against the assaults of Evil. It is also meant that the
more the satans attempt to defame or slander them, the more triumphantly will they be
vindicated and provided with the physical and moral good which will advance their real
life.
SECTION 4.

27. O ye who believe!
Enter not houses other than Your own, until ye have Asked permission and saluted Those in them: that is Best for you, in order that Ye may heed (what is seemly).2980

28. If ye find no one2981 In the house, enter not Until permission is given To you: if ye are asked To go back, go back: That makes for greater purity For yourselves: and Allah Knows well all that ye do.

29. It is no fault on your part To enter houses not used For living in, which serve Some (other) use for you:2982

2980. The conventions of propriety and privacy are essential to a refined life of goodness and purity. The English saying that an Englishman's home is his castle, suggests a certain amount of exclusiveness and defiance. The Muslim principle of asking respectful permission and exchanging salutations ensures privacy without exclusiveness, and friendliness without undue familiarity.

2981. That is, if no one replies; there may be people in the house not in a presentable state. Or, even if the house is empty, you have no right to enter it until you obtain the owner's permission, wherever he may be. The fact of your not receiving a reply does not entitle you to enter without permission. You should wait, or knock twice or three times, and withdraw in case no permission is received. If you are actually asked to withdraw, as the inmates are not in a condition to receive you, you should a fortiori withdraw, either for a time, or altogether, as the inmates may wish you to do. Even if they are your friends, you have no right to take them by surprise or enter against their wishes. Your own purity of life and conduct as well as of motives is thus tested.

2982. The rule about dwelling-houses is strict, because privacy is precious, and essential to a refined, decent, and well-ordered life. Such a rule of course does not apply to houses used for other useful purposes, such as an inn or caravanserai, or a shop, or =
And Allah has knowledge
Of what ye reveal
And what ye conceal.

30. Say to the believing men
That they should lower
Their gaze and guard\textsuperscript{2983}
Their modesty: that will make
For greater purity for them:
And Allah is well acquainted
With all that they do.

31. And say to the believing women
That they should lower
Their gaze and guard\textsuperscript{2984}
Their modesty; that they
Should not display their
Beauty and ornaments\textsuperscript{2985} except
What (ordinarily) appear
Thereof; that they should
Draw their veils over
Their bosoms and not display

\textsuperscript{2983} The rule of modesty applies to men as well as women. A brazen stare by a man at a woman (or even at a man) is a breach of refined manners. Where sex is concerned, modesty is not only “good form”: it is not only to guard the weaker sex, but also to guard the spiritual good of the stronger sex.

\textsuperscript{2984} The need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the uncovering of the bosom.

\textsuperscript{2985} Zinat means both natural beauty and artificial ornaments. I think both are implied here, but chiefly the former. The woman is asked not to make a display of her figure except to the following classes of people: (1) her husband, (2) her near relatives whom a certain amount of \textit{neglige} is permissible; (3) her women, (4) slaves, male and female, as they would be in constant attendance; but this item would now be blank, with the abolition of slavery; (5) men who are free from sexual desire and who usually frequent the houses; and (6) infants or small children before they get a sense of sex. \textit{Cf. also} xxxiii. 59.
Their beauty except
To their husbands, their fathers,
Their husbands' fathers, their sons,
Their husbands' sons,
Their brothers or their brothers' sons,
Or their sisters' sons,
Or their women, or the slaves
Whom their right hands Possess, or male attendants Free of sexual desires.
Or small children who Have no carnal knowledge of women;
And that they Should not strike their feet In order to draw attention To their hidden ornaments. 2986
And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together Towards Allah in repentance that ye May be successful. 2987

32. Marry those among you Who are single, 2988 and The virtuous ones among Your slaves, male or female: If they are in poverty,

2986. It is one of the tricks of showy or unchaste women to tinkle their ankle ornaments, to draw attention to themselves.

2987. While all these details of the purity and good form of domestic life are being brought to our attention, we are clearly reminded that the chief object we should hold in view is our spiritual welfare. All our brief life on this earth is a probation, and we must make our individual, domestic, and social life all contribute to our holiness, so that we can get the real success and bliss which is the aim of our spiritual endeavour.

2988. The subject of sex ethics and manners brings us to the subject of marriage. “Single” (ayāmā, plural of Aiyīm) here means any one not in the bond of wedlock, whether unmarried or lawfully divorced, or widowed.
Allah will give them
Means out of His grace:
For Allah is Ample-giving. 2989
And He knoweth all things.

33. Let those who find not
The wherewithal for marriage
Keep themselves chaste, until
Allah gives them means 2990
Out of His grace.
And if any of your slaves
Ask for a deed in writing
(For emancipation)
Give them such a deed 2991
If ye know any good
In them; yea, give them
Something yourselves
Out of the means which
Allah has given to you.
But force not your maids 2992

2989. Cf. v. 57. Allah’s mercy is for all: it is not confined to a class or grade of people.

2990. A Muslim marriage requires some sort of a dower for the wife. If the man cannot afford that, he must wait and keep himself chaste. It is no excuse for him to say that he must satisfy his natural cravings within or outside marriage. It must be within marriage.

2991. The law of slavery in the legal sense of the term is now obsolete. While it had any meaning, Islam made the slave’s lot as easy as possible. A slave, male or female, could ask for conditional manumission by a written deed fixing the amount required for manumission and allowing the slave meanwhile to earn money by lawful means. Such a deed was not to be refused if the request was genuine and the slave had character. Not only that, but the master is directed to help with money out of his own resources in order to enable the slave to earn his or her own liberty.

2992. Where slavery was legal, what is now called the “white slave traffic” was carried on by wicked people like ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubai, the Hypocrite leader at Madinah. This is absolutely condemned. While modern nations have abolished ordinary slavery, the “White Slave Traffic” is still a big social problem in individual States. Here it is absolutely condemned. No more despicable trade can be imagined.
To prostitution when they desire Chastity, in order that ye May make a gain In the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, Yet, after such compulsion, Is Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them). 2994

34. We have already sent down To you verses making things Clear, an illustration from (the story Of) people who passed away Before you, and an admonition For those who fear (Allah). 2995

SECTION 5.

35. Allah is the Light 2996 Of the heavens and the earth. 2997

The parable of His Light Is as if there were a Niche And within it a Lamp:

2993. I have translated “in” (literally, “if”) by “when” because this is not a conditional clause but an explanatory clause, explaining the meaning of “force”. “Forcing” a person necessarily means that it is against the wish or inclination of the person forced. Even if they were to give a formal consent, it is not valid.

2994. The poor unfortunate girls, who are victims of such a nefarious trade, will yet find mercy from Allah, whose bounties extend to all His creatures.

2995. This prepares the way for the magnificent Verse of Light that follows, and its sublime meaning.

2996. Embedded within certain directions concerning a refined domestic and social life, comes this glorious parable of light, which contains layer upon layer of transcendent truth about spiritual mysteries. No notes can do adequate justice to its full meaning. Volumes have been written on this subject. In these notes I propose to explain the simplest meaning of this passage.

2997. The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, light is the purest thing we know, but physical =
The Lamp enclosed in Glass: The glass as it were A brilliant star Lit from a blessed Tree An Olive, neither of the East Nor of the West

Light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g. (1) it is dependent upon some source external to itself; (2) it is a passing phenomenon; if we take it to be a form of motion or energy it is unstable, like all physical phenomena; (3) it is dependent on space and time; its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth. The perfect Light of Allah is free from any such defects.

The first three points in the Parable centre round the symbols of the Niche, the Lamp, and the Glass. (1) The Niche (Mishkāt) is the little shallow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a light (before the days of electricity) was usually placed. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light in the room and minimised the shadows. The background of the wall and the sides of the niche helped to throw the light well into the room, and if the wall was white-washed, it also acted as a reflector: the opening in front made the way for the light. So with the spiritual Light; it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own, in Revelation and other Signs of Allah; its access to men is by a special Way, open to all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays. (2) The Lamp is the core of the spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the Niche is nothing without it; the Niche is actually made for it. (3) The Glass is the transparent medium through which the Light passes. On the one hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of low life and from gusts of wind, and on the other, it transmits the light through a medium which is made up of and akin to the grosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), so arranged as to admit the subtle to the gross by its transparency. So the spiritual Truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind.

The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star. So men of God, who preach Allah's Truth, are themselves illuminated by Allah's Light and become the illuminating media through which that Light spreads and permeates human life.

The olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance. Its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has a specially fine flavour. Cf. n. 2880 to xxxiii. 20. For the illuminating quality of its oil, see n. 3002 below.

This Olive is not localised. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is universal, for such is Allah's Light. As applied to the olive, there is also a more literal meaning, which can be allegorised in a different way. An olive tree with an eastern aspect =
Whose Oil is well-nigh Luminous, Though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide Whom He will To His Light. Allah doth set forth Parables For men: and Allah Doth know all things.

36. (Lit is such a Light) In houses, which Allah Hath permitted to be raised To honour; for the celebration, In them, of His name:

gets only the rays of the morning sun; one with a western aspect, only the rays of the western sun. In the northern hemisphere the south aspect will give the sun’s rays a great part of the day, while a north aspect will shut them out altogether, and vice versa in the southern hemisphere. But a tree in the open plain or on a hill will get perpetual sunshine by day; it will be more mature, and the fruit and oil will be of superior quality. So Allah’s light is not localised or immature: it is perfect and universal.

3002. Pure olive oil is beautiful in colour, consistency, and illuminating power. The world has tried all kinds of illuminants, and for economic reasons or convenience, one replaces another. But for coolness, comfort to the eyes, and steadiness, vegetable oils are superior to electricity, mineral oils, and animal oils. And among vegetable oils, olive oil takes a high place and deserves its sacred associations. Its purity is almost like light itself: you may suppose it to be almost light before it is lit. So with spiritual Truth: it illuminates the mind and understanding imperceptibly, almost before the human mind and heart have been consciously touched by it.

3003. Glorious, illimitable Light, which cannot be described or measured. And there are grades and grades of it, passing transcendently into regions of spiritual height, which man’s imagination can scarcely conceive of. The topmost pinnacle is the true prototypical Light, the real Light, of which all others were reflections, the Light of Allah.

3004. The punctuation of the Arabic text makes it necessary to carry back the adverbia l clause “in houses”, to something in the last verse, say “Lit from a blessed Tree”,—the intervening clauses being treated as parenthetical.

3005. That is, in all places of pure worship; but some Commentators understand special Mosques, such as the Ka’ba in Makkah or Mosques in Madinah or Jerusalem; for these are specially held in honour.
In them is He glorified
In the mornings and
In the evenings, (again and
again), 3006

37. By men whom neither
Trade nor sale
Can divert from the
Remembrance 3007
Of Allah, nor from regular Prayer,
Nor from paying zakat
Their (only) fear is
For the Day when
Hearts and eyes
Will be turned about. 3008

38. That Allah may reward them
According to the best 3009
Of their deeds, and add
Even more for them
Out of His Grace:
For Allah doth provide
For those whom He will,
Without measure.

3006. In the evenings: the Arabic word is Āsāl, a plural of a plural, to imply emphasis: I have rendered that shade of meaning by adding the words “again and again”.

3007. “Remembrance of Allah” is wider than Prayer: it includes silent contemplation, and active service of Allah and His creatures. The regular Prayers and regular Charity are the social acts performed through the organised community.

3008. Some renderings suggest the effects of terror on the Day of Judgment. But here we are considering the case of the righteous, whose “fear” of Allah is akin to love and reverence and who (as the next verse shows) hope for the best reward from Allah. But the world they will meet will be a wholly changed world.

3009. The best of the righteous do not deserve the reward that they get: all their faults are forgiven, and only their best actions are considered in the reward that they get.
Nay, more! Out of the unbounded Grace of Allah even more is added to them. For in giving rewards, Allah’s bounty is boundless.
39. But the Unbelievers,—
Their deeds are like a mirage
In sandy deserts, which
The man parched with thirst
Mistakes for water; until
When he comes up to it,
He finds it to be nothing:
But he finds Allah
There, and Allah
Will pay him his account:
And Allah is swift
In taking account.

40. Or (the Unbelievers’ state)
Is like the depths of darkness
In a vast deep ocean,
Overwhelmed with billow
Topped by billow,
Topped by (dark) clouds:
Depths of darkness, one

3010. We have had various metaphors to give us an idea of the beneficent Light of Allah. Now we have contrasted metaphors to enable us to see those who deny or refuse that Light, and are overwhelmed in utter darkness. The Light (of Allah) is an absolute Reality, and is mentioned first, and the souls that follow that Light are a reflected reality and are mentioned after the Light. On the other hand the Darkness is not a reality in itself, but a negation of reality; the reflected existences that refuse the Light are mentioned, and then their state, which is Unreality. Two metaphors are given: a mirage, in this verse, and the depths of darkness in the sea, in the next.

3011. The mirage, of which I have seen several instances in the Arabian deserts and in Egypt, is a strange phenomenon of illusion. It is a trick of our vision. In the language of our Parable, it rejects the Light which shows us the Truth, and deceives us with Falsehood. A lonely traveller in a desert, nearly dying of thirst, sees a broad sheet of water. He goes in that direction, lured on and on, but finds nothing at all. He dies in protracted agony.

3012. The rebel against Allah finds himself like the man deluded by a mirage. The Truth which he rejected is always with him. The mirage which he accepted leads to his destruction.

3013. What a graphic picture of darkness in the depths of the Ocean, wave upon wave, and on top of all, dense dark clouds! There is so little light even in ordinary depths of the Ocean that fishes which live there lose their eyes as useless organs.

3014. A contrast to “Light upon Light” in xxiv. 35 above.
Above another: if a man
Stretches out his hand,
He can hardly see it!
For any to whom Allah
Giveth not light,
There is no light. 3015

SECTION 6.

41. Seest thou not that it is
Allah Whose praises all beings
In the heavens and on earth
Do celebrate, and the birds
(of the air) with wings
Outspread? Each one knows
Its own (mode of) prayer
And praise. And Allah
Knows well all that they do.

42. Yea, to Allah belongs
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth; and to Allah
Is the return. 3018

43. Seest thou not that Allah
Makes the clouds move
Gently, then joins them
Together, then makes them

3015. The true source of Light in the world of Reality is Allah, and anyone who
cuts himself off from that Light is in utter darkness indeed, for it is the negation of the
only true Light, and not merely relative darkness, like that which we see, say, in the
shadows of moonlight.


3017. All denizens of the heavens, such as angels, all denizens of the earth (including
the waters) such as man, animals, insects, fishes, etc., and all denizens of the air, such
as birds, celebrate the praises of Allah. Each has his own mode of prayer and praise.
It is not necessarily with words, for language (as we know it) is peculiar to man. But
actions and other modes of self-expression recognise and declare the Glory of Allah.

3018. To Him we belong; and to Him we shall return. Not only we, but all Creation,
proclaims this in the whole world.
Into a heap?—then wilt thou
See rain issue forth\(^{3019}\)
From their midst. And He
Sends down from the sky
Mountain masses (of clouds)
Wherein is hail: He strikes
Therewith whom He pleases
And He turns it away
From whom He pleases.
The vivid flash of its lightning
Well-nigh blinds the sight.

44. It is Allah Who alternates
The Night and the Day:\(^{3020}\)
Verily in these things
Is an instructive example
For those who have vision!

45. And Allah has created
Every animal from water:\(^{3021}\)
Of them there are some
That creep on their bellies;
Some that walk on two legs:

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3019. Artists, or lovers of nature, or observers of clouds will appreciate this
description of cloud effects—thin clouds floating about in fantastic shapes, joining together
and taking body and substance, then emerging as heavy clouds heaped up, which condense
and pour forth their rain. Then the heavy dark clouds in the upper regions, that bring
hail,—how distinct and yet how similar! They are truly like mountain masses! And when
the hailstones fall, how local their area! It hits some localities and leaves free others
almost interlaced! And the lightning—how blinding flashes come from thunderous clouds!
In this Book of Nature can we not see the hand of the powerful and beneficent Allah?

3020. His power, wisdom, and goodness are shown no less in the regular phenomena
of nature like the succession of Day and Night, than in the seasonal or seemingly irregular
movements of clouds and rain and hail and lightning. Those who have the spiritual vision
can read this Book of Allah with delight and instruction.

3021. Cf. xxi. 30, n. 2691. Protoplasm is the basis of all living matter, and “the vital
power of protoplasm seems to depend on the constant presence of water”.

And some that walk on four.\textsuperscript{3022}
Allah creates what He wills;\textsuperscript{3023}
For verily Allah has power
Over all things.

46. We have indeed sent down
Signs that make things manifest:
And Allah guides whom He wills
To a Way that is straight.

47. They\textsuperscript{3024} say, "We believe
In Allah and in the Messenger,
And we obey": but
Even after that, some of them
Turn away: they are not
(Really) Believers.

48. When they are summoned
To Allah and His Messenger,
In order that he may judge
Between them, behold, some
Of them decline (to come).

49. But if the right is\textsuperscript{3025}
On their side, they come
To him with all submission.

\textsuperscript{3022} The creeping things include worms and lowly forms of animal life as well as reptiles (like snakes), centipedes, spiders, and insects. Where these have legs they are small, and the description of creeping or crawling is more applicable to them than that of walking. Fishes and sea-animals generally cannot be said to walk: their swimming is like “creeping on their bellies”. Two-legged animals include birds and man. Most of the mammals walk on four legs. This includes the whole of the animal world.

\textsuperscript{3023} In Allah’s Will and Plan, the variety of forms and habits among animals is adapted to their various modes of life and stages of biological development.

\textsuperscript{3024} The Hypocrites, far from profiting from Allah’s Light and Revelation, or declaring their open hostility, play fast and loose according to their selfish worldly aims.

\textsuperscript{3025} The Hypocrites only wanted to go to the judge who they thought was likely to give judgment in their favour. If their case was incontestable, and justice was on their side, they readily came to the Prophet, knowing that he was just and would judge in their favour, even against his own adherents. But if they had done wrong, an impartial judge was not to their taste. They would rather go to some one who would tip the balance in their favour! This form of selfishness and iniquity was not confined to the Hypocrites of Madinah. It is common in all ages, and should be suppressed.
50. Is it that there is
   A disease in their hearts?
Or do they doubt,
   Or are they in fear,
That Allah and His Messenger
   Will deal unjustly with them?
Nay, it is they themselves
   Who do wrong.\footnote{3026}

SECTION 7.

51. The answer of the Believers,
   When summoned to Allah
And His Messenger, in order
   That he may judge between them,
Is no other than this:
   They say, “We hear and we
   obey”.\footnote{3027}

   It is such as these
   That will prosper.\footnote{3028}

52. It is such as obey
   Allah and His Messenger,
   And fear Allah and do
   Right, that will triumph.

53. They swear their strongest oaths
   By Allah that, if only thou
   Wouldst command them, they

\footnote{3026. The real fact is that their conscience smites them. They know their own iniquity, and do not wish to go before a just judge who would be open to no influence and would be sure to give a righteous decree.}

\footnote{3027. Cf. ii. 285. Contrast with it the attitude of the Unbelievers or Hypocrites, who say aloud, “we hear”, but intend in their hearts to disobey (ii. 93).}

\footnote{3028. True happiness, whether here or in the Hereafter, is not to be attained by fraud or duplicity: it is the privilege of those who listen attentively to good counsel and carry it out in their lives.}
Would leave (their homes).  
Say: "Swear ye not; 
Obedience is (more) reasonable; 
Verily, Allah is well acquainted With all that ye do."

54. Say: "Obey Allah, and obey 
The Messenger: but if ye turn 
Away, he is only responsible For the duty placed on him And ye for that placed 
On you. If ye obey him, 
Ye shall be on right guidance. 
The Messenger's duty is only 
To preach the clear (Message)".

55. Allah has promised, to those 
Among you who believe 
And work righteous deeds, that 
He

Will, of a surety, grant them In the land, inheritance (Of power), as He granted it

3029. Some people, especially hypocrites, give hyperbolic assurances, as did the Madinah Hypocrites to the holy Prophet, that they would do any bidding, even to the forsaking of their hearths and homes. To this they are ready to swear their strongest oaths, which mean nothing. They are asked to spare their oaths, and quietly do at least such unheroic duties as they are asked to do in every-day life. Idle words are not of the least value. Allah will judge by your actions, and He knows all, whether it is open or secret.

3030. 'If you disobey Allah's commands as explained by His Prophet, you are not going to be forced. The Prophet's mission is to train your will and explain clearly all the implications of your conduct. The responsibility for your conduct rests entirely on yourselves.

3031. Three things are promised here, to those who have Faith and obey Allah's Law: (1) that they will inherit power and authority in the land, not for any selfish purposes of theirs nor by way of favouritism, but in order that they may maintain Allah's Law; (2) that the Religion of Right, which Allah has chosen for them, will be openly established, and will suppress all wrong and oppression; (3) that the righteous will live in peace and security, instead of having to suffer persecution, or leave their hearths and homes for the cause of Allah, or practise the rites of their Faith in secret.
To those before them; that
He will establish in authority
Their religion—the one
Which He has chosen for them;
And that He will change
(Their state), after the fear\(^{3032}\)
In which they (lived), to one
Of security and peace:
‘They will worship Me (alone)
And not associate aught with Me.’
If any do reject Faith
After this, they are
Rebellious and wicked.

56. So establish regular Prayer
And give zakat
And obey the Messenger;
That ye may receive mercy.

57. Never think thou
That the Unbelievers
Can escape
In the earth
Their abode is the Fire,—
And it is indeed
An evil refuge!

\(^{3032}\). If this verse was revealed about the time of the Battle of the Ditch (Khandaq), also called the Battle of the Confederates (Ahzâb), A.H. 4-5, we can imagine the comfort it gave to the Muslims who were besieged in Madinah by a force ten times their number. The Muslims then lived in a state of great suspense and danger, and under arms for days on end. (See xxxiii. 9-20). The security and authority they were promised came to them subsequently in abundant measures.
SECTION 8.

58. **O ye who believe!**

Let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age, ask your permission (before they come to your presence), on three occasions: before morning prayer; the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and after the late-night prayer: these are your three times of undress: outside those times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

3033. We now come to rules of decorum within the family circle in refined society. Servants and children have rather more freedom of access, as they come and go at all hours, and there is less ceremony with them. But even in their case there are limitations. During the night, before morning prayer, *i.e.*, before dawn, they must discreetly ask for permission before they enter, partly because they must not unnecessarily disturb people asleep, and partly because the people are then undressed. The same applies to the time for the midday siesta, and again to the time after night prayers, when people usually undress and turn in to sleep. For grown-ups the rule is stricter: they must ask permission to come in at all times (xxiv. 59).

3034. This would mean slaves in a regime of slavery.

3035. I have translated "come of age" euphemistically for "attain the age of puberty".

3036. It is a mark of refinement for ladies and gentlemen not to be slipshod or vulgarly familiar, in dress, manners, or speech; and Islam aims at making every Muslim man or woman, however humble in station, a refined gentleman or lady, so that he or she can climb the ladder of spiritual development with humble confidence in Allah, and with the co-operation of his brothers and sisters in Islam. The principles here laid down =
59. But when the children among you3037
Come of age, let them (also)
Ask for permission, as do those
Before them:3038
Thus does Allah make clear
His Signs to you: for Allah
Is full of knowledge and wisdom.3039

60. Such elderly women3040 as are
Past the prospect of marriage, -
There is no blame on them
If they lay aside
Their (outer) garments, provided
They make not a wanton display
Of their beauty: but
It is best for them
To be modest: and Allah
Is One Who sees and knows3041
All things.
61. It is no fault in the blind
Nor in one born lame, nor
In one afflicted with illness, 3042
Nor in yourselves, that ye
Should eat in your own houses,
Or those of your fathers,
Or your mothers, or your brothers,
Or your sisters, or your father's
brothers
Or your father's sisters,
Or your mother's brothers,
Or your mother's sisters,
Or in houses of which
The keys are in your possession,
Or in the house of a sincere
Friend of yours: there is
No blame on you, whether
Ye eat in company or
Separately. But if ye
Enter houses, salute each other—
A greeting of blessing
And purity as from Allah. 3043

3042. There were various Arab superstitions and fancies which are combated and rejected here. (1) The blind, or the halt, or those afflicted with serious disease were supposed to be objects of divine displeasure, and as such not fit to be associated with us in meals in our houses: we are not to entertain such a thought, as we are not judges of the causes of people’s misfortunes, which deserve our sympathy and kindness. (2) It was considered unbecoming to take meals in the houses of near relatives: this taboo is not approved. (3) A similar superstition about houses in our possession but not in our actual occupation is disapproved. (4) If people think they should not fall under obligation to casual friends, that does not apply to a sincere friend, in whose company a meal is not to be rejected, but welcomed. (5) If people make a superstition either that they should always eat separately, or that they must always eat in company, as some people weary of their own company think, either of them is wrong. Man is free and should regulate his life according to needs and circumstances.

3043. The shades of meaning in *Salam* are explained in n. 2512 to xix. 62. Here, we were first told that we might accept hospitality and good fellowship in each other’s houses. Now we are told what spirit should animate us in doing so. It should not be a spirit only of self-satisfaction in a worldly sense. It should rather be a spirit of good-will in the highest spiritual sense of the term—purity of motives and purity of life, as in the sight of Allah.
Thus does Allah make clear
The Signs to you: that ye
May understand.\footnote{3044}

SECTION 9.

62. Only those are Believers,
Who believe in Allah and
His Messenger: when they are
With him on a matter
Requiring collective action,\footnote{3045}
They do not depart until
They have asked for his leave;
Those who ask for the leave
Are those who believe in Allah
And His Messenger; so when
They ask for thy leave,
For some business of their,
Give leave to those of them
Whom thou wilt,\footnote{3046} and ask
Allah for their forgiveness;\footnote{3047}
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

\footnote{3044. See notes 3039 and 3041 above. The refrain comes again, in a different form, closing the argument from a different point of view.}

\footnote{3045. \textit{Matter requiring collective action}: anything that affects the Community as a whole: Jumu‘a and ‘I‘d prayers are periodical occasions of this kind, but what is meant here is, I think, joint consultations with a view to joint undertakings, such as a Jihād, or some kind of organisation in peace.}

\footnote{3046. That is, those to whom, in the exercise of your impartial discretion, you think it expedient to give leave. “Will”, unless the context shows otherwise, means “right will”, not a will without any definite principle behind it.}

\footnote{3047. In important matters of general consultation, even though leave of absence is given on sufficient excuse, it implies some defect in duty on the part of the person to whom the leave is given, and therefore the need of forgiveness from Him to Whom we owe duty in a perfect measure.}
63. Deem not the summons
Of the Messenger among yourselves
Like the summons of one
Of you to another: Allah
Doth know those of you
Who slip away under shelter
Of some excuse: then
Let those beware who
Withstand the Messenger’s order,
Lest some trial befall them,
Or a grievous Chastisement
Be inflicted on them.

64. Be quite sure that
To Allah doth belong
Whatever is in the heavens
And on earth. Well doth He
Know what ye are intent upon:
And the day they will be
Brought back to Him, He
Will tell them the truth
Of what they did:
For Allah doth know
All things.

3048. Three significations are possible. One is that adopted in the Translation, which agrees with the view of most Commentators. Another would be: ‘Do not think that the prayer of the Prophet of Allah is like your ordinary requests to another: the Prophet’s prayer will be about serious matters and will be accepted by Allah’. A third interpretation would be: ‘Do not address the Prophet familiarly as you would address one another: use proper terms of respect for him.’

3049. The “trial” is understood to be some misfortune in this life, and the “grievous Penalty” to be the punishment in the Hereafter.

3050. The condition or position you are in, the motives which actuate you, and the ends you have in view.

3051. Things misunderstood or maligned, falsely praised or held in honour, or fraudulently shown to be good when they are evil—everything will be revealed in its true light on the Day of final Judgment.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Furqān 25.

This Sūra further develops the contrast between Light and Darkness, as symbolical of knowledge and ignorance, righteousness and sin, spiritual progress and degradation. It closes with a definition of the deeds by which the righteous are known in the environment of this world.

It is mainly an early Makkān Sūra, but its date has no significance.

Summary.—Allah's highest gift to man is that He has furnished a Criterion for judgment between right and wrong,—in His revelation, which teaches us the true significance of our eternal Future (xxv. 1-20).

Those who do not use that Criterion will be full of woe when the Judgment comes, for Allah gave full warning at all times (xxv. 21-44).

In the contrasts of shade and sun, night and day, death and life, and the whole ordering of Allah's Creation, men may learn of Allah Most Gracious; and the virtues of the righteous respond to Allah's care for them (xxv. 45-77).
**Al-Furqān, or The Criterion.**

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. **Blessed** is He Who Sent down the Criterion To His servant, that it May be an admonition To all creatures;—

2. He to Whom belongs The dominion of the heavens And the earth: no son Has He begotten, nor has He A partner in His dominion: It is He Who created All things, and ordered them In due proportions.

3. Yet have they, Besides Him, gods that can

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3052. *Tabāraka*: the root meaning is “increase” or “abundance”. Here that aspect of Allah’s dealing with His creatures is emphasised, which shows His abundant goodness to all His creatures, in that He sent the Revelation of His Will, not only in the unlimited Book of Nature, but in a definite Book in human language, which gives clear directions and admonitions to all. The English word “blessed” hardly conveys that meaning, but I can find no other without departing far from established usage. To emphasise the meaning I have explained, I have translated “Blessed is ...”, but “Blessed be ...” is also admissible, as it brings out another shade of meaning, that we praise and bless His holy name.

3053. That by which we can judge clearly between right and wrong. Here the reference is to the Qur-ān, which has already been symbolised by Light. This symbol is continued here, and many contrasts are shown, in the midst of which we can distinguish between the true and the false by Allah’s Light, especially the contrast between righteousness and sin.

3054. The pronoun in yakāna may refer either to Furqān (the Criterion) or to ‘Abd (the holy Prophet). In either case the ultimate meaning is the same. The Qur-ān is the standing Criterion for judgment between right and wrong.

3055. The majesty of Allah and His independence of all wants or help are mentioned to show how exceedingly great is His goodness in revealing His Will to us.

3056. This is the first great distinction taught by the Criterion; to know the attributes of the true God, as against the false fancies of men.
Create nothing but are themselves Created; that have no control
Of hurt or good to themselves;
Nor can they control Death
Nor Life nor Resurrection.

4. But the Misbelievers say:
"Naught is this but a lie\textsuperscript{3057}
Which he has forged,
And others have helped him
At it." In truth it is they
Who have put forward
An iniquity and a falsehood.

5. And they say: "Tales of
The ancients, which he has caused
To be written: and they
Are dictated before him
Morning and evening.\textsuperscript{3058}

6. Say: "The (Qur-ān) was sent down
By Him Who knows
The secret (that is) in the heavens\textsuperscript{3059}

3057. \textit{Ifk}, which I have translated a "lie" may be distinguished from \textit{zūr} at the end of this verse, translated "falsehood". The "lie" which the enemies attributed to the holy Prophet of Allah was supposed to be something which did not exist in reality, but was invented by him with the aid of other people: the implication was that (1) the Revelation was not a revelation but a forgery, and that (2) the things revealed \textit{e.g.} the news of the Hereafter, the Resurrection, the Judgment, the Bliss of the Righteous and the sufferings of the Evil, were fanciful and had no basis in fact. Delusion is also suggested. The reply is that, so far from that being the case, the facts were true and the charges were false (\textit{zūr}),–the falsehood being due to the habits of iniquity for which the Misbelievers' whole mental and spiritual attitude was responsible.

3058. In their misguided arrogance they say: 'We have heard such things before; they are pretty tales which have come down from ancient times; they are good for amusement, but who takes them seriously?' When the beauty and power of the Revelation are pointed out, and its miracle as coming from an unlearned man, they again hint at other men who wrote them, though they could not produce any one who could write anything like it.

3059. The answer is that the Qur-ān teaches spiritual knowledge of what is ordinarily hidden from men's sight, and such knowledge can only come from Allah, to Whom alone is known the secret of the whole Creation. In spite of man's sin and shortcomings, He forgives, and He sends His most precious gift, \textit{i.e.}, the revelation of His Will.
And the earth: verily He Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

7. And they say: “What sort Of a messenger is this, Who eats food, and walks Through the streets? Why Has not an angel Been sent down to him To give admonition with him? 3060

8. “Or (why) has not a treasure Been bestowed on him, or Why has he (not) a garden For enjoyment? 3061 The wicked Say: "Ye follow none other Than a man bewitched." 3062

9. See what kinds of comparisons They make for thee! But they have gone astray, And never a way will they Be able to find! 3063

3060. This is another objection: 'He is only a man like us: why is not an angel sent down, if not by himself, at least with him?' The answer is: angels would be of no use to men as Messengers, as they and men would not understand each other, and if angels came, it might cause more confusion and wonder than understanding in men's minds. Cf. xxi. 7-8; xxvii, 94-95. The office of an angel is different. A teacher for mankind is one who shares their nature, mingles in their life, is acquainted with their doings, and sympathises with their joys and sorrows.

3061. Literally, 'that he may eat out of it'. As shown in n. 776 to v. 69, akala (to eat) has a comprehensive meaning, implying enjoyment of all kinds. Here the garden itself stands for a type of the amenities of life: its fruits would be available for eating, its coolness for rest and refreshment, its waters and its landscape for aesthetic delight.

3062. Cf. xvii. 47. This speech, of the wicked or the ungodly, is meant to be even more bitter than that of the Misbelievers. It makes out the Prophet to be a demented fool!

3063. The charges the enemies made against the Messenger of Allah recoiled on those who made them. The Messenger was vindicated, and went from strength to strength, for Allah's Truth will always prevail. The men who perversely leave the way of truth, righteousness, and sincerity, have not only missed the Way, but on account of their perversity they will never be able to find any way by which they can get back to Truth.
SECTION 2.

10. Blessed is He Who,\textsuperscript{3064}
    If that were His Will,
    Could give thee better (things)
    Than those,—Gardens beneath
    which\textsuperscript{3065}
    Rivers flow; and He could
    Give thee Palaces (secure
    To dwell in).

11. Nay, they deny the Hour
    (Of the Judgment to come):\textsuperscript{3066}
    But We have prepared
    A Blazing Fire for such
    As deny the Hour:

12. When it sees them
    From a place far off,
    They will hear its fury
    And its raging sigh.\textsuperscript{3067}

\textsuperscript{3064. Cf. above, xxv. 1. The reminiscent phrase shows that the first argument, about
    the Revelation and Prophethood, is completed, and we now pass on to the contrast, the
    fate of the rejecters of both.}

\textsuperscript{3065. This phrase is usually symbolical of the Bliss in the Hereafter. If it were Allah's
    Plan, He could give his Messengers complete felicity and power in this life also. Instead
    of being persecuted, mocked, driven out of their homes, and having to exert their utmost
    powers of body, mind, and character to plant the flag of Truth in an unbelieving world,
    they could have lived in ease and security. But that would not have given the real lessons
    they came to teach struggling humanity by their example.}

\textsuperscript{3066. Denying the Hour of Judgment means denying the power of Justice and Truth
    to triumph; it means asserting the dominion of Evil. But Allah himself will punish them,
    as shown in the following verses.}

\textsuperscript{3067. For zafir, a deep emission of breath or a sigh, see n. 1607 to xi. 106. Here
    the Fire is personified. It is raging with hunger and fury, and as soon as it sees them
    from ever so far, it emits a sigh of desire. Till then they had not realised their full danger.
    Now, just as their heart begins to tremble with terror, they are bound together—like with
    like,—and cast into the roaring flames!}
13. And when they are cast, Bound together, into a Constricted place therein, they Will plead for destruction There and then!3068

14. “This day plead not For a single destruction: Plead for destruction oft-repeated!”

15. Say: “Is that best, or The eternal Garden, promised3069 To the righteous? For them, That is a reward as well As a final abode.3070

16. “For them there will be Therein all that they wish for: They will dwell (there) for aye: A promise binding upon Thy Lord.”3071

17. The Day He will gather Them together as well as Those whom they worship Besides Allah, He will ask:3072

3068. Anything—total annihilation—would be better than the anguish they will suffer. But no annihilation will be granted to them. One destruction will not be enough to wipe out the intensity of their anguish. They will have to ask for many destructions, but they will not get them!

3069. Shifting the scene back to this life, they may fairly be asked: “Here is the result of the two courses of conduct: which do you prefer?”

3070. To the righteous, the final Bliss will in one sense be a reward. But the word “reward” does not truly represent facts, for two reasons: (1) the Bliss will be greater than they deserved; and (2) righteousness is its own reward. The best way of expressing the result would be to say that their highest Wish will now have been attained; the goal will have been reached; they will be in Allah’s Presence. That is salvation in the highest.

3071. That is the sort of thing—to be prayed for from Allah which he has made binding upon Himself and not ephemeral things, even though they may be good. And that is the sort of thing that Allah has promised and undertaken to give.

3072. The question is as in a Court of Justice, to convince those who stand arraigned.
"Was it ye who led
These My servants astray,
Or did they stray
From the Path themselves?"

18. They will say: “Glory to Thee!
Not meet was it for us
That we should take
For protectors others besides
Thee.”

But Thou didst bestow,
On them and their fathers,
Good things (in life), until
They forgot the Message:
For they were a people
Destroyed”.

19. (Allah will say): “Now
Have they proved you liars
In what ye say: so
Ye cannot avert (your penalty)
Nor (get) help.” And whoever
Among you does wrong,
Him shall We cause to taste
Of a grievous Chastisement.

3073. The creatures of Allah who were worshipped will prove that they never asked
for worship: on the contrary they themselves worshipped Allah and sought the protection
of Allah and of none but Allah. Cf. xlvi. 5-6. They will go further and show that the
false worshippers added ingratitude to their other sins: for Allah bestowed abundance
on them, and they blasphemed against Allah. They were indeed “worthless and destroyed”,
for the word *būr* bears both significations.

3074. The argument is as in a court of justice. If the false worshippers plead that
they were misled by those whom they falsely worshipped, the latter will be confronted
with them and will prove that plea to be false. No help can be got from them, and the
penalty cannot then be averted. After all these things are thus explained in detail
beforehand, all ungodly men should repent and turn to Allah. False worship is here
identified with sin, for sin is disobedience to Allah, and arises from a wrong appreciation
of Allah’s attributes and His goodness to His creatures. The sinful man refuses, in his
conduct, to serve Allah: he serves other things than Allah.
20. And the messengers whom We
Sent before thee were all
(Men) who ate food
And walked through the markets. 3075
We have made some of you
As a trial for others: 3076
Will ye have patience?
For Allah is One Who
Sees (all things).

SECTION 3.

21. Those who do not hope
To meet Us 3077
(For Judgment) say:
"Why are not the angels
Sent down to us, or
(Why) do we not see 3078
Our Lord?" Indeed they
Have an arrogant conceit
Of themselves, and mighty
Is the insolence of their impiety!

3075. Cf. above, xxv. 7.

3076. In Allah's universal Plan, each unit or thing serves a purpose. If some are rich, the poor should not envy them: it may be that the rich man’s proximity is itself a trial of their virtue. If some are poor, the righteous rich should not despise or neglect them: it may be that their coming within their sight is a trial for the real feeling of charity or brotherly love in the rich. If A is bad-tempered or persecutes or ill-uses B, it may be an opportunity for B to show his patience or humility or his faith in the ultimate prevalence of justice and truth. Whatever our experiences with other human beings may be, we must make them subserve the ends of our spiritual improvement and perhaps theirs also.

3077. The blasphemers who have given up all Faith and laugh at the Hereafter: nothing is sacred to them: their arrogance and insolence are beyond all bounds.

3078. Cf. ii. 55. The Israelites in the time of Moses demanded to see Allah. But they were struck with thunder and lightning even as they looked on. Indeed death would have been their fate, had it not been for the mercy of Allah.
22. The Day they see the angels,-
   No joy will there be
To the sinners that Day:
The (angels) will say:
   “There is a barrier
Forbidden (to you) altogether!”\(^{3079}\)

23. And We shall turn
   To whatever deeds they did
   (In this life), and We shall
Make such deeds as floating dust
Scattered about.\(^{3080}\)

24. The Companions of the Garden
   Will be well, that Day,
In their abode, and have
The fairest of places for repose.\(^{3081}\)

25. The Day the heaven shall be
   Rent asunder with clouds,\(^{3082}\)
   And angels shall be sent down,
Descending (in ranks),-

26. That Day, the dominion
   Right by
Shall be (wholly) for The\(^{3083}\)

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3079. They will not be allowed to enjoy any of the felicity or peace which will be the normal state of the new world of Reality. Their own past will stand as a barrier to shut them off.

3080. The false hopes they built on in this life, and the deeds did under the shadow of such false hopes will be dissipated as if they were dust flying about in the wind. They will have no value whatever.

3081. The barrier which will shut out the evil ones will not exist for the righteous, who will have an abode of bliss and repose, for they will be in the Garden of bliss.

3082. It will be a new world, and the way to describe it must necessarily draw upon our present experience of the finest things in nature. The sky, which now appears remote and unpeopled will be rent asunder. There will appear clouds of glory—angels and spiritual Lights of all grades and ranks—and the true majesty and goodness of Allah will be visible as it should be in reality, and as it is not now, on account of “our muddy vesture of decay”.

3083. See last note.
Most Gracious: it will be
A Day of dire difficulty
For the Misbelievers.

27. The Day that the wrong-doer
Will bite at his hands,
He will say, “Oh! would that
I had taken a (straight) path
With the Messenger!”

28. “Ah! woe is me!
Would that I had never
Taken such a one
For a friend!

29. “He did lead me astray
From the Message (of Allah)
After it had come to me!
Ah! the Satan is
But a traitor to man!

30. Then the Messenger will say:
“O my Lord, Truly
My people treated this Qur-án
With neglect.”

3084. The words are general, and for us the interest is in a general sense. A man who actually receives the Truth and is on the right path is all the more culpable if he is diverted from that path by the machinations of a worldly friend. The particular person whom some Commentators mention in this connection was one ‘Uqba who received the light of Islam, but was misled afterwards by a worldly friend into apostasy and blasphemy. He came to an evil end afterwards.

3085. The seductive wiles of the Satan are merely meant for snares. There is fraud and treachery in them. The deceived ones are left in the lurch after the way of escape is made impossible for them.

3086. “My people” are of course the unbelieving Quraish. They treated the Qur-án with neglect, i.e., something to be discarded. But they were only a handful of people whose vested interests were touched by the beneficent reforms initiated by Islam. They soon passed away, and all Arabic-speaking or Arabic-understanding people have considered the Qur-án as a treasury of Truths expressed in the most beautiful possible language, with a meaning that grows deeper with research.
31. Thus have We made For every prophet an enemy Among the sinners: but enough Is thy Lord to guide And to help. 3087

32. Those who reject Faith Say: "Why is not the Quran Revealed to him all at once? Thus (is it revealed), that We May strengthen thy heart 3088 Thereby, and We have Rehearsed it to thee in slow, Well-arranged stages, gradually.

33. And no question do they Bring to thee but We Reveal to thee the truth And the best explanation (thereof). 3089

3087. It is the nature of sin to be hostile to truth and righteousness, but such hostility will not harm the righteous and need cause no misgiving because Allah will guide and help those who work in His cause. And what could he better or more effective than His guidance and help?

3088. Three reasons are given for the gradual revelation of the Qur-ān. (1) "To strengthen thy heart": the tremendous task of winning the Arab nation, and, through them, the whole world, to Islam, required superhuman patience, constancy, and firmness, and these qualities were strengthened by the gradual promulgation of solutions to each difficulty as it arose. (2) "Slow, well-arranged stages": though the stages were gradual, as the occasion demanded from time to time, in the course of twenty-three years, the whole emerged, when completed, as a well-arranged scheme of spiritual instruction, as we have seen in following the arrangement of the Sūras. (3) Questions put and answers given: see next note.

3089. Divine knowledge is a fathomless ocean. But glimpses of it can be obtained by any individuals sincerely searching for the Truth. Their progress will be in grades. If they ask questions, and answers are then furnished to them, they are more likely to apprehend the Truth, as they have already explored the part of the territory in which they are interested. In the same way, when concrete questions arise by the logic of events, and they are answered not only for the occasion, but from a general stand-point, the teaching has a far greater chance of penetrating the human intelligence and taking shape in practical conduct. And this is the usual way of instruction in the Qur-ān.
34. Those who will be gathered
   To Hell (prone) on their faces.\(^{3090}\)
   They will be in an evil
   Plight, and, as to Path,
   Most astray.\(^{3091}\)

SECTION 4.

35. (Before this), We sent Moses
   The Book, and appointed
   His brother Aaron with him
   As Minister;\(^{3092}\)

36. And We commanded: “Go ye
   Both, to the people who
   Have rejected our Signs:”
   And those (people) We destroyed
   With utter destruction.

37. And the people of Noah,—
   When they rejected the messengers,
   We drowned them,
   And We made them
   As a Sign for mankind;\(^{3093}\)
   And We have prepared
   For (all) wrong-doers
   A grievous Chastisement:

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\(^{3090}\) That is, in ignominy.

\(^{3091}\) This verse may be compared and contrasted with xxv. 24 above. Here the argument is rounded off about the distinction between the Good and Evil in their final Destiny. The Good are to have “the fairest of places for repose”, and in contrast, the Evil are, “as to Path, most astray”. They have no repose, and their wanderings lead nowhere.

\(^{3092}\) Cf. xx. 29, and the whole passage there, which is merely referred to here, to show how previous Prophets were treated, but how they stuck fast to the Criterion given, to distinguish between Good and Evil.

\(^{3093}\) The stories of Noah, of the prophets of ‘Ād and Thamūd (and of other prophets), in the reactions of their communities to their teaching are told in xxvi. 105-159, below. Here they are just mentioned to illustrate how little respect past ages had for their prophets and teachers of Truth. But Allah’s Truth did not suffer: it was the blind rejecters of spiritual Truth who were wiped out.
38. As also ‘Ād and Thamūd,
   And the Companions of the Rass, and many
   A generation between them.

39. To each one We set forth
   Parables and examples;
   And each one We broke
   To utter annihilation
   (For their sins).

40. And the (Unbelievers) must indeed
   Have passed by the town
   On which was rained
   A shower of evil: did they not
   Then see it (with their own
   Eyes)? But they expect not
   To be raised again.

41. When they see thee,
   They treat thee no otherwise
   Than in mockery: “Is this
   The one whom Allah has sent
   As a messenger?”

3094. Commentators are not clear as to who the “Companions of the Rass” were.
   The root meaning of “rass” is an old well or shallow water-pit. Another root connects
   it with the burial of the dead. But it is probably the name of a town or place. The
   “Companions of the Rass” may well have been the people of Shu‘aib, as they are here
   mentioned with the ‘Ād, the Thamūd, and Lot’s people, and the people of Shu‘aib are
   mentioned in a similar connection in xxvi. 176-190 and in xi. 84-95. Shu‘aib was the
   prophet of the Madyan people in the north-west of Arabia, where many old wells are
   found. There is however an oasis town al-Rass in the district of Qasim in Middle Najd,
   about thirty-five miles south-west of the town of ‘Unaiza, reputed to be the central point
   of the Arabian Peninsula, and situated midway between Makkah and Basra. See
   Doughty’s Arabia Deserta, thin-paper one-volume edition, London 1926, II, 435 and Map,
   Lat. 26°N., and Long. 43°E.

3095. This refers to Lūṭ’s story and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the
   wicked cities of the plain near the Dead Sea, by a shower of brimstone. The site lies
   on the highway between Arabia and Syria. Cf. xv. 74, 76, and n. 1998.
42. “He indeed would well-nigh 
   Have misled us from 
   Our gods, had it not been 
   That we were constant 
   To them!”—Soon will they 
   Know, when they see 
   The Chastisement, who it is 
   That is most misled 
   In Path.  

43. Seest thou such a one 
   As taketh for his god 
   His own passion (or impulse)? 
   Couldst thou be a disposer 
   Of affairs for him?  

44. Or thinkest thou that most 
   Of them listen or understand? 
   They are only like cattle;— 
   Nay, they are farther astray 
   From the way.  

SECTION 5.  

45. Hast thou not seen  
   How thy Lord?—  

3096. “Path” (Sabit) is almost equivalent here to conduct, way of life.  

3097. The man who worships his own passions or impulses or desires is the most hopeless to teach or lead or guide. If it were anything else the matter with him, the Prophet could argue with him. But Reason cannot prevail over blind passion. It is vain to hope that such a man could be led, until his mad desires are killed. No one could undertake any responsibility for him, for he obeys no law and follows no advice. He is worse than brute beasts, which may not understand, but at least follow the wholesome instincts implanted in them by Allah. The lawless man has killed his instincts and is unwilling to submit to guidance.  

3098. We saw in xxiv. 35 that Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. We have now another sublime passage, in which we are asked to contemplate the Glory of Allah by a parable of the subtle play of Light and Shade in Allah’s creation.
Doth prolong\textsuperscript{3099} The Shadow! If He willed, He could make it stationary! Then do We make The sun its guide;\textsuperscript{3100}

46. Then We draw it in\textsuperscript{3101} Towards Ourselves,— A contraction by easy stages.\textsuperscript{3102}

47. And He it is Who makes The Night as a Robe For you, and Sleep as Repose, And makes the Day (As it were) a Resurrection.\textsuperscript{3103}

\textsuperscript{3099} In our artificial life and surroundings we fail to see some of the finest mysteries of Light and Shade. We praise, and rightly, the wonderful colours of sunset. We see, particularly in climates more northerly than that of India, the subtle play of Light and Shade in the twilights succeeding sunsets. If we were as assiduous in seeing sunrises and the play of Light and Shade preceding them, we should see phenomena even more impressive, as the early morning seems to us more holy than any other time in the twenty-four hours of the sun’s daily journey. There is first the false dawn, with its curious uncertain light and the curious long uncertain shadows which it casts. Then there are the streaks of black in the East, succeeded by the true dawn, with its delicate tones of colours and light and shade. The light of this true or false Dawn is not given by the direct rays of the sun. In a sense it is not light, but the shadows or reflections of light. And they gradually merge into actual sunrise, with its more substantial or more defined shadows, which we can definitely connect with the sun.

\textsuperscript{3100} The morning shadows are long but more definite, and their length and direction are seen to be guided by the sun. But they change insensibly every second or fraction of a second.

\textsuperscript{3101} As the sun rises higher and higher, the shadows contract. In regions where the sun gets actually to the zenith at noon, there is no shadow left at that time. Where does it go to? It was but a shadow cast by a substance and it gets absorbed by the substance which produced it.

\textsuperscript{3102} The shadows are constantly in a state of flux; so are all things in Creation, all things we see or covet in this life. Allah, if He wills, can give some of them greater fixity or comparative stability.

\textsuperscript{3103} It is still the contrast between Light and Shade; but the shade of Night is as a Robe to cover and screen us and give us Repose from activity; and the Light of Day is for striving, work, activity. Or again, the Night is like Death, our temporary Death before Judgment, the time during which our senses are as sealed in Sleep; and the Day is like the renewal of Life at the Resurrection.
48. And He it is Who sends
The Winds as heralds
Of glad tidings, going before\(^{3104}\)
His Mercy, and We send down
Pure water from the sky,\(^{3105}\)

49. That with it We may give
Life to a dead land,
And slake the thirst
Of things We have created,\(^{3106}\)
Cattle and men in great numbers.

50. And We have distributed
The (water) amongst them, in
order\(^{3107}\)

\(^{3104}\). Cf. vii. 57. The Winds are heralds of Joy, ushering in Rain, which is one form of Allah's Mercy. Again, the symbolism presents a fresh point of view. Heat (which is connected with light) sets up currents in the atmosphere, besides sucking up moisture from the seas, and distributing it by means of Winds over wide surfaces of the earth. In the physical world we know the beneficent action of heat on life, and by contrast, we also know how intolerable high temperatures may become, and how the cloud-bearing Winds come as welcome heralds of rain.

\(^{3105}\). Rain water (in pure air) is not only pure water distilled in air and sky, but it is the best purifying and sanitating agent on the largest scale known to us.

\(^{3106}\). The whole cycle of water,—sea, clouds, rain or hail or snow, rivers, and sea again,—is a remarkable illustration of the processes of nature making Allah's providence visible to us. The salts of the sea sanitize and purify all the filth that pours into it. Water action, in the form of rain, frost, glaciers, rivers, lakes, etc., is responsible for the building up and configuration of the crust of the earth, and is the chief agent in physical geography. A parched desert quickly comes to life under the action of water. All drinking water, whether derived from rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, springs, wells, or waterworks of any kind, are ultimately traceable to rain. The connection of life with water is intimate. The physical basis of life itself, protoplasm, is in great part water; see xxv. 54 below.

\(^{3107}\). The water is distributed all over the world, in order that all life may receive its support according to its needs. In xxv. 48-50, we have the argument of contrasts stated in another way. Water is life, and is made available to sustain life all over the world; this is a physical fact which all can see. But water is also the symbol of spiritual life, whose sustaining principle is the Will of Allah as made known to us through Revelation. It sometimes comes to us in our inward or spiritual storms. Many violent unsettlements =
That they may be mindful
But most men
Are averse (to aught) but (Rank) ingratitude.

51. Had it been Our Will,
We could have sent
A warner to every town.

52. Therefore listen not
To the Unbelievers, but strive
Against them with the utmost
Strenuousness, with the (Qur-an).

53. It is He Who has
Let free the two bodies
Of flowing water:
One palatable and sweet,

= of the spirit are but heralds of the refreshing showers of spiritual understanding that come in their wake. They purify our souls, and produce spiritual Life even where there was a parched spiritual desert before. They continue to sustain us in our normal spiritual Life out of the reservoirs of Allah's Revelation, which are open to all, and well distributed in time and space. The universality of distribution is again referred to in the following verse.

3108. In contrast to Allah's abounding Mercy is man's base ingratitude.

3109. Allah's Message has been distributed to all nations. If it had been necessary, a Prophet could have been sent to every town and village. But Allah's Plan is different. He has sent His Light to every heart, through His Signs in man's conscience, in Nature, and in Revelation.

3110. The distribution of Allah's Signs being universal, the Prophet of Allah pays no heed to carping critics who reject Faith. He wages the biggest Jihad of all, with the weapon of Allah's Revelation.

3111. Maraja: literally, let free or let loose cattle for grazing. Bahrain: two seas, or two bodies of flowing water; for bahr is applied both to the salt sea and to rivers. In the world taken as a whole, there are two bodies of water, viz., (1) the great salt Ocean, and (2) the bodies of sweet water fed by rain, whether they are rivers, lakes or underground springs: their source in rain makes them one, and their drainage, whether above-ground or underground, eventually to the Ocean, also makes them one. They are free to mingle, and in a sense they do mingle, for there is a regular water-cycle: see n. 3106 above: and the rivers flow constantly to the sea, and tidal rivers get sea-water for several miles up their estuaries at high tide. Yet in spite of all this, the laws of gravitation are like a barrier or partition set by Allah, by which the two bodies of water as a whole =
And the other salt
And bitter; yet has He
Made a barrier between them,
A partition that is not
To be passed. 3112

54. It is He Who has
Created man from water: 3113
Then has He established
Relationships of lineage 3114
And marriage: for thy Lord
Has power (over all things).

55. Yet do they worship,
Besides Allah, things that can
Neither profit them nor
Harm them: and the Misbeliever

= are always kept apart and distinct. In the case of rivers carrying large quantities of water
to the sea, like the Mississippi or the Yangtse-Kiang, the river-water with its silt remains
distinct from sea-water for a long distance out at sea. But the wonderful Sign is that the
two bodies of water, though they pass through each other, remain distinct bodies, with
their distinct functions.

3112. In Allah's overall scheme of things, bodies of salt and sweet water, which are
adjoining and yet separate, have significant functions. Weaving a harmonious fabric out
of these different fibres shows both Allah's power and wisdom. Incidentally, this verse
points to a fact which has only recently been discovered by science. This fact relates to
the oceans of the world: they meet and yet each remains separate for Allah has placed
"a barrier, a partition" between them.

3113. The basis of all living matter in the physical world, protoplasm, is water: Cf.
xxiv. 45 and xxi. 30, and notes thereon.

3114. Water is a fluid, unstable thing: yet from it arises the highest form of life
known to us, in this world, man. And man has not only the functions and characteristics
of the noblest animals, but his abstract relationships are also typical of his highest nature.
He can trace lineage and pedigree, and thus remember and commemorate a long line of
ancestors, to whom he is bound by ties of piety, which no mere animals can do. Further,
there is the union in marriage: it is not only like the physical union of animals, but it
gives rise to relationships arising out of the sexes of individuals who were not otherwise
related to each other. These are physical and social facts.
Is a helper (of Evil),
Against his own Lord!\(^{3115}\)

56. But thee We only sent
To give glad tidings
And warnings.

57. Say: "No reward do I
Ask of you for it but this:
That each one who will
May take a (straight) Path
To his Lord:"

58. And put thy trust
In Him Who lives
And dies not; and celebrate
His praise; and enough is He
To be acquainted with
The faults of His servants.;\(^{3116}\)

59. He Who created the heavens
And the earth and all
That is between, in six days,\(^{3117}\)
Then He established Himself
On the Throne:\(^{3118}\)
Allah Most Gracious:
Ask thou, then, about Him
Of any acquainted (with such
things).\(^{3119}\)

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3115. Here is the highest contrast of all—material things which are inert, and Allah,
Whose goodness and power are supreme; Faith and Unfaith, meriting glad tidings and
admonition; the selfish man who is self-centred, and the man of God, who works for
others without reward.

3116. Allah knows our faults better than we or anyone else. It is no use hiding
anything from Him. We must put our trust completely in Him. His care is for all, and
He is Allah Most Gracious.

3117. Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1031.

3118. See n. 1386 to x. 3.

3119. The argument is about the question, in whom shall we put our trust? Worldly
men put their trust in worldly things: the righteous man only in Allah. The true distinction
will be quite clear from a ray of divine knowledge. If you do not see it all clearly, ask
of those who possess such knowledge.
60. When it is said to them,  
"Adore ye The Most Gracious!",  
They say, "And what is (Allah)  
Most Gracious? Shall we adore  
That which thou commandest us?"  
And it increases them  
In aversion.3120

SECTION 6.

61. Blessed is He Who made  
Constellations in the skies,  
And placed therein a Lamp3121  
And a Moon giving light;

62. And it is He Who made  
The Night and the Day  
To follow each other:  
For such as desire  
To be mindful3122  
Or to show their gratitude.

63. And the servants of (Allah)  
Most Gracious are those

3120. Those who have no spiritual Light cannot understand this precept about putting all our trust in Allah. It seems to them foolish. They have no faith, or but a superficial faith. They may possibly take the name of Allah on their lips, but they cannot understand the full significance of His title of Rahman (Most Gracious). Perhaps they are afraid on account of their sins; perhaps they do not see how unbounded is the mercy of Allah. Such men are contrasted against the true servants of Allah, who are described below in xxv. 63-75.

3121. The glorious Lamp of the skies is the Sun; and next to him is the Moon, which gives borrowed light. The Constellations of course include the Signs of the Zodiac, which mark the path of the planets in the heavens.

3122. The scenes of the phenomenal world are Signs of the Self-Revelation of Allah, for those who understand and who have the will to merge their wills in His. This they do (1) by praising Him, which means understanding something of His nature, and (2) by gratitude to Him, which means carrying out His Will, and doing good to their fellow-creatures. These two attitudes of mind and heart give rise to various consequences in their lives, which are detailed in the following verse.
Who walk on the earth
In humility, and when the
ignorant[^123^]
Address them, they say,
"Peace!";

64. Those who spend the night
In adoration of their Lord
Prostrate and standing;[^124^]

65. Those who say, "Our Lord!
Avert from us the Wrath
Of Hell, for its Wrath
Is indeed an affliction grievous,[^125^]

66. "Evil indeed is it
As an abode, and as
A place to rest in";[^126^]

67. Those who, when they spend,
Are not extravagant and not
Niggardly, but hold a just (balance)
Between those (extremes);[^127^]

[^123^]: Ignorant: in a moral sense. Address: in the aggressive sense. Their humility is shown in two ways: (1) to those in real search of knowledge, they give such knowledge as they have and as the recipients can assimilate; (2) to those who merely dispute, they do not speak harshly, but say "Peace!", as much as to say, "May it be well with you, may you repent and be better"; or "May Allah give me peace from such wrangling"; or "Peace, and Good-bye; let me leave you!"

[^124^]: Humble prayer brings them nearer to Allah.

[^125^]: This is a prayer of humility: such a person relies, not on any good works which he may have done, but on the Grace and Mercy of Allah; and he shows a lively sense of the Day of Judgment, when every action will weigh for or against a soul.

[^126^]: The misery which results from sin is not only grievous to live in ("an abode") but also grievous "to rest in" or "to stand in", if it be only for a short time.

[^127^]: In ordinary spending this is a wise rule. But even in charity, in which we give of our best, it is not expected that we should be extravagant, i.e., that we should either do it for show, to impress other people, or do it thoughtlessly, which would be the case if we "rob Peter to pay Paul". We should certainly not be niggardly, but we should remember everyone's rights, including our own, and strike a perfectly just balance between them.
68. Those who invoke not,
With Allah, any other god,
Nor slay such life as Allah
Has made sacred, except
For just cause, nor commit \(^{3128}\)
Fornication;—and any that does
This (not only) meets punishment

69. (But) the Chastisement on the Day
Of Judgment will be doubled
To him, and he will dwell
Therein in ignominy, \(^{3129}\)

70. Unless he repents, believes,
And works righteous deeds,
For Allah will change
The evil of such persons
Into good, and Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful \(^{3130}\)

71. And whoever repents and does good
Has truly turned to Allah
In repentance:

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3128. Here three things are expressly condemned: (1) false worship, which is a crime against Allah; (2) the taking of life, which is a crime against our fellow-creatures; and (3) fornication, which is a crime against our self-respect, against ourselves. Every crime is against Allah, His creatures, and ourselves, but some may be viewed more in relation to one than to another. The prohibition against taking life is qualified: "except for just cause," e.g., in judicial punishment for murder, or in self-preservation, which may include not only self-defence in the legal sense, but also the clearing out of pests, and the provision of meat under conditions of *Halāl*: see n. 698 to v. 5. After this comes a long parenthesis, which ends with verse 71 below.

3129. The three crimes just mentioned are specially detestable and infamous, and as ignominy will be added to other punishments, the penalty will be double that of ordinary punishment.

3130. But even in the case of great crimes, if there is true repentance as tested by a changed life in conduct, Allah’s Mercy is available, and it will transform the repentant’s nature from evil to good.
72. Those who witness no falsehood

And, if they pass by futility,

They pass by it
With honourable (avoidance);

73. Those who, when they are
Admonished with the Signs
Of their Lord, droop not down
At them as if they were
Deaf or blind;

74. And those who pray,
“Our Lord! Grant unto us
Wives and offspring who will be
The comfort of our eyes,
And give us (the grace)
To lead the righteous.”

3131. Witness no falsehood has two significations, both implied in this passage: (1) those who give no evidence that is false; and (2) those who do not assist at anything which implies fraud or falsehood.

3132. There is not only condemnation of positive falsehood or of being mixed up with things implying falsehood; but futilities—vain random talk, unedifying jokes, useless show, etc.—are all condemned. If a good man finds himself in such an affair, he must withdraw from it in an honourable, dignified way, not in a fussy arrogant way.

3133. Kharra may mean: to fall down, to snore, to droop down as if the person were bored or inattentive, or did not wish to see or hear or pay attention.

3134. We must also pray for the maintenance of Allah’s Law after us, through our wives and descendants: in our eyes they should not be mere accidents or play-things, but a real comfort and fulfilment of our spiritual longings. Perhaps, through them, as well through ourselves, we may, by Allah’s grace, be able to give a lead for truth and righteousness.

3135. Let us recapitulate the virtues of the true servants of Allah: (1) they are humble and forbearing to those below them in spiritual worth; (2) they are constantly, by adoration, in touch with Allah; (3) they always remember the Judgment in the Hereafter; (4) they are moderate in all things; (5) they avoid treason to Allah, to their fellow-creatures, and to themselves; (6) they give a wide berth not only to falsehood but to futility; (7) they pay attention, both in mind and manner, to the Signs of their Lord; (8) their ambition is to bring up their families in righteousness and to lead in all good. A fine code of individual and social ethics, a ladder of spiritual development, open to all.
75. Those are the ones who
Will be rewarded with
The highest place in heaven,
Because of their patient constancy:
Therein shall they be met
With salutations and peace,

76. Dwelling therein;—how beautiful
An abode and place of rest!

77. Say (to the Rejecters):
"My Lord would not concern
Himself
With you but for your call on
Him.\textsuperscript{3136}
But ye have indeed rejected
(Him), and soon will come
The inevitable (punishment)!"

\textsuperscript{3136}. Let not the wicked think that it causes Allah any annoyance or uneasiness if they do not serve or worship Him. He is high above all needs. But He turns in His Mercy to all who call on Him. For those who arrogantly reject Him, the evil consequences of their rejection are inevitable, and must soon come to pass.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Ash-Shu‘arā*, 26.

This Sūra begins a new series of four Sūras (xxvi-xxix), which illustrate the contrast between the spirit of Prophecy and spiritual Light and the reactions to it in the communities among whom it appeared, by going back to old Prophets and the stories of the Past, as explained in the Introduction to S. xvii.

In this particular Sūra we have the story of Moses in his fight with Pharaoh and of Pharaoh's discomfiture. Other Prophets mentioned are Abraham, Noah, Hūd, Sāliḥ, Lūṭ, and Shu‘aib. The lesson is drawn that the Qur-ān is a continuation and fulfilment of previous Revelations, and is pure Truth, unlike the poetry of vain poets.

Chronologically the Sūra belongs to the middle Makkan period, when the contact of the Light of Prophecy with the milieu of Pagan Makkah was testing the Makkans in their most arrogant mood.

*Summary.*—The conflict of Unbelief with Truth is vain: so was the conflict of Pharaoh with Moses: Pharaoh's magicians bowed to the Truth, and Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned (xxvi. 1-69).

Nor did Abraham's people gain anything by their resisting the Truth he preached, and Noah's people perished by their Unbelief (xxvi. 70-122).

Hūd warned his people against reliance on their material strength and Sāliḥ against sacrilege, but in both cases the evil ones were brought low (xxvi. 123-159).

Lūṭ had to deal with unspeakable crimes, and Shu‘aib against dishonest dealings and mischief; their teaching was rejected, but the rejecters were wiped out (xxvi. 160-191).

So, when the spirit of Prophecy came to Makkah, it was resisted by the votaries of evil: but Truth is not like vain poetry, and must triumph at last (xxvi. 192-277).
1. **Tā. Sin. Mīm.**

2. These are Verses of the Book
   That makes (things) clear.

3. It may be thou will kill
   Thy self with grief, that they
   Do not become Believers.

4. If (such) were Our Will,
   We could send down to them
   From the sky a Sign,
   To which they would bend
   Their necks in humility.

5. But there comes not
   To them a newly-revealed
   Message from The Most Gracious,
   But they turn away therefrom.

6. They have indeed rejected
   (The Message): so they will
   Know soon (enough) the truth
   Of what they mocked at!

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3137. This is a combination of three Abbreviated Letters, as to which, generally, see Appendix I, printed at the end of S.ii.

3138. Cf. v. 17, and n. 716. The comparison of Allah’s revelation with Light is continued.

3139. “They” are the Pagans of Makkah. From a human point of view it was a great disappointment to Allah’s Messenger in the middle period of his Makkan ministry that the Makkans could not be brought to believe in the Truth.

3140. If it had been Allah’s Will and Plan to force people’s will, He could quite easily have forced the Makkans. But His Will and Plan work differently. His revelation is meant to train man’s own will so that it conforms to Allah’s beneficent purpose.

3141. They may laugh at Allah’s Message of righteousness, but they will soon see the power of Truth and realise the real significance of the movement which they opposed. Where were the Pagans of Makkah after Badr, and still more, after the bloodless surrender of Makkah? And the meaning may be applied universally in all history.
7. Do they not look
At the earth,—how many
Noble things of all kinds
We have produced therein?3142

8. Verily, in this is a Sign:
But most of them
Do not believe.

9. And verily, thy Lord
Is He, the Exalted in Might,3143
Most Merciful.

SECTION 2.

10. Behold, thy Lord called3144
Moses: "Go to the people
Of iniquity,—

11. "The people of Pharaoh:
Will they not fear Allah?"

12. He said: "O my Lord!
I do fear that they
Will charge me with falsehood:

13. "My breast will be straitened.3145
And my tongue will not speak
(Plainly): so send unto Aaron.

3142. If evil has a little run in this life, let them not run away with the notion that the world is for evil. They have only to look round at the physical and moral world around them, and they would be undeceived. But they are blind and without the Faith (the Light) which would open their eyes.

3143. One Who is able to carry out all His Will and Plans. See n. 2818 to xxii. 40.

3144. The part of the story of Moses told here is how Moses felt diffident about undertaking his commission; how Allah reassured him; how he went to Pharaoh with "the Signs"; how Pharaoh and his people rejected him; how their blasphemy recoiled on themselves, but the cause of Allah triumphed; in other words the point here is the reaction of a wicked people to the Light that was held up to them, considered in its relation to the mind of Allah's Messenger.

3145. As we should say in English, "My heart would fail me, and my tongue cleave to my mouth." Moses had an impediment in his speech, and his mission was risky: see =
14. “And (further), they have
A charge of crime against me;3146
And I fear they may
Slay me.”

15. Allah said: “By no means!
Proceed then, both of you,
With Our Signs; We
Are with you, and will
Listen (to your call).

16. “So go forth, both of you,
To Pharaoh, and say:
“We have been sent
By the Lord and Cherisher
Of the Worlds;

17. “‘Send thou with
The Children of Israel.’”

18. (Pharaoh) said: “Did we not3147
Cherish thee as a child
Among us, and didst thou not
Stay in our midst
Many years of thy life?

= next note. But Allah’s Plan works in wondrous ways. Aaron was given to assist him in
his mission, and Moses’s shortcomings were transformed by Allah’s grace into power, so
that he became the most powerful leader of Israel.

3146. Moses was brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, as narrated in his personal
story in xx. 39-40 and n. 2563. When he was grown-up he saw an Egyptian smiting an
Israelite, and as the Israelites were being generally oppressed by the Egyptians, Moses’s
anger was roused, and he slew the Egyptian. He then fled to the Midianite country in
the Sinai peninsula, where he received the divine commission. But the charge of slaying
the Egyptian was hanging against him. He was also apparently quick-tempered. But
Allah’s grace cured his temper and he became wise; his impediment
in speech, for he
stood up boldly to speak to Pharaoh; and his fear, for he dared the Egyptians with Allah’s
Signs, and they were afraid of him.

3147. There is here a little play of wit on the part of Pharaoh. When Moses speaks
of the “Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds”, Pharaoh says: “Who cherished you? Did we
not bring you up as a child? Did you not grow up among us?” By implication Pharaoh
suggest that he is the cherisher of Moses, and in any case Pharaoh laid claim to godhead
himself.
19. "And thou didst a deed
Of thine which (thou knowest)\textsuperscript{3148}
Thou didst, and thou art
An ungrateful!"

20. Moses said: "I did it
Then, when I was
In error."\textsuperscript{3149}

21. "So I fled from you (all)
When I feared you;\textsuperscript{3150}
But my Lord has (since)
Invested me with judgment
(And wisdom) and appointed me
As one of the messengers.

22. "And this is the favour\textsuperscript{3151}
With which thou dost
Reproach me,—that you
Hast enslaved the Children
Of Israel!"

\textsuperscript{3148}. Further, Pharaoh reminds Moses of his having slain the Egyptian, and taunts him: "You are not only a murderer: you are an ungrateful wretch" (using kāfir again in a double sense) "to have killed one of the race that brought you up!"

\textsuperscript{3149}. What is Moses's reply? He is no longer afraid. He tells the whole truth, extenuating nothing in his own favour. "Yes I did it: but I did it under an error." There are three implications in this: "(1) I was wrong in doing it in a temper and in being hasty; (2) I was wrong in taking the law into my own hands, but I repented and asked for Allah's pardon (xxviii. 15-16); (3) that was at a time when I was under your influence, but since then I am a changed man, as Allah has called me."

\textsuperscript{3150}. He accounts for all his movements, much more than Pharaoh had asked for. He has nothing to hide. At that time he was under the influence of fear, and he had fled from him. Now he is serving Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. He has no fear: he is a messenger.

\textsuperscript{3151}. Pharaoh had called Moses ungrateful and reproached him with all the favours which Moses had received from the Egyptians. "What favours?" he says; "Do you count it also as a favour to me that you have enslaved my brethren the Children of Israel?" Moses was now speaking as a Prophet of Allah, not as an individual. Any individual favours he may have received were blotted out by the oppression of his people.
23. Pharaoh said: “And what
Is the Lord and Cherisher
Of the Worlds?”

24. (Moses) said: “The Lord
And Cherisher of the heavens
And the earth, and all between,—
If ye had but
Sure belief.”

25. (Pharaoh) said to those
Around: “Do ye not listen
(To what he says)?”

26. (Moses) said: “Your Lord
And the Lord of your fathers
From the beginning!”

27. (Pharaoh) said: “Truly
Your messenger who has been
Sent to you is
A veritable madman!”

3152. Moses having eliminated all personalities, the argument now comes up to the highest plane of all,—the attributes of Allah and His mercies. Moses had put forward this before, as implied in verse 16 above, but Pharaoh had twisted it into personalities. Now we come back to the real issue. It may have been in the same sitting, or it may have been in a later sitting.

3153. Moses had stirred up the wrath of Pharaoh both by putting forward the name of the One True God as against Pharaoh’s pretended godhead, and by suggesting that any man of judgment would understand Allah’s majesty. While Pharaoh turns to his people in indignation, Moses drives the nail in further: “He is the God of the heavens and the earth and all between: therefore He is also your God, and the God of your fathers from the beginning. Any other pretensions are false!”

3154. Pharaoh is further perturbed. In reply to Moses’s statement that Allah, the One True God is also the God of the Egyptians and Pharaoh also, Pharaoh says sarcastically to his Court: “Look at this ‘Messenger’ of yours; he seems to be mad!” But Moses is not abashed. He boldly says what is the truth: “It is you who are mad! The God Whom I preach is the universal Lord,—of the East and of the West. He reigns wherever you go!”
28. (Moses) said: "Lord of the East
   And the West, and all between!
   If ye only had sense!"

29. (Pharaoh) said: "If thou
   Takest any god
   Other than me, I will
   Certainly put thee in prison!"\textsuperscript{3155}

30. (Moses) said: "Even if I
   Showed you something
   Clear (and) convincing?"\textsuperscript{3156}

31. (Pharaoh) said: "Show it then,
   If thou tellest the truth!"

32. So (Moses) threw his rod,
   And behold, it was
   A serpent, plain (for all to see)!

33. And he drew out his hand,
   And behold, it was white
   To all beholders\textsuperscript{3157}

SECTION 3.

34. (Pharaoh) said to the Chiefs\textsuperscript{3158}
   Around him: "This is indeed
   A sorcerer well-versed:

\textsuperscript{3155} Now we come to the crisis. Pharaoh threatens Moses with prison for treason. Moses remains calm and still argues: "What if I show you a miracle? Will it convince you that I am not mad, and that I have behind me the Lord of all the Worlds?"

\textsuperscript{3156} The Egyptians were addicted to magic and sorcery. If a true miracle were shown to them, would they believe? Perhaps they would see the hollowness of their own magic. In fact this actually happened with the Egyptian sorcerers themselves and perhaps with the commonalty. But Pharaoh and his Court were too arrogant to accept Moses’s religion.

\textsuperscript{3157} Cf. vii. 107-8. See the whole passage there, and the notes thereon.

\textsuperscript{3158} In vii. 109 it is the Chiefs who say this. The fact is that it was a general consultation, and this was the general feeling, expressed in words by each to the others.
His plan is to get you out
Of your land by his sorcery;
Then what is it ye counsel?

They said: “Keep him
And his brother in suspense
(For a while), and dispatch
To the Cities heralds to collect—

“And bring up to thee
All (our) sorcerers well-versed.”

So the sorcerers were got
Together for the appointment
Of a day well-known,

And the people were told:
“Are ye (now) assembled?”—

“That we may follow
The sorcerers
If they win?”

So when the sorcerers arrived,
They said to Pharaoh:
“Of course—shall we have
A (suitable) reward
If we win?”

He said: “Yea, (and more),—
For ye shall in that case
Be (raised to posts)
Nearest (to my person).”

3159. A day well-known: a solemn day of festival: see xx. 59. The object was to get together as large a concourse of people as possible. It was confidently expected that the Egyptian sorcerers with all their organisation would win with their tricks against these amateur Israelites, and so the State cult of the worship of Pharaoh would be fastened on the necks of the people more firmly than ever.

3160. See the last note. The people are to come and witness the triumph of the State religion, so that they may become the more obedient to Pharaoh and more compliant with the demands of the priests. The State religion included magic and the worship of Pharaoh.

3161. There was no such thing as pure loyalty to an exploiting ruler like this Pharaoh. The sorcerers, who were probably also priests, were venal, and they hoped to establish their own hold on both king and people by the further enrichment of themselves and their order.
43. Moses said to them:
   "Throw ye—that which
   Ye are about to throw!" 3162

44. So they threw their ropes
   And their rods, and said:
   "By the might of Pharaoh,
   It is we who will
   Certainly win!" 3163

45. Then Moses threw his rod,
   When, behold, it straightway
   Swallows up all
   The falsehoods which they fake! 3164

46. Then did the sorcerers
   Fall down, prostrate in adoration,

47. Saying: "We believe
   In the Lord of the Worlds.

48. "The Lord of Moses and Aaron."

49. Said (Pharaoh): "Believe ye
   In Him before I give
   You permission? Surely he
   Is your leader, who has
   Taught you sorcery!
   But soon shall ye know!" 3165

3162. The euphemism implies a taunt, as if Moses had said: "I know about your tricks! You pretend to throw ropes and rods, and make people believe they are snakes. But now come on!"

3163. Though Pharaoh claimed to be a god. And so they appeal to his "divine" power.

3164. The sorcerers' ropes and rods seemed to have become serpents, but the rod of Moses was mightier than all of them and quickly swallowed them up. So truth is more powerful than tricks and will expose and destroy them.

3165. The sorcerers knew that they had met something very different from their tricks. Allah's power worked on them and they professed the True God. As they represented the intelligence of the community, it may be presumed that they carried the intelligence of Egypt with them and perhaps some of the commonalty, who were impressed by the dramatic scene! Hence Pharaoh's anger, but it is the beginning of his decline!
“Be sure I will cut off Your hands and your feet On opposite sides, and I Will crucify you all”

50. They said: “No matter! For us, we shall but Return to our Lord!

51. “Only, our desire is That our Lord will Forgive us our faults, Since we are The first to believe.”

SECTION 4.

52. By inspiration We told Moses: “Travel by night with My servants; for surely Ye shall be pursued.”

53. Then Pharaoh sent heralds To (all) the Cities,

54. (Saying): “These (Israelites) Are but a small band,

55. “And they have Surely enraged us;*

3166. This is the core of the lesson enforced in this passage. What was the reaction of the environment to the Light or Message of Allah? (1) It transformed Moses so that he became a fearless leader, one of the foremost in faith. (2) From men like Pharaoh and his corrupt court, it called forth obstinacy, spite, and all the tricks and snares of evil, but Evil was defeated on its own ground. (3) The magicians were touched by the glorious Light of Allah, and they were ready to suffer tortures and death, their sole ambition (in their transformed state) being to be foremost in Faith!

3167. The rest of the story—of the plagues of Egypt—is passed over as not germane to the present argument. We come now to the story of Israel leaving Egypt, pursued by Pharaoh. Here again there are three contrasts: (1) the blind arrogance of the Egyptians, against the development of Allah’s Plan; (2) the Faith of Moses, against the fears of his people; and (3) the final deliverance of the Israelites against the destruction of the host of brute force.
56. “And we are a multitude
Amply forewarned.”*

57. So We expelled them
From gardens, springs,
Treasures, and every kind
Of honourable position;

58. Thus it was, but
We made the Children
Of Israel inheritors
Of such things.

59. So they pursued them
At sunrise.

60. And when the two bodies
Saw each other, the people
Of Moses said: “We are
Sure to be overtaken.”

61. (Moses) said: “By no means!
My Lord is with me!
Soon will He guide me!”

62. Then We told Moses
By inspiration: “Strike
The sea with thy rod.”
So it divided, and each
Separate part became
Like the huge, firm mass
Of a mountain.

3168. In deference to almost unanimous authority I have translated this passage (verses 58-60) as if it were a parenthetical statement of Allah’s purpose.

3169. The Children of Israel certainly inherited the gardens, springs, treasures, and honourable positions in Palestine after many years’ wanderings in the wilderness. But when they were false to Allah, they lost them again, and another people (the Muslims) inherited them when they were true in Faith. “Of such things”: literally, “of them”.

3170. The story is here resumed after the parenthesis of verses 58-60.

3171. Guide me: i.e., show me some way of escape from danger. This actually happened for Pharaoh’s host was drowned. The faith of Moses stands in strong contrast to the fears of his people.
64. And We made the other Party approach thither.\textsuperscript{3172}

65. We delivered Moses and all Who were with him;

66. But We drowned the others.

67. Verily in this is a Sign: But most of them Do not believe.\textsuperscript{3173}

68. And verily thy Lord Is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.\textsuperscript{3174}

SECTION 5.

69. And rehearse to them (Something of) Abraham’s story.\textsuperscript{3175}

70. Behold, he said To his father and his people: “What worship ye?”

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\textsuperscript{3172} The miracle was twofold: (1) Moses with his people passed safely through the sea; and (2) Pharaoh and his great host were drowned in the sea.

\textsuperscript{3173} As it was then, so it is now. In spite of the obvious Signs of Allah, people who are blind in their obstinate resistance to Truth accomplish their own destruction, while humble, persecuted men of Faith are transformed by the Light of Allah, and obtain salvation.

\textsuperscript{3174} Nothing that the powers of evil can do, will ever defeat the merciful Purpose of Allah. Evil, in resisting good, will effect its own destruction.

\textsuperscript{3175} For the argument of this Sūra the incidents in Abraham’s life are not relevant and are not mentioned. What is mentioned is: (1) the steps by which he taught about the sin of false worship, in the form of a Dialogue; (2) the aims of a righteous man not only in his individual life, but for his ancestors and posterity, in the form of a Prayer; and (3) a picture of the Future Judgment, in the form of a vision. (1) is covered by verses 70-82; (2) by 83-87; and (3) by 88-102.
3176. They want to show their true and assiduous devotion. But Abraham goes at once to the heart of the matter by asking: "To whom is your devotion paid? Is the object worthy of it?"

3177. The things that you worship are enemies to mankind: let me testify from my own personal experience: they are enemies to me: they can do me no good, but would lead me astray. Contrast with their impotence or their power of mischief the One True God Whom I worship: He created me and all the Worlds: He cherishes me and guides me; He takes care of me; and when I die, He will give me new life; He will forgive me and grant me final Salvation. Will you then come to this true worship? How can you doubt, after seeing the contrast of the one with the other? Is it not as the contrast between Light and Darkness?"
82. "And who, I hope,
Will forgive me my faults
On the Day of Judgment.

83. "O my Lord! bestow wisdom
On me, and join me
With the righteous;

84. "Grant me honourable mention
On the tongue of truth
Among the latest (generations);

85. "Make me one of the inheritors
Of the Garden of Bliss;

86. "Forgive my father, for that
He is among those astray;

87. "And let me not be
In disgrace on the Day
When (men) will be raised up;-

88. "The Day whereon neither
Wealth nor sons will avail,

89. "But only he (will prosper)
That brings to Allah
A sound heart;

3178. Having shown clearly the distinction between the False and the True, Abraham now shows in the form of a Prayer what his inmost wishes are. (1) He wants his own soul enlightened with divine wisdom, and (2) his heart and life filled with righteousness; (3) he will not be content with working for himself or his own generation: his view extends to all future generations; (4) and of course he wishes to attain the goal of the righteous, the Garden of the Bliss of the Divine Countenance; but he is not content with this; for (5) he wants his father and relatives to share in his spiritual joy, so that he can proudly see all whom he can reach, in an honourable station (contrasted with disgrace) on the Day of Judgment.

3179. Cf. xix. 50. The whole of the passage about Abraham there may be compared with this passage.

3180. Now we have a vision of the Day of Judgment. Nothing will then avail except a pure heart; all sorts of the so-called "good deeds" of this world, without the motive of purity, will be useless. The contrast of the Garden of Bliss with the Fire of Misery will be plainly visible. Evil will be shown in its true colours,—isolated, helpless, cursing and despairing; and all chances will then have been lost.
90. "To the righteous, the Garden
Will be brought near,"\textsuperscript{3181}

91. "And to those straying in evil,
The Fire will be placed
In full view;

92. "And it shall be said
To them: ‘Where are
The (gods) ye worshipped—

93. "‘Besides Allah? Can they
Help you or help themselves?’"

94. "Then they will be thrown
Headlong into the (Fire),—
They and those straying\textsuperscript{3182}
In evil,

95. "And the whole hosts
Of Iblis together.

96. "They will say there
In their mutual bickerings:

97. "‘By Allah, we were truly
In an error manifest,\textsuperscript{3183}

98. “'When we held you as equals
With the Lord of the Worlds;

\textsuperscript{3181} The Good will only see good (the Garden of Bliss), and the Evil will only see evil (the Fire of Hell). The type of this contrast is shown to us in the world of our spiritual sense even in this life.

\textsuperscript{3182} The false gods, being devils or personified false fancies, will be all involved in the punishment of Hell, together with their worshippers, and the ultimate sources of evil, the hosts of Iblis or Satan.

\textsuperscript{3183} Error-manifest: 'our error is now plainly manifest, but it should have been manifest to us before it was too late, because the Signs of Allah were always around us'. This will be said by the ungodly, whose eyes will then be fully opened.
99. “And our seducers were Only those who were Steeped in guilt.”

100. “‘Now, then, we have none To intercede (for us),”

101. “‘Nor a single intimate friend

102. “‘Now if we only had A chance of return, We shall truly be Of those who believe!’”

103. Verily in this is a Sign But most of them Do not believe.

104. And verily thy Lord Is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 6.

105. The people of Noah rejected The messengers.

106. Behold, their brother Noah Said to them: “Will ye not Fear (Allah)?

3184. They now see that the people who seduced them were themselves evil and subject to the penalties of evil, and their seductions were frauds. They feel that they ought to have seen it before. For who would deliberately follow the paths of those condemned to misery and punishment? How simple they were not to see the true character of their seducers, though they had been warned again and again against them! It was their own folly that made them accept such obviously false guidance!

3185. This apparent longing for a chance of return is dishonest. If they were sent back, they would certainly return to their evil ways: vi. 27-28. Besides, they have had numerous chances already in this life, and they have used them for mischief or evil.

3186. Noah’s generation had lost all faith and abandoned themselves to evil. They had rejected the Message of messengers previously sent to the world. Noah was sent to them as one of themselves (“their brother”). His life was open before them: he had proved himself pure in heart and conduct (like the holy Prophet of Islam long after him), and worthy of every trust. Would they fear Allah and follow his advice? They could see that he had no ends of his own to serve. Would they not listen to him?
107. "I am to you a trustworthy messenger."

108. "So fear Allah, and obey me.

109. "No reward do I ask
   Of you for it: my reward
   Is only from the Lord
   Of the Worlds:

110. "So fear Allah, and obey me."

111. They said: "Shall we
   Believe in thee when it is
   The meanest that follow thee?"

112. He said: "And what
   Do I know as to
   What they do?

113. "Their account is only
   With my Lord, if ye
   Could (but) understand.

114. "I am not one to drive away
   Those who believe.

3187. Amīn=one to whom a trust has been given, with several shades of meaning implied: e.g., (1) worthy of trust, (2) bound to deliver his trust, as a prophet is bound to deliver his Message, (3) bound to act entirely as directed by the trust, as a prophet is bound to give only the Message of Allah, and not add anything of his own, and (4) not seeking any interest of his own.

3188. Note how the repetition rounds off the argument. See n. 3186 above.

3189. The leaders of the people are speaking, as the Quraish leaders spoke in the time of the holy Prophet. "We know that thou hast been trustworthy in thy life. But look at the 'tag rag and bob tail' that follow thee! Dost thou expect us to be like them or to be classed with them?" His answer was: "I know nothing against them; if they have done any wrong, or are only hypocrites, they are answerable to Allah; how can I drive them away from me, seeing that I am expressly sent to admonish all people?"

3190. Cf. xi. 29. All people who have faith have the right to come and listen to Allah's Word and receive Allah's Mercy, whether they are publicans and sinners, "Harijans" and low-caste men, men of "superior" or "inferior" races. The Prophet of Allah welcomes them all, as His Message has to shine before the whole world.
115. “I am sent only
As a plain warner”.

116. They said: “If thou
Desist not, O Noah!
Thou shalt be stoned (to death).”

117. He said: “O my Lord!
Truly my people have
Rejected me.

118. “Judge thou, then, between me
And them openly, and deliver
Me and those of the Believers
Who are with me.”

119. So We delivered
him
And those with him.
In the Ark filled
(With all creatures).

120. Thereafter We drowned those
Who remained behind.

121. Verily in this is a Sign:
But most of them
Do not believe.

122. And verily thy Lord
Is He, the Exalted in Might,
Most Merciful.

3191. Two other cases occur to me where prophets of Allah were threatened with death by stoning: one was Abraham (xix. 46), and the other was Shu‘aib (xi. 91). In neither case did the threats deter them from carrying out their mission. On the contrary the threats recoiled on those who threatened. So also did it happen in the case of Noah and the holy Prophet.

3192. The story of Noah’s Flood is told in xi. 36-48. Here the point emphasised is Noah’s patience and constancy against threats, and the triumph and preservation of Allah’s Truth even though the world was ranged against it.

3193. This and the following verse run like a refrain throughout this Sūra, and give the key-note to the subject-matter: how the Message of Allah is preached, how it is rejected in all ages, and how it triumphs at last, through the Mercy of Allah. See xxvi. 8-9, 68-69, 103-104, here (121-122), 139-140, 158-159, 174-175, and 190-191.
SECTION 7.

123. The ‘Ad (people) rejected\textsuperscript{3194} The messengers.

124. Behold, their brother Hūd Said to them: “Will ye not Fear (Allah)?

125. “I am to you a messenger Worthy of all trust.”\textsuperscript{3195}

126. “So fear Allah and obey me.

127. “No reward do I ask Of you for it: my reward Is only from the Lord Of the Worlds.”

128. “Do ye build a landmark On every high place To amuse yourselves?\textsuperscript{3196}

129. “And do ye get for yourselves Fine buildings in the hope Of living therein (for ever)?

130. “And when ye strike You strike Like tyrants.\textsuperscript{3197}

\textsuperscript{3194}. See n. 1040 to vii. 65 for the ‘Ad people and their location. Here the emphasis is on the fact that they were materialists believing in brute force, and felt secure in their fortresses and resources, but were found quite helpless when Allah’s Message came and they rejected it.

\textsuperscript{3195}. See n. 3187 to xxvi. 107 above.

\textsuperscript{3196}. Any merely material civilisation prides itself on show and parade. Its votaries scatter monuments for all sorts of things in conspicuous places—monuments which commemorate deeds and events which are forgotten in a few generations! Cf. Shelley’s poem on Ozymandias: “I am Ozymandias, King of Kings! Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!...Boundless and bare the lonely and level sands stretch far away!”

\textsuperscript{3197}. “Without any responsibility or consideration for those who come within your power?”
131. "Now fear Allah, and obey me." 3198

132. "Yea, fear Him Who Has bestowed on you Freely all that ye know." 3199

133. "Freely has He bestowed On you cattle and sons,—


135. "Truly I fear for you The Chastisement of a Great Day." 3200

136. They said: "It is the same To us whether thou Admonish us or be not Among (our) admonishers! 3201

137. "This is no other than A customary device Of the ancients, 3202

138. "And we are not the ones To receive Pains and Chastisement!"

3198. See n. 3188 above.

3199. The gifts are described generally, immaterial and material. "All that ye know" includes not only material things, but knowledge and the faculties by which knowledge may be used for human well-being, all that makes life beautiful and refined. "Cattle" means wealth generally, and "sons" means population and man-power. "Gardens and Springs" are things that contribute to the delight and pleasure of man.

3200. "But you have misused all those gifts, and you will suffer the inevitable penalties for your misuse and or your ingratitude."

3201. "We are not going to attend to you whether you preach to us or not." The construction of the second clause, "or be not among our admonishers" is a rapier cut at Hûd, as if they had said: "Oh yes! we have heard plenty of admonishers like you!" See the next verse.

3202. They said, as many of our modern enemies of religion say, "you are only reviving an ancient superstition, a dope of the crowd; there is no such thing as a Hereafter, or the sort of punishments you denounce!"
139. So they rejected him,
   And We destroyed them.
   Verily in this is a Sign:
   But most of them
   Do not believe.

140. And verily thy Lord
   Is He, the Exalted in Might,
   Most Merciful.

SECTION 8.

141. The Thamūd (people) rejected
   The messengers.

142. Behold, their brother Sālih
   Said to them: "Will you not
   Fear (Allah)?

143. "I am to you a messenger
   Worthy of all trust.

144. "So fear Allah, and obey me.

145. "No reward do I ask
   Of you for it: my reward
   Is only from the Lord
   Of the Worlds.

146. "Will ye be left secure,
   In (the enjoyment of) all
   That ye have here?—

147. "Gardens and Springs,

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3203. For the Thamūd people see n. 1043 to vii. 73. They were great builders in
stone and a people with agricultural wealth, but they were an exclusive people and
oppressed the poor. The point emphasised here is: "How long will your wealth last,
especially if you depress your own people and dishonour Allah's Signs by sacrilege?" The
inscriptions on the Thamūd remains of rock-cut buildings in Al-Hijr are described in the
Appendix at the end of this Sūra.
148. "And corn-fields and date palms
   With spathes near breaking—
   (With the weight of fruit)?

149. "And ye carve houses
   Out of (rocky) mountains
   With great skill.

150. "But fear Allah and obey me;

151. "And follow not the bidding
   Of those who are extravagant—

152. "Who make mischief in the land,
   And mend not (their ways)."

153. They said: "Thou art only
   One of those bewitched—

154. "Thou art no more than
   A mortal like us:
   Then bring us a Sign,
   If thou tellest the truth!"

155. He said: "Here is
   A she-camel: she has
   A right of watering,
   And ye have a right
   Of watering, (severally)
   On a day appointed.

3204. The date palm flowers on a long spathe: when the flowers develop into fruit, the heavy ones hang with the load of fruit. The Thamūd evidently were proud of their skill in producing corn and fruit and in hewing fine dwellings out of rocks, like the later dwellings of Roman times in the town of Petra.

3205. They are told: "All your skill is very well; but cultivate virtue and do not follow the ways of those who put forward extravagant claims for men's powers and material resources, or who lead lives of extravagant in luxury and self-indulgence; that makes mischief: but the door of repentance is open: will you repent?"

3206. They think he is talking like a madman, and they say so.

3207. For this she-camel, see n. 1044 to vii. 73. The she-camel was to be a Sign and a test-case. Would they respect her rights of watering (and pasturage)?
156. “Touch her not with harm, 
Lest the Chastisement 
Of a Great Day 
Seize you.”

157. But they ham-strung her: 
Then did they become 
Full of regrets.\footnote{3208}

158. But the Chastisement seized them. 
Verily in this is a Sign: 
But most of them 
Do not believe.

159. And verily thy Lord 
Is He, the Exalted in Might, 
Most Merciful.

SECTION 9.

160. The people of Lūt rejected\footnote{3209} 
The messengers.

161. Behold, their brother Lūt 
Said to them: “Will ye not 
Fear (Allah)?

162. “I am to you a messenger 
Worthy of all trust.

163. “So fear Allah and obey me.

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\footnote{3208}{Their regrets were too late. They had themselves asked for a Sign. The Sign had been given to them in the she-camel, which their prophet Sālih had put forward as a test-case. Would they, through that symbol, respect the law of equity by which all people had rights in water and in the gifts of nature? They refused to respect that law, and committed sacrilege by deliberately killing the she-camel. They themselves came to an evil end.}

\footnote{3209}{The story of Lūt (Lot) will be found in vii. 80-84: see n. 1049. Here the point is that the people of the Cities of the Plain were shamelessly addicted to vice against nature, and Lūt’s warning only exasperated them, until they were destroyed by a shower of brimstone.}
164. “No reward do I ask
Of you for it: my reward
Is only from the Lord
Of the Worlds.

165. “Of all the creatures
In the world, will ye
Approach males,

166. “And leave those whom Allah
Has created for you
To be your mates?
Nay, ye are a people
Transgressing (all limits)!”

167. They said: “If thou desist not,
O Lût! thou wilt assuredly
Be cast out!”

168. He said: “I do detest
Your doings.”

169. “O my Lord! deliver me
And my family from
Such things as they do!”

170. So We delivered him
And his family,—all

171. Except an old woman
Who lingered behind.

172. Then the rest We destroyed
Utterly.

3210. Their threat to cast him out has a grim significance in what actually happened.
They were destroyed where they were, and he was glad to escape the dreadful Punishment
according to the warning he had received.

3211. He was only among them from a stern sense of duty. The whole atmosphere
there was detestable to him, and he was glad to escape when duty no longer demanded
his presence there. He prayed for deliverance from such surroundings.

3212. This was Lût's wife, who lingered behind and was among those who perished.
See n. 1051 to vii. 83.
173. We rained down on them
A shower (of brimstone). \(^{3213}\)
And evil was the shower
On those who were admonished
(But heeded not)!

174. Verily in this is a Sign:
But most of them
Do not believe.

175. And verily thy Lord
Is He, the Exalted in Might
Most Merciful.

SECTION 10.

176. The Companions of the Wood\(^{3214}\)
Rejected the messengers.

177. Behold, Shu’âib\(^{3215}\) said to them:
“Will ye not fear (Allah)?

178. “I am to you a messenger
Worthy of all trust.

179. “So fear Allah and obey me.

180. “No reward do I ask
Of you for it: my reward
Is only from the Lord
Of the Worlds.

181. “Give just measure,\(^{3216}\)
And cause no loss
(To others by fraud).

\(^{3213}\) See n. 1052 to vii. 84.

\(^{3214}\) See n. 2000 to xv. 78.

\(^{3215}\) For Shu’âib see n. 1054 to vii. 85.

\(^{3216}\) They were a commercial people, but they were given to fraud, injustice, and wrongful mischief (by intermeddling with others). They are asked to fear Allah and follow His ways: it is He Who also created their predecessors among mankind, who never prospered by fraud and violent wrong-doing, but only justice and fair dealing.
182. “And weigh with scales
True and upright.

183. “And withhold not things
Justly due to men,
Nor do evil in the land,
Working mischief.

184. “And fear Him Who created
You and (Who created)
The generations before (you).”

185. They said: “Thou art only
One of those bewitched!

186. “Thou art no more than
A mortal like us,
And indeed we think
Thou art a liar!”

187. “Now cause a piece
Of the sky to fall on us,
If thou art truthful!”

188. He said: “My Lord
Knows best what ye do.”

189. But they rejected him.
Then the punishment
Of a day of overshadowing
gloom.

3217. They deny that he is a prophet or that they are doing wrong, or that any former generations behaved differently. They think they are the true exponents of human nature, and that such as he—idealists—are mere madmen.

3218. ‘If you really claim any real contact with Allah, let us see if you can bring down a piece of the sky to fall on us!’

3219. The challenge to bring down a piece of the sky was merely empty bravado, on the part of those who had called him a liar. But Shu‘aib does not insult them. He merely says: “Allah is the best judge of your conduct: what more can I say?” And Allah did punish them.

3220. Perhaps a shower of ashes and cinders accompanying a volcanic eruption. If these people were the same as the Midianites, there was also an earthquake. See vii. 91 and n. 1063.
Seized them, and that was
The Chastisement of a Great
Day. 3221

190. Verily in that is a Sign:
But most of them
Do not believe.

191. And verily thy Lord
Is He, the Exalted in Might
Most Merciful. 3222

SECTION 11.

192. Verily this is a Revelation 3223
From the Lord of the Worlds:

193. With it came down
The Truthful spirit 3224

194. To thy heart 3225
That thou mayest admonish

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3221. It must have been a terrible day of wholesale destruction—earthquake, volcanic eruption, lava, cinders and ashes and rumbling noises to frighten those whose death was not instantaneous.

3222. See above, n. 3193 to xxvi. 121.

3223. The hostile reception of some of the previous Messengers having been mentioned, the special characteristics of the Qur-án are now referred to, to show (1) that it is true, and (2) that its rejection by the Makkan Pagans was of a piece with previous experience in the history of man: vested interests resist Truth, but it conquers.

3224. Ruh-ul-amín, the epithet of Gabriel, who came with the inspired Messages to the holy Prophet, is difficult to render in a single epithet in translation. In n. 3187 to xxvi. 107 I have described some of the various shades of meaning attached to the adjective Amín as applied to a Prophet. A further signification as attached to the Spirit of Inspiration is that it is the very quintessence of Faith and Truth, unlike the lying spirits which delude men with falsehood. On the whole, I think “the Spirit of Faith and Truth” will represent the original best here.

3225. Qalb (Heart) signifies not only the seat of the affections, but also the seat of the memory and understanding. The process of inspiration is indicated by the impression of the divine Message on the inspired one’s heart, memory, and understanding, from which it was promulgated in human speech to the world. In this case the human speech was the perspicuous Arabic tongue, which would be plainly intelligible to the audience who would immediately hear it and be through them transmitted to all the world.
195. In the perspicuous Arabic tongue.

196. Without doubt it is (announced) In the revealed Books Of former peoples.*

197. Is it not a Sign To them that the Learned Of the Children of Israel Knew it (as true)?

198. Had We revealed it To any of the non-Arabs,

199. And had he recited it To them, they would not Have believed in it.

200. Thus have We caused it To enter the hearts Of the Sinners.

201. They will not believe In it until they see The grievous Chastisement

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3226. The word Zubur, used here, is plural of Zabur, which is mentioned in the Qur-án as the Book revealed to the prophet Dá‘úd. It has also been used in the Qur-án in generic sense of “Book” (LIV: 52). Here the word refers to the earlier Revelations.

3227. Many of the Jewish Doctors recognised the holy Prophet’s Message as a Message from Allah, e.g., ‘Abdulláh ibn Salám and Mukhairiq. The latter was a man of property, which he left for Islam. (There were also Christian monks and learned men who recognised the Prophet’s mission.)

3228. The turn of Arabia having come for receiving Allah’s Revelation, as was foretold in previous Revelations, it was inevitable that it should be in the Arab tongue through the mouth of an Arab. Otherwise it would have been unintelligible, and the Arabs could not have received the Faith and become the vehicles for its promulgation as actually happened in history.

3229. “Thus” I think means through the medium of the Arabic language and the Arab people. The Qur-án penetrated through their language and their hearts. If the hard-hearted among them did not believe, they will see when the Penalty comes, how grievous a mistake they made. For the Penalty must come; even when they least expected it. They will be caught saying or thinking, “There is plenty of time; we can get another respite,” when already it will have become too late for them to turn over a new leaf.
202. But it will come
   To them of a sudden,
   While they perceive it not;

203. Then they will say:
   "Shall we be respited?"

204. Do they then ask
   For Our Chastisement to be
   Hastened on?\(^{3230}\)

205. Seest thou? If We do
   Let them enjoy (this life)
   For a few years,

206. Yet there comes to them
   At length the (Punishment)
   Which they were promised!

207. It will profit them not
   The enjoyment they were given.

208. Never did We destroy
   A town but had
   Its warners—

209. By way of reminder;
   And We never are unjust.\(^{3231}\)

210. The Satans did not bring
   It down;\(^{3232}\)

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3230. While some sinners out of negligence postpone the day of repentance till it is
too late, others more bold actually ask out of bravado that Allah's Punishment should
be brought down on them at once, as they do not believe in Allah or His Punishment!
The answer to them is: It will come soon enough—to too soon, they will think, when it
comes! Cf. xxii. 47 and notes.

3231. Allah will grant much respite to sinners, for He is Most Gracious and Merciful.
But all this respite will profit them nothing if they are merely immersed in the vanities
of this world. Again and again, in spite of their rebellion and their rejection, does Allah
send warnings and warners before the final Punishment of Justice. For Allah knows
human weakness, and He will never be unjust in the least.

3232. When anything extraordinary happens, there are always people desirous of
putting the worst construction on it, and saying that it is the work of Satans. So when
the Qur-an came with its Message in wondrous Arabic, its enemies could only account
for its power by attributing it to evil spirits! Such a beneficent message can never suit —
211. It is not meet for them, Nor is it in their power

212. Indeed they are banished from Hearing it.

213. So call not on any Other god with Allah, Or thou wilt be among Those who will be punished.

214. And admonish thy nearest Kinsmen,

215. And lower thy wing To the Believers who Follow thee.

216. Then if they disobey thee, Say: “I am free (of responsibility) From what ye do!”

217. And put thy trust On the Exalted in Might, The Merciful,

218. Who seeth thee standing Forth (in prayer),

= the purposes of Satans, nor would it be in their power to produce it. In fact Good and Evil are poles asunder, and Evil cannot even hear words of Good, of tender Pity for sinners and Forgiveness for the penitent!

3233. That is, be kind, gentle, and considerate with them, as a high flying bird is when she lowers her wing to her offspring. C.f. xvii. 24 and n. 2205, and xv. 88 and n. 2011.

3234. “Disobey thee” implied that they did something wrong, for the holy Prophet commanded what was right and forbade what was wrong. If, then, any of his flock did wrong the responsibility was not his, for he, like a good shepherd, tried to keep them right. What was he then to do? He would continue his teaching. But if any of them went so far wrong as to try to injure their own Teacher, Leader, and Guide, there was nothing for him to fear. His trust was only in Allah, and Allah sees and appraises all men's actions at their true worth.
219. And thy movements among
Those who prostrate themselves. 3235

220. For it is He
Who heareth and knoweth
All things.

221. Shall I inform you,
(O people), on whom it is
That the Satans descend? 3236

222. They descend on every
Lying, wicked person,

223. They listen eagerly
And most
Of them are liars.

224. And the Poets,— 3237
It is those straying in Evil,
Who follow them:

225. Seest thou not that they
Wander distracted in every
Valley?—

226. And that they say
What they practise not?—

3235. Literally, the standing and prostration are postures in Muslim prayer: the holy
Prophet was equally earnest, sincere, and zealous in prayer for himself and for all his
people. The Prophet’s behaviour was exemplary in all the turns of fortune, and however
foolish men may cavil, his purity and uprightness are fully known to Allah.

3236. To people who maliciously suggested that the holy Prophet was possessed or
inspired by evil spirits (xxvi. 210 above) the reply had already been made, but it is now
declared that that suggestion is itself the work of Evil. Behind such suggestions are lying
and wickedness, or at best some half-truths caught up in hearsay and twisted so as to
show Allah in an evil light.

3237. The Poets: to be read along with the exceptions mentioned in verse 227 below.
Poetry and other arts are not in themselves evil, but may on the contrary be used in
the service of religion and righteousness. But there is a danger that they may be
prostituted for base purposes. If they are insincere (“they say what they do not”) or are
divorced from actual life or its goodness or its serious purpose, they may become
instruments of evil or futility. They then wander about without any set purpose, and seek
the depths (valleys) of human folly rather than the heights of divine light.
227. Except those who believe, \[3238\]
Work righteousness, engaged much
In the remembrance of Allah,
And defend themselves after
They are unjustly attacked.
And soon will the unjust \[3239\]
Know what vicissitudes
Their affairs will take!

3238. Poetry and the fine arts which are to be commended are those which emanate from minds steeped in Faith, which try to carry out in life the fine sentiments they express in their artistic work, aim at the glory of Allah rather than at self-glorification or the fulsome praise of men with feet of clay, and do not (as in Jihād) attack anything except aggressive evil. In this sense a perfect artist should be a perfect man. Perfection may not be attainable in this life, but it should be the aim of every man, and especially of one who wishes to become a supreme artist, not only in technique but in spirit and essentials. Among the commendable poets contemporary with the holy Prophet may be mentioned Ḥassān and Labīd: the latter had the honour of being one of the seven whose poems were selected for “hanging” (the Muʿallaqāt) in the Days of Ignorance.

3239. These were the scurrilous rhymesters, who were doomed to come to an evil end.
APPENDIX - 4

Thamûd Inscriptions at al-Ḥijr. (xxvi. 141-159; xv. 80-84; and vii. 73-79.)

Mr. C.M. Doughty travelled in North-Western Arabia and Najd in the 1880's, and his book Arabia Deserta forms one of the most notable of Arabian Travel-books. It was first published in two volumes by the Cambridge University Press in 1888, and has recently gone through several editions. The edition I have used is the unabridged one-volume edition printed in London in 1926. The references in this Appendix should be understood to refer to that edition.

Doughty travelled on the old Pilgrim Caravan from Damascus as far as Madâin Șâliḥ, and then parted company with the Pilgrims and turned into Najd. Madâin Șâliḥ (the Cities of Șâliḥ), is one of the station on the Syrian Pilgrim route, about 180 miles north of Madinah Tabûk, to which the holy Prophet led an expedition in A.H. 9 (see Introduction to S. ix), is about 170 miles farther to the north-west, and Ma'an Junction about 150 miles still farther. Madâin Șâliḥ was also an important station on the prehistoric gold and frankincense (bakhûr) route between Yemen and Egypt or Syria. In sacred history it marks the ruined site of the Thamûd people to whom the prophet Șâliḥ was sent, whose she-camel was a Sign and is connected with Șâliḥ's history. See n. 3208 to xxvi. 155-157. To the west and north-west of Madâin Șâliḥ are three Harrats or tracts of volcanic land covered with lava, stretching as far as Tabûk.

This is how Doughty describes his first view of Madâin Șâliḥ, approaching from the north-west. “At length in the dim morning twilight, as we journeyed, we were come to a sandy brow and a straight descending-place betwixt cliffs of sandstones. There was some shouting in the forward, and Aswad bid me look up, ‘this was a famous place, “Mabrak-an-Nâqa’” (the kneeling place of the she-camel of Șâliḥ). “It is short, at first steep, and issues upon the plain of Al-Ḥijr, which is Madâin Șâliḥ; where the sun coming up showed the singular landscape of this valley-plain, encompassed with mighty sand-rock precipices (which here resemble ranges of city walls, fantastic towers, and castle buildings), and upon them lie high shouldering sand drifts. The bottom is sand, with much growth of desert bushes; and I perceived some thin sprinkled volcanic drift. Westward is seen the immense mountain blackness, terrible and lowering, of the Ḥarrat.” (Arabia Deserta, p. 83, vol. I.)

Doughty took rubbings of some of the Inscriptions which were accessible to him and they were studied by the great Semitic scholar M. Ernest Renan and published by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Renan's Report in French is printed as an Appendix to Chapters IV, V and VI of
Arabia Deserta (pp. 180-187, vol. I) and M. le Marquis de Vogüé’s Note (also in French) on the Nabataean sculptured Architecture at Madain Śaliḥ at pp. 620-623, vol. I.

The general result of these studies may be summarised. The sculpture and architecture are found to be of the same kind as in the Nabataean monuments at Petra (for which see n. 1043 to vii. 73). At Petra there are no dated Inscriptions preserved, but at Madain Śaliḥ we have several. There are at Madain Śaliḥ perhaps 100 sepulchral rock-hewn chambers, in some of which are found human bones and remains, showing that the Nabataeans knew the art of embalming, and used linen of the same kind as was used in ancient Egypt. The tombs are dedicated in perpetuity to named families, and the named Nabataean kings have, each, the epithet “loving his people”. There are flat side-pilasters, and the figures of four-footed beasts, eagles, and other birds are discernible. Besides the sepulchral chambers, there is a great Hall or Council Chamber (Diwān), 25ft. x 27ft. x 13ft. This may have been a Temple. The gods worshipped were those whose names we know of from other Nabataean sources,—Dusares, Martaba, Allāt, Manā, Kaīs, and Hubal. Allāt, Manāt, and Hubal are also known to us in connection with the idols of the Pagan Quraish of the Times of Ignorance. It is interesting to find the word Mesjeda (Arabic Masjid) already used here for a “place of worship”. Triads of stones were worshipped as gods.

The Inscriptions have dates from 3 B.C. to 79 A.D. Within this short period of 82 years we can see something of the development of Semitic palaeography. The writing becomes more and more cursive with the years. We have here a central point between Old Armenian, Square Hebrew, Palmyran, Sinaitic, Kūfī and Naskh.

We may treat the Nabataeans as historical, as we have established dates. The Thamūd were prehistoric, and occupied sites which were afterwards occupied by the Nabataeans and others. The kneeling place of Śaliḥ’s she-camel (Mabrak-un-Nāqa) and the well of the she-camel (Bir-un-Nāqa), and a number of local names keep alive the race-memory of an ancient Arabian people and their prophet Śaliḥ.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT An-Naml, 27.

This Sūra is cognate in subject to the one preceding it and the two following it. Its chronological place is also in the same group of four, in the middle Makkan period.

The Fire, the White Hand, and the Rod, in the story of Moses; the speech of birds, the crowds of Jinns and men pitted against a humble ant, and the Hoopoe and the Queen of Sheba, in Solomon’s story; the defeat of the plot of the nine wicked men in the story of Sālih; and the crime of sin with open eyes in the story of Lot;—lead up to the lessons of true and false worship and the miracles of Allah’s grace and revelation.

Summary.—Wonderful is Revelation, like the Fire which Moses saw, which was a glimpse of Allah’s Glory, and His Miracles, which searched out those who refused Faith in spite of the light they had received (xxvii. 1-14).

Solomon knew the speech of Birds and had hosts of Jinns and men; yet the wise ant had ample defence against them: the Hoopoe who was absent at his muster, was yet serving him: the Queen of Sheba had a kingdom, but it submitted with conviction to the Wisdom of Solomon and the Kingdom of Allah (xxvii. 15-44).

Fools ascribe ill-luck to godliness as in Şālih’s story, or fall into their lusts with their eyes open, as in Lūt’s story; but their plots and their rage will be foiled by Allah (xxvii. 45-58).

Allah’s glory and goodness are supreme over all Creation: Unfaith will yield to Faith in the final adjustment of values: so follow Revelation, serve Allah, and trust in Him (xxvii. 59-93).
An-Naml, or the Ants...

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. **Tū. Sin.**

These are verses Of the Qur-ān,—A Book That makes (things) clear;

2. A Guide; and Glad Tidings For the Believers,—

3. Those who establish regular prayers And give zakat, And also have sure faith In the Hereafter.

4. As to those who believe not In the Hereafter, We have Made their deeds pleasing In their eyes; and so they Wander blindly.

5. Such are they for whom A grievous Chastisement is (waiting): And in the Hereafter theirs Will be the greatest loss.

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3240. See n. 3137 to xxvi. 1.

3241. Revelation is here presented in three aspects: (1) it explains things, the attributes of Allah, our own position, and the world around; (2) it directs us to right conduct and keeps us from evil; and (3) to those who have Faith and accept its guidance, it gives the good news of forgiveness, purification, and the achievement of salvation.

3242. Those who reject Allah and follow Evil have a good conceit of themselves. Their deeds are pleasing to no one else. As they have rejected Allah’s guidance, they are allowed to hug their own self-conceit, and given further respite for repentance. But they follow their own whims and wander about in distraction, as they have no standards such as guide the godly.

3243. The account will then be made up, and they will be found to be terribly in loss. They will be the worst in loss, for all their self-complacency.
6. As for thee, thou receivest
   The Qur-ān from One
   All-Wise, All-Knowing.

7. Behold! Moses said\textsuperscript{3244}
   To his family: "I perceive
   A fire; soon will I bring you
   From there some information,
   Or I will bring you
   A burning brand (to light
   Our fuel,) that ye may
   Warm yourselves.

8. But when he came
   To the (Fire), a voice
   Was heard: "Blessed are those\textsuperscript{3245}
   In the Fire and those around:
   And Glory to Allah,
   The Lord of the Worlds.

9. "O Moses! Verily,
   I am Allah, the Exalted
   In Might, the Wise!...

10. "Now do thou throw thy rod!\textsuperscript{3246}
    But when he saw it
    Moving (of its own accord)
    As if it had been a snake,

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\textsuperscript{3244.} Cf. xx. 9-24. Both there and here there is a reference to the dawn of
Revelation in the heart of Moses. The points there emphasised will be found in the notes
to that passage. Here the emphasis is on the wonderful nature of the Fire and the
wonderful way in which Moses was transformed at the touch of the Light. He was
travelling in the Sinai desert with his family. Seeking ordinary light, he came upon a Light
which took him to the highest signs of Allah. No doubt all his inner history had prepared
him for his great destiny. It is the inner history that matters, and not the place or position
of a man in the eyes of his ordinary fellows.

\textsuperscript{3245.} Those: in the original the pronoun is in the singular, "man", which is often
used with a plural meaning.

\textsuperscript{3246.} Moses was now transported into an entirely new world. What he had taken
to be an ordinary fire was a gleam of the heavenly light. His own rod or staff was no
longer the dead piece of wood that had hitherto supported him. It became instinct with
life, a life that moved, and had the power of offence and defence in it, as all living Good
must have in its fight with Evil. His own transformation is described in the next note.
He turned back in retreat,
And retraced not his steps:
"O Moses!" (it was said),
"Fear not: truly, in My presence,
Those called as messengers
Have no fear."

11. "But if any have done wrong
And have thereafter substituted
Good to take the place of evil,
Truly, I am Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

12. "Now put thy hand into
Thy bosom, and it will
Come forth white without stain
(Or harm): (these are) among
The nine Signs (thou wilt take)
To Pharaoh and his people:
For they are a people
Rebellious in transgression."

3247. In this great, new, wonderful world, that was opening out to Moses, he had to get his vision adjusted to his new surroundings, as an ordinary man has to adjust his sight before he can see in any very strong light that is new to him. The staff which had become alive as a snake frightened him: yet it was to be his own instrument of work in his new mission. All fear was to be cast out of his mind, as befitted a man chosen by Allah.

3248. His slaying the Egyptian (n. 3146 to xxvi. 14), however defensible from certain aspects, was yet something from his past that had to be washed off, and Allah, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, did it out of His abounding Grace. Nay, more; he was given a pure, Radiant Hand, as a Sign from Allah, as stated in the next verse.

3249. Cf. xx. 22. There the expression is: "Draw thy hand close to thy side." As far as the physical act is concerned, the expressions there and here mean the same thing. Moses had a loose-fitting robe. If he put his hand within the folds of the robe, it would go to his bosom on the side of his body opposite to that from which his hand came; i.e., if it was his right hand it would go to the left side of his bosom. The hand comes out white and radiant, without a stain. Ordinarily if the skin becomes white it is a sign of disease or leprosy. Here it was the opposite. It was a sign of radiance and glory from the higher Light.

3250. The nine Signs: see n. 1091 to vii. 133.
13. But when Our Signs came to them, visibly\textsuperscript{3251} They said:
“This is sorcery manifest!”

14. And they denied them, though their souls acknowledged them wrongfully and out of pride:
So see what was the end of those who acted corruptly!

SECTION 2.

15. We gave knowledge to David and Solomon:\textsuperscript{3252}
And they both said:
“Praise be to Allah, Who has favoured us above many of His servants who believe!”\textsuperscript{3253}

16. And Solomon was David’s heir.\textsuperscript{3254}
He said: “O ye people!

\textsuperscript{3251} The Signs should have clearly opened the eyes of any persons who honestly examined them and thought about them. Those who rejected them were perverse and were going against their own light and inner conviction. That was the aggravating feature of their sin.

\textsuperscript{3252} Cf. xxii. 78-82. “Knowledge” means such knowledge as leads up to the higher things in life, the Wisdom that was shown in their decisions and judgments, and the understanding that enabled them to fulfil their mission in life. They were both just men and prophets of Allah. The Bible, as we have it, is inconsistent: on the one hand it calls David “a man after God’s own heart” (I Samuel, xiii. 14, and Acts xiii. 22); and the Christians acclaim Christ as a son of David; but on the other hand, horrible crimes are ascribed to him, which, if he had committed them, would make him a monster of cruelty and injustice. About Solomon, too, while he is described as a glorious king, there are stories of his lapses into sin and idolatry. The Muslim teaching considers them both to be men of piety and wisdom, and high in spiritual knowledge.

\textsuperscript{3253} They ascribed, as was proper, their knowledge, wisdom, and power to the only true Source of all good, Allah.

\textsuperscript{3254} The point is that Solomon not only inherited his father’s kingdom but his spiritual insight and the prophetic office, which do not necessarily go from father to son.
We have been taught the speech of Birds, and we have been given of everything. This is indeed Grace manifest (from Allah).

17. And before Solomon were marshalled His hosts—of Jinns and men And birds, and they were all kept in order and ranks.

18. At length, when they came to a valley of ants, One of the ants said: “O ye ants, get into Your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (Under foot) without knowing it.”

3255. Speech of Birds. The spoken word in human speech is different from the means of communication which birds and animals have between each other. But no man can doubt that they have means of communication with each other, if he only observes the orderly flight of migratory birds or the regulated behaviour of ants, bees, and other creatures who live in communities. The wisdom of Solomon consisted in understanding these things in the animal world and in the lower fringes of human intelligence.

3256. “Everything”: Solomon was a king of power and authority; outside his kingdom he had influence among many neighbouring peoples; he had knowledge of birds, and beasts and plants; he was just and wise, and understood men; and above all, he had spiritual insight, which brought him near to Allah. Thus he had something of all kinds of desirable gifts. And with true gratitude he referred them to Allah, the Giver of all gifts.

3257. Besides the literal meaning, there are two symbolical meanings. (1) All his subjects of varying grades of intelligence, taste, and civilization, were kept in due order and co-operation, by his discipline, justice, and good government. (2) The gifts of various kinds, which he possessed (see last note), he used in proper order and co-ordination, as if they were a well disciplined army, thus getting the best possible results from them.

3258. This verse and the next, read together, suggest the symbolical meaning as predominant. The ant, to outward appearance, is a very small and humble creature. In the great pomp and circumstances of the world, she (generic feminine in Arabic) may be neglected or even trampled on by a people who mean her no harm. Yet, by her...
19. So he smiled, amused
   At her speech; and he said:
   “O my Lord! so order me
   That I may be grateful
   For Thy favours, which Thou
   Has bestowed on me and3259
   On my parents, and that
   I may work the righteousness
   That will please Thee.3260
   And admit me, by Thy Grace,
   To the ranks of Thy
   Righteous Servants.”3261

20. And he took a muster
   Of the Birds; and he said:
   “Why is it I see not
   The Hoopoe? Or is he
   Among the absentees?3262

3259. The counterpart to the position of the humble ant is the position of a great
   king like Solomon. He prays that his power and wisdom and all other gifts may be used
   for righteousness and for the benefit of all around him. The ant being in his thoughts,
   we may suppose that he means particularly in his prayer that he may not even unwittingly
   tread on humble beings in his preoccupations with the great things of the world.

3260. The righteousness which pleases the world is often very different from the
   righteousness which pleases Allah. Solomon prays that he may always take Allah's Will
   as his standard, rather than the standards of men.

3261. In the Kingdom of Allah, righteousness is the badge of citizenship. And
   although there are great and noble grades (see n. 586 to iv. 69), the base of that
   citizenship is the universal brotherhood of righteousness. The greatest in that Kingdom
   are glad and proud to pray for that essential badge.

3262. Solomon was no idle or easy-going king. He kept all his organisation strictly
   up to the mark, both his armies literally and his forces (metaphorically). His most mobile
   arm was the Birds, who were light on the wing and flew and saw everything like efficient
   scouts. One day he missed the Hoopoe in his muster. The Hoopoe is a light, graceful
   creature, with elegant plumage of many colours, and a beautiful yellow crest on his head,
   which entitles him to be called a royal bird.
21. “I will certainly punish him
   With a severe punishment,
   Or execute him, unless he
   Bring me a clear reason
   (For absence).”

22. But the Hoopoe tarried not
   Far: he (came up and) said:
   “I have compassed
   Which thou hast not compassed,
   And I have come to thee
   From Sabā\(^{3263}\) with tidings true.

23. “I found (there) a woman\(^{3264}\)
   Ruling over them and provided\(^{3265}\)
   With every requisite; and she
   Has a magnificent throne.

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3263. Sabā may reasonably be identified with the Biblical Sheba (1 Kings x. 1-10). It is further referred to in the Sūra called after its name: xxxiv. 15-20. It was a city in Yemen, said to have been three days’ journey (say 50 miles) from the city of San‘ā. A recent German explorer, Dr. Hans Helfritz, claims to have located it in what is now Hadhramaut territory. The famous dam of Ma‘rib made the country very prosperous, and enabled it to attain a high degree of civilization (“provided with every requisite” in the next verse). The Queen of Sheba therefore rightly held up her head high until she beheld the glories of Solomon.

3264. The Queen of Sheba (by name Bilqis in Arabian tradition) came apparently from Yemen, but she had affinities with Abyssinia and possibly ruled over Abyssinia also. The Ḥabasha tribe (after whom Abyssinia was named) came from Yemen. Between the southern coast of Yemen and the north-eastern coast of Abyssinia there are only the Straits of Bāb-al-Mandab, barely twenty miles across. In the 10th or 11th century B.C. there were frequent invasions of Abyssinia from Arabia, and Solomon’s reign of 40 years is usually synchronised with B.C. 992 to 952. The Sabaean and Himyarite alphabets in which we find the south Arabian pre-Islamic inscriptions, passed into Ethiopic, the language of Abyssinia. The Abyssinians possess a traditional history called “The Book of the Glory of Kings” (Kebra Nagast), which has been translated from Ethiopic into English by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge (Oxford, 1932). It gives an account of the Queen of Sheba and her only son Menyelek I, as founders of the Abyssinian dynasty.

3265. Provided with every requisite: I take this to refer not only to the abundance of spices and gems and gold in her country, but to sciences and arts, as well.
24. “I found her and her people
Worshipping the sun besides
Allah.”

Satan has made their deeds
Seem pleasing in their eyes,
And has kept them away
From the Path,—so
They receive no guidance,—

25. “So that they worship not
Allah who brings forth
What is hidden in the heavens
And the earth, and knows
What ye hide and what
Ye reveal.

26. “Allah!—there is no god
But He!—Lord of the Throne
Supreme!”

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3266. The ancient religion of the people of Sabā (the Himyar or Sabæans) consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies, the sun, the planets, and the stars. Possibly the cult was connected with that of Chaldaea, the home-land of Abraham: see vi. 75-79 and notes thereon. Yemen had easy access to Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf by way of the sea, as well as with Abyssinia. That accounts for the Christians of Najran and the Jewish dynasty of kings (e.g. Zū-Nuwās, d. 525 A.D.) who persecuted them in the century before Islam,—also for the Christian Abyssinian Governor Abraha and his discomfiture in the year of the Prophet’s birth (S. cv.), say 570 A.D. Jewish-Christian influences were powerful in Arabia in the sixth century of the Christian era.

The religion of these Sabaeans (written in Arabic with a Šīn) should not be confounded with that of the Sabians (with a Šād), as to whom see n. 76 to ii. 62.

3267. The false worship of the Sabaeans is here exposed in three ways: (1) that they were self-satisfied with their own human achievements, instead of looking up to Allah; and (2) that the light of the heavenly bodies which they worshipped was only dependent on the true Light of Allah, which extends over heaven and earth; the Creator should be worshipped rather than His Creation; and (3) Allah knows the hidden secrets of men’s minds as well as the objects which they openly profess: are false worshippers really only worshipping their own selves, or the “sins they have a mind to” and are therefore afraid to go to Allah, Who knows all?

3268. The messenger (Hoopoe) is a pious bird, as befits a messenger of Solomon. After mentioning the false worship of the Sabaeans, he pronounces the Creed of Unity, and emphasises Allah’s attribute as Lord of the Great Throne, in order to make it clear =
27. (Solomon) said: "Soon shall we see whether thou hast told the truth or lied!" 3269

28. "Go thou, with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them: then draw back from them, and (wait to see) what answer they return."...

29. (The Queen) said: "Ye chiefs! Here is-delivered to me—a letter worthy of respect.

30. "It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): 'In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful:

31. 'Be ye not arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (to the true Religion). '"

SECTION 3.

32. She said: "Ye chiefs! Advise me in (this) my affair: no affair have I decided except in your presence."

= that whatever may be the magnificence of a human throne such as he has described (in verse 23), he is not in any way misled from his loyalty to Solomon, the exponent of the true Religion of Unity.

3269. Solomon does not doubt his messenger's plea that he has scouted a new country, but wants to test whether he has loosened the rein of his imagination in describing its splendours or its worship.

3270. Solomon expressly begins his letter with the formula of the true and universal Religion of Unity, and he invites to the true Faith the new people with whom he establishes honourable relations, not for worldly conquest but for the spreading of the Light of Allah.
33. They said: “We are endued With strength, and given To vehement war: But the command is With thee; so consider What thou wilt command.”

34. She said: “Kings, when they Enter a country, despoil it, And make the noblest Of its people its meanest Thus do they behave.

35. “But I am going to send Him a present, and (wait) To see with what (answer) Return (my) ambassadors.”

36. Now when (the embassy) came To Solomon, he said: “Will ye give me abundance In wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better Than that which He has Given you! Nay it is ye Who rejoice in your gift!”

3271. The character of Queen Bilqis, as disclosed here, is that of a ruler enjoying great wealth and dignity, and the full confidence of her subjects. She does nothing without consulting her Council, and her Council are ready to carry out her commands in all things. Her people are manly, loyal, and contented, and ready to take the field against any enemy of their country. But their queen is prudent in policy, and is not willing to embroil her country in war. She has the discrimination to see that Solomon is not like ordinary kings who conquer by violence. Perhaps in her heart she has a ray of the divine light already, though her people are yet Pagans. She wishes to carry her people with her in whatever she does, because she is as loyal to them as they are to her. An exchange of presents would probably establish better relations between the two kingdoms. And perhaps she anticipates some spiritual understanding also, a hope which was afterwards realised. In Bilqis we have a picture of womanhood, gentle, prudent, and able to tame the wider passions of her subjects.

3272. Poor Bilqis! she thought she had arranged with womanly tact to conciliate Solomon, and at the same time pacify her warlike subjects! But the effect of the embassy with presents was the very opposite. Solomon took it as an insult that she should send =
37. “Go back to them, and be sure
   We shall come to them
   With such hosts as they
   Will never be able to meet:
   We shall expel them
   From there in disgrace,
   And they will feel
   Humbled (indeed).”

38. He said (to his own men):
   “Ye Chiefs! which of you
   Can bring me her throne
   Before they come to me
   In submission?”

39. A stalwart of the Jinn said:
   “I will bring it to thee
   Before thou rise from thy
   Council: indeed I have
   Full strength for the purpose,
   And may be trusted.”

40. Said one who had knowledge
   Of the Book: “I will
   Bring it to thee before ever
   Thy glance returns to thee.
   Then when (Solomon) saw it
   Placed firmly before him,
   He said: “This is

= her presents instead of her submission to the true Religion! He flung back the presents
at her, as much as to say, “Let these baubles delight your own hearts! Allah has blessed
me with plenty of worldly goods, and something infinitely better, viz.; His Light and
Guidance! Why do you say nothing about that?"

3273. The throne is symbolical of power and dignity. So far her throne was based
on material wealth: Solomon is going to alter it to a basis of Faith and the Religion of
Unity.

3274. Ifrīt: a large, powerful jinn.

3275. Solomon was thankful to Allah that he had men endowed with such power,
and he had the throne of Bilqīs transported to his Court and transformed as he desired,
without Bilqīs even knowing it.
By the grace of my Lord!—

To test me whether I am
Grateful or ungrateful!
And if any is grateful,
Truly his gratitude is (a gain)
For his own soul; but if
Any is ungrateful, truly
My Lord is Free of all Needs,
Supreme in Honour!»

41. He said: “Disguise her throne.
Let us see whether she
Is guided (to the truth)
Or is one of those who
Are not rightly guided.”

42. So when she arrived,
She was asked, “Is this
Thy throne?” She said,
“It seems the same.
And knowledge was bestowed
On us in advance of this.
And we have submitted
To Allah (in Islam).”

3276. If Solomon had been ungrateful to Allah, i.e., if he had worked for his own selfish or worldly ends, he could have used the brute strength of ’Ifrît to add to his worldly strength and glory. Instead of it he uses the higher magic of the Book,—of the Spirit—to transform the throne of Bilqîs for her highest good, which means also the highest good of her subjects, by the divine Light. He had the two alternatives, and he chooses the better, and he thus shows his gratitude to Allah for the Grace He had given him.

3277. Man’s gratitude to Allah is not a thing that benefits Allah, for Allah is high above all needs: it benefits a man’s own soul and gives him higher rank in the life to come. Per contra, man’s ingratitude will not detract from Allah’s Glory and Honour or the value of Allah’s generous gifts to man: for Allah is supreme in honour, glory, and generosity. Karîm in Arabic involves all three significations.

3278. The throne having been disguised, it will be a test to see whether Bilqîs recognises it as her own or not.

3279. Bilqîs stands the test. She knows it was her throne, yet not exactly the same, for it was now much better. And she is proud of her good fortune, and acknowledges, for herself and her people, with gratitude, the light which was given to them by Allah, by which they recognised Allah’s prophet in Solomon, and received the true Religion with all their will and heart and soul.
43. And he diverted her from the worship of others besides Allah: for she was (sprung) of a people that had no faith.

44. She was asked to enter the lofty Palace: but when she saw it, she thought it was a lake of water, and she (tucked up her skirts), uncovering her legs. He said: "This is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass."

She said: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul: I do now submit in Islam, with Solomon, to the Lord of the Worlds."

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3280. Some Commentators and Translators adopt an alternative construction for the last clause of the last verse and the first clause of this verse. They understand the former to be spoken by Solomon and to mean, 'we had knowledge of Allah's Message and accepted it before her.' They understand the latter to mean, 'the worship of others besides Allah diverted her (from the true Religion). If we accept the construction adopted in this Translation, the visit to Solomon confirmed the true Faith of Bilqis and prevented her from lapsing into her ancestral false worship.

3281. Bilqis, having been received with honour on her arrival, and having accepted the transformation of her throne, placed presumably in an outer building of the Palace, is asked to enter the great Palace itself. Its floor was made of slabs of smooth polished glass, that glistened like water. She thought it was water, and tucked up her clothes to pass through it, showing her bare feet and ankles. This was a very undignified position for a woman, especially one of the position of a Queen. Solomon immediately told her the real facts, when she felt grateful, and joined herself with Solomon in praising Allah.

3282. A gentle leader points out the truth. Instead of resenting it, the new entrant is grateful; acknowledges his own mistake freely and frankly; and heartily joins with the Teacher in the worship of Allah, the Source of all truth and knowledge.
SECTION 4.

45. We sent (aforetime),
To the Thamûd, their brother\(^{3283}\)
Sâlih, saying, "Serve Allah":
But behold, they became
Two factions quarrelling
With each other.

46. He said: "O my people!
Why ask ye to hasten on
The evil before the good?\(^{3284}\)
If only ye ask Allah for forgiveness,
Ye may hope to receive mercy."

47. They said: "Ill omen
Do we augur from thee
And those that are with thee".
He said: "Your ill omen
Is with Allah; yea, ye are
A people under trial."\(^{3285}\)

48. There were in the City
Nine men,
Who made mischief in the land,
And would not reform.\(^{3286}\)

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3283. The main story of the Thamûd, who were broken up into two factions, the rich oppressing the poor and keeping them out of the good things of life and the test case of the She-camel, will be found in xxvi. 141-159 and the notes thereon. The point here is the secret plot of the nine men against the Prophet of Allah, whose teaching, they thought, brought them ill-luck; but what they called ill-luck was the just punishment from Allah for their own ill-deeds. Their plot was foiled, and the whole community, which was involved in evil, was destroyed.

3284. Cf. xiii. 6. The evil-doers were really hastening on their own punishment by their feuds against the poor. The advocates of justice were not bringing ill-luck to them. They were showing the way to ward it off. Their own injustice was bringing on their disaster.

3285. All evil unpunished is not evil condoned, but evil given a chance for reform. They are on trial, by the mercy of Allah. What they call "ill omen" is really the just punishment for their ill-deeds, and that punishment rests with Allah.

3286. They had made up their minds to wage a relentless war against justice. They did not destroy justice, but justice destroyed them.
49. They said: “Swear
   A mutual oath by Allah
   That we shall make
   A secret night attack
   On him and his people, \(^{3287}\)
   And that we shall then
   Say to his heir (when he
   Seeks vengeance): ‘We were not
   Present at the slaughter
   Of his people, and we are
   Positively telling the truth’.”

50. They plotted and planned, \(^{3288}\)
   But We too planned,
   Even while they perceived it not.

51. Then see what was the end
   Of their plot!—this,
   That We destroyed them
   And their people, all (of them).

52. Now such were their houses,—
   In utter ruin,—because
   They practised wrong-doing.
   Verily in this is a Sign
   For people of knowledge.

53. And We saved those
   Who believed and practised
   Righteousness.

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\(^{3287}\): A most dastardly plot, because (1) it was to be secret, (2) by night, (3) taking their victims unawares, and (4) because careful provision was made that they should all tell lies together, saying that they knew nothing about it, in order to evade the vengeance which Šālih’s heirs (if any were left) or his tribe might want to exact! And yet such were exactly the plots laid against the holy Prophet himself.

\(^{3288}\): Cf. iii. 54. Their secret plotting is all known to Allah, but of Allah’s just and beneficent plans they know nothing. And the wicked must come to an evil end.
54. (We also sent) Lūṭ.\textsuperscript{3289}  
(As a messenger): behold,  
He said to his people,  
"Do ye do what is indecent  
Though ye see (its iniquity)?  

55. Would ye really approach men  
In your lusts rather than  
Women? Nay, ye are  
A people (grossly) ignorant.\textsuperscript{3290}  

56. But his people gave  
No other answer but this:  
They said, "Drive out  
The followers of Lūṭ from  
Your city: these are  
Indeed men who want  
To be clean and pure!"\textsuperscript{3291}  

57. But We saved him  
And his family, except  
His wife: her We destined  
To be  
Of those  
Who lagged behind.  

\textsuperscript{3289}. The story of Lūṭ is referred to elsewhere. The passages to which reference may be made here are: xxvi. 160-175, and vii. 80-84. But the point emphasised here is that the crime of the Cities of the Plain was against their own nature, and they saw its enormity, and yet they indulged in it. Can degradation go further? His wife was not apparently a Believer. Her previous sympathy with the sinful people “destined her” (verse 57 below) to a miserable end, as she lagged behind and shared in the destruction of her kinsfolk.  

\textsuperscript{3290}. The ignorance referred to here is the spiritual Ignorance, the Ignorance of how grossness and sins that bring shame on their own physical and moral nature are doomed to destroy them: it is their own loss. That they knew the iniquity of their sins has already been stated in the last verse. That knowledge makes their spiritual Ignorance all the more culpable, just as a man consciously deceiving people by half-truths is a greater liar than a man who tells lies inadvertently.  

\textsuperscript{3291}. Cf. vii. 82-84. Instead of being ashamed on account of the consciousness of their own guilt, they attack the pure ones with their sarcasms, as if not they but the pure ones were in the wrong in trying to set them on the right way.
58. And We rained down on them
A shower (of brimstone):
And evil was the shower
On those who were admonished
(But heeded not)!

SECTION 5.

59. Say: Praise be to Allah,
And Peace on His servants\(^{3292}\)
Whom He has chosen
(For His Message). (Who)
Is better?—Allah or
The false gods they associate
(With Him)?

60. On who has created\(^{3293}\)
The heavens and the earth,
And who sends you down
Rain from the sky?
Yea, with it We cause
To grow well-planted orchards
Full of beauty and delight:
It is not in your power
To cause the growth\(^{3294}\)

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3292. Allah’s revelation having been described as Light, Guidance, and Mercy, we ought all to be grateful to Allah for vouchsafing His revelation. We ought also to appreciate the services of Allah’s Messengers, who are chosen to deliver His Message: we ought to send salutations of Peace on them, instead of plotting, as the wicked do, for their removal or persecution, or banishment or death. For these Prophets of Allah undergo every kind of hardship and forego every kind of advantage or pleasure in life for serving mankind. And Allah is truth and goodness, and all our fancies of false worship are falsehoods and evils. Shall we prefer falsehood and evil to truth and goodness?

3293. The order, beauty, and grandeur of the Universe are appealed to. They show unity of design and purpose. How can unjust, ignorant, foolish, heedless, false men think of a multiplicity of gods, or of any god, besides the One True God?

3294. To make a single seed germinate and grow into a tree is beyond man’s power. When it comes to a great well-laid-out garden of beauty and delight, no one would think it grew up of itself without a Gardener’s consummate art. And the orchard is more than the trees in it: there is design and beauty in their arrangement: proper spaces have to
Of the trees in them. (Can there be Another) god besides Allah?
Nay, they are a people
Who swerve from justice.

61. Or, who has made the earth
Firm to live in; made
Rivers in its midst; set
Thereon mountains immovable;\(^{3295}\)
And made a separating bar
Between the two seas\(^{3296}\)
(Can there be another) god
Besides Allah? Nay, most
Of them know not.

62. Or, who listens to the
Distressed when he calls
On Him, and Who relieves\(^{3297}\)
His suffering, and makes you
(Mankind) inheritors of the
earth?\(^{3298}\)
(Can there be another) god
Besides Allah? Little it is
That ye heed!

= be left between them for the growth of their roots, for the aeration of the soil beneath them, and for the penetration of air and sunlight between their branches. How can any one then think of the wonderful Universe as a whole, without thinking of the far higher Unity of Design, the evidence of the One True Allah?

3295. Cf. xvi. 15 and notes 2038 and 2039. The *terra firma*, the flowing water, and the cycle of water circulation—sea, vapour, clouds, rain, rivers, and sea again,—all one and yet all distinct, with a sort of wonderful barrier between salt water and fresh water: can man see all this and yet be ignorant of Allah?

3296. Cf. xxv. 53 and notes 3111 and 3112.

3297. Besides the evidence of external nature, there is the still more intimate evidence in man's inner conscience and heart. Allah listens to man's cry of agony and relieves his suffering, and He has given him superiority over other creation on this earth, through his mind and soul. Is man then going to run after inferior beings and forget Allah?

63. Or, who guides you
Through the depths of darkness
On land and sea, and who
Sends the winds as heralds\textsuperscript{3299}
Of glad tidings, going before
His Mercy? (Can there be
Another) god besides Allah?
High is Allah above what
They associate with Him!

64. Or, who originates Creation,
Then repeats it,\textsuperscript{3300}
And who gives you sustenance
From heaven and earth?\textsuperscript{3301}
(Can there be another) god
Besides Allah? Say, “Bring forth
Your argument, if ye
Are telling the truth!”\textsuperscript{3302}

65. Say: None in the heavens
Or on earth, except Allah,
Knows what is hidden:\textsuperscript{3303}
Nor can they perceive
When they shall be raised
Up (for Judgment).

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\textsuperscript{3299} Cf. xxv. 48, n. 3104. After external nature, our attention was drawn to our inner consciousness; after that, it is drawn here to our social and collective life, in which we use the forces of nature for international intercourse, trade, agriculture, production, and economic well-being generally. In the next verse, we are asked to contemplate creation from its primeval stages, through its intermediate processes, to the final Destiny in a new Creation—a new heaven and a new earth.

\textsuperscript{3300} Cf. x. 34, and n. 1428.

\textsuperscript{3301} Sustenance: of course in the spiritual as well as the material sense.

\textsuperscript{3302} All the arguments point to the Unity of Allah: there is none whatever against it.

\textsuperscript{3303} The existence of Allah is certain. But nothing else can be known with certainty to our knowledge. He has told us of the Hereafter, and therefore we know it is true. But those who do not believe in Allah,—what knowledge or certainty can they have? Even when it is actually coming, they will not have the sense to perceive it.
66. Nay, but their knowledge Fails as to the Hereafter, They are in doubt and uncertainty Thereanent; nay, they are blind Thereunto! 3304

SECTION 6.

67. The Unbelievers say: “What! When we become dust, We and our fathers,—shall we Really be raised (from the dead)?

68. “It is true we were promised This,—we and our fathers Before (us): these are nothing But tales of the ancients.”

69. Say: “Go ye through the earth And see what has been The end of those guilty (Of sin).” 3305

70. But grieve not over them, Nor distress thyself Because of their plots. 3306

71. They also say: “When will This promise (come to pass)? If ye are truthful.”

3304. The Unbelievers are generally materialists, who cannot go beyond the evidence of their physical senses. As to a spiritual vision of the future, their physical senses would only leave them in doubt and uncertainty, while their rejection of the spiritual Light makes them blind altogether to the next world.

3305. Even if the Unbelievers are unwilling to take any doctrine, they have only to observe what has actually happened on the earth, and they will see that evil always came to an evil end, and that Truth and righteousness ultimately won.

3306. Cf. xvi. 127, and n. 2164. The righteous need not worry over the unjust. The plots of the unjust can never defeat or deflect the purpose of Allah.
72. Say: “It may be that
Some of the events which
Ye wish to hasten on
May be (close) in your pursuit!”

73. But verily thy Lord is
Full of grace to mankind:
Yet most of them are ungrateful.

74. And verily thy Lord knoweth
All that their hearts do hide,
As well as all that
They reveal.

75. And there is nothing
Hidden in heaven
Or earth, but is (recorded)
In a clear record.

76. Verily this Qur’án doth explain
To the Children of Israel
Most of the matters
In which they disagree.

3307. The Unbelievers—or even men of half-hearted faith—may say, “Why worry over distant future events? Take the day as it comes!” But that is a fallacy. Judgment is certain, and it may be that this very hour may be the hour of doom for any given individual. This is the hour of repentance and amendment. For Allah wishes well to all mankind in spite of their ingratitude.

3308. Cf. xxii. 70, xxxvi. 12, lvii. 22.

3309. The Jews had numerous sects. Some were altogether out of the pale, e.g., the Samaritans, who had a separate Taurát of their own: they hated the other Jews and were hated by them. But even in the orthodox body, there were several sects, of which the following may be mentioned: (1) the Pharisees, who were literalists, formalists, and fatalists, and had a large body of traditional literature, with which they overlaid the Law of Moses; (2) the Sadducees, who were rationalists, and seemed to have doubted the doctrine of the Resurrection or of a Hereafter; (3) the Essenes, who practised a sort of Communism and Asceticism and prohibited marriage. About many of their doctrines they had bitter disputes, which were settled by the Qur’án, which supplemented and perfected the Law of Moses. It also explained clearly the attributes of Allah and the nature of Revelation, and the doctrine of the Hereafter.
77. And it certainly is
A Guide and a Mercy
To those who believe.

78. Verily thy Lord will decide
Between them by His Decree: 3310
And He is Exalted in Might,
All-Knowing.

79. So put thy trust in Allah:
For thou art on (the Path Of) manifest Truth.

80. Truly thou canst not cause
The Dead to listen, nor
Canst thou cause the Deaf
To hear the call,
(Especially) when they
Turn back in retreat. 3311

81. Nor canst thou be a guide
To the Blind, (to prevent them)
From straying: only those
Wilt thou get to listen
Who believe in Our Signs,
So they submit.

82. And when the Word is 3312
Fulfilled against them (the unjust),
We shall bring forth from the earth

3310. Decree: hukm: the disputes between rival sects can only be settled by the Decree of Allah,—(1) in the form of a Revelation, as was done by the Qur-ān, or (2) by the logic of events, for hundreds of sects have been extinguished and forgotten in the course of time, and (3) in the Decree of Judgment in the Hereafter, when all jarring sects will at length see their errors.

3311. The Prophet’s responsibility was to preach and show the way. Men and women of goodwill had faith and accepted the Message. But he was not responsible for the obstinacy and perversity of men who turned away from Allah’s Signs and rejected the Truth.

3312. The Word: the Decree or Sentence, the Decision to end the respite and restore the true values of right and wrong in a new world: their cup of iniquity will then have been full.
5.27, A.82-85

A Beast to speak unto them\(^{3313}\)
Because mankind had no
Faith in our signs.

SECTION 7.

83. The Day We shall gather
Together from every people
A troop of those who reject
Our Signs, and they shall
Be kept in ranks,--

84. Until, when they come
(Before the Judgment-seat),
(Allah) will say: "Did ye
Reject My Signs, though ye\(^{3314}\)
Comprehended them not
In knowledge, or what
Was it ye did?"

85. And the Word will be\(^{3315}\)
Fulfilled against them, because
Of their wrong-doing, and they
Will be unable to speak
(In plea).

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3313. The Beast will be one of the Signs of the Last Days to come, before the present World passes away and the new World is brought into being. If *taklimuhum* is read instead of *tukallimuhum*, it would mean that the Beast would wound them.

3314. The charge against them will be: 'You had no knowledge, and yet you arrogantly rejected My Signs: is that true, or have you any plea in your defence?'

3315. There will be no plea, because the charge will be only too true. The Decree will be passed and executed.
86. See they not that We
Have made the Night
For them to rest in
And the Day to give\textsuperscript{3316}
Them light? Verily in this
Are Signs for any people
That believe!

87. And the Day that the Trumpet
Will be sounded—then will be
Smitten with terror those
Who are in the heavens,
And those who are on earth,
Except such as Allah will please
(To exempt): and all shall come
To Him in utter humility.\textsuperscript{3317}

88. Thou seest the mountains
And thinkest them firmly fixed:\textsuperscript{3318}
But they shall pass away
As the clouds pass away:
(Such is) the artistry of Allah,

\textsuperscript{3316}. Night, Day, Rest, and Light: both in the literal and the symbolic sense. Any one with a scrap of faith or spiritual insight could see that the Night is blessing when used for rest and a curse when used to cover ignorance or sin; and that the Day is for work and enlightenment, and its misuse is gross ingratitude to Allah. Or, understand Truth and practise Righteousness while it is yet Light and the Message of Allah is here to guide you: for there comes the Night when Endeavour will cease and there will be no room for Repentance.

\textsuperscript{3317}. Arrogance will flee with Ignorance, and Self will see itself in its true place—that of humility and lowliness—when the scales of ignorance fall from its eyes.

\textsuperscript{3318}. This is so in the present phase of phenomenal things, both literally and figuratively. There seems nothing more firm or fixed or permanent than the “eternal hills”: yet when the new order of things comes and the new World is brought into being, they will be as flimsy and unsubstantial as clouds. So, in the revaluation of things in the Hereafter persons or things or ideas that seem so great and so firmly established now will pass away like mere fancies and give way to the Reality of Allah.
Who disposes of all things\textsuperscript{3319}
In perfect order: for He is
Well acquainted with all that ye do.

89. If any do good, he will
Have better than it.
And they will be secure
From terror that Day.

90. And if any do evil,
Their faces will be thrown
Headlong into the Fire:\textsuperscript{3320}
“Do ye receive a reward
Other than that which ye
Have earned by your deeds?”\textsuperscript{3321}

91. For me, I have been
Commanded to serve the Lord\textsuperscript{3322}
Of this City. Him Who has
Sanctified it and to Whom

\textsuperscript{3319} Atqana: to arrange or dispose of things with art, or so as to obtain the most perfect results. The present phenomenal world and the Future that is to be, all have a definite object and purpose in the Plan of Allah, Who knows perfectly what we are, what we do, what we think, and what we need. Who can praise His artistry enough?

\textsuperscript{3320} Headlong: it may be that the very things of which we were proudest, which we considered foremost in our present order of the world, will be the first to go into the Fire, as they are but the window-dressing (=faces) of Evil.

\textsuperscript{3321} There will be no punishment except such as has been deserved by actual conduct in the present life of probation.

\textsuperscript{3322} The Lord of this City. This was spoken in Makkah say about the 5th year before the Hijrat, when the holy Prophet and his adherents were being persecuted as enemies to the cult of Makkah. So far from being against the true spirit of the holy City of Makkah, it was actually in furtherance of that spirit, which had been overlaid by the idolatries and abominations of the Pagan Quraish. They are told that the new Teaching is from the Lord of Makkah itself, the One True God, Who had sanctified it in the time of Abraham. Lest they should think that it was a local or tribal or narrow cult, it is added that He is not only Lord of this City, but Lord of the Worlds, “to Whom belong all things”. It is a universal message; but how sad it would be if the Makkans, among whom it came first, were to reject it?
(Belong) all things:
And I am commanded
To be of those who bow
In Islam to Allah’s Will,—

92. And to rehearse the Qur-ân:\textsuperscript{3323}
And if any accept guidance,
They do it for the good
Of their own souls,
And if any stray, say:
“I am only a Warner”.

93. And say: “Praise be to Allah,
Who will soon show you\textsuperscript{3324}
His Signs, so that ye
Shall know them:” and thy Lord
Is not unmindful
Of all that ye do.\textsuperscript{3325}

\textsuperscript{3323} The duty of the Prophet and his adherents was, first, to accept Islam and become themselves shining examples of Allah’s grace and mercy, as they in fact were, and secondly to preach that message and spread that Light to all around. It was not for them to force it on unwilling people: for any who rejected it would find their own spiritual loss in such rejection. But they must clearly warn them of the consequences.

\textsuperscript{3324} In a few years after that, many wonderful things happened that removed the doubts of the doubters and confirmed the faith of the Believers. They showed how the logic of events proved the true mission of the holy Prophet. Other things some minds may not be able to grasp. But the logic of events is for all to see.

\textsuperscript{3325} Trials and tribulations, persecution and exile, and the patient endurance and constancy with which they were met by the Believers—all are known to Allah and will be credited to their account.
INTRODUCTION TO SūRAT Al-Qāsas, 28.

This Sūra continues the subject of Revelation and its reception by those to whom it is sent. But it emphasises new points: how the recipient of inspiration is prepared for his high destiny, even in the growth of his ordinary life, and how the rejection of Allah’s Message by groups of men or by individuals is caused by overweening arrogance or avarice. The plight of those who reject the Truth is contrasted with the reward of the righteous.

With the possible exception of a few verses, it belongs to the late Makkan period, just preceding the Hijrat.

Summary.—Pharaoh was arrogant and unjust, but Allah’s Plan was to strengthen the weak: in infancy Moses was prepared for his mission; in youth he trusted in the Lord and was guided; in his exile he found help and love; and when he was called, he was supported by Allah (xxviii. 1-42).

So was the holy Prophet Muhammad fed spiritually by Allah’s Grace, and his Revelation was recognised by those who knew the earlier Revelations: it came to an old and sacred Centre, to warn those seduced by this world’s life (xxviii. 43-60).

The Future is with those who repent, have faith, and do good: for all Mercy and Truth are with Allah (xxviii. 61-75).

But men puffed up with wealth, like Qārūn, will come to an evil end, while the lowly and the righteous will attain Allah’s Mercy (xxviii. 76-88).
Al-Qasas, or the Narration.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. َثَ َسَمَ مِم. ٣٣٢٦

2. These are Verses of the Book
That makes (things) clear. ٣٣٢٧

3. We rehearse to thee some
Of the story of Moses
And Pharaoh in Truth,
For people who believe. ٣٣٢٨

4. Truly Pharaoh elated himself
In the land and divided
Its people into sections,٣٣٢٩
Depressing a group
Among them: their sons he slew,
But he kept alive their females:
For he was indeed
An evil-doer.

3326. See n. 3137 to xxvi. 1.

3327. See n. 3138 to xxvi. 2.

3328. The part of the story of Moses told here is how Moses and his mother were guided in the child’s infancy, that even as he grew up, he might be prepared for his high destiny; how in youth he trusted Allah in the most awkward situations and sought His help; how he fled into exile, and yet found love and support because of his well-doing: and how, when he was called to his mission, he received Allah’s favour, which defeated all the plots of his enemies. Thus Allah’s Plan works continuously in the web of events. Those who have faith will thus see the hand of Allah in everything and welcome the light that comes to them by Revelation. With such a Faith there is no room for Chance or blind Fate.

3329. For a king or ruler to make invidious distinctions between his subjects, and specially to depress or oppress any particular class of his subjects, is a dereliction of his kingly duties, for which he is responsible to Allah. Pharaoh and his clique were intoxicated with pride of race and pride of material civilization, and grievously oppressed the Israelites. Pharaoh decreed that all male sons born to his Israelite subjects should be killed, and the females kept alive for the pleasure of the Egyptians. Moses was saved in a wonderful way, as related further.
5. And We wished to be Gracious to those who were Being depressed in the land,\textsuperscript{3330} To make them leaders (in faith) And make them heirs,

6. To establish a firm place For them in the land, And to show Pharaoh, Hāmān,\textsuperscript{3331} And their hosts, what they were Dreading from them.\textsuperscript{3332}

7. So We sent this inspiration To the mother of Moses: “Suckle (thy child), but when Thou hast fears about him, Cast him into the river,\textsuperscript{3333} But fear not nor grieve: For We shall restore him To thee, and We shall make Him one of Our messengers.”

\textsuperscript{3330.} What Pharaoh wished was to crush them. But Allah’s Plan was to protect them as they were weak, and indeed to make them custodians and leaders in His Faith, and to give them in inheritance a land “flowing with milk and honey”. Here they were established in authority for such time as they followed Allah’s Law. As regards Pharaoh and his ministers and hosts, they were to be shown that they would suffer, at the hands of the Israelites, the very calamities against which they were so confidently taking precautions for themselves.

\textsuperscript{3331.} Hāmān was evidently Pharaoh’s minister, not to be confounded with a Hāmān who is mentioned in the Old Testament (Esther iii.1), as a minister of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) King of Persia, the same who invaded Greece, and ruled from B.C. 485 to 464.

\textsuperscript{3332.} Pharaoh was trying to kill the Israelites. Instead, the Plagues of Egypt, invoked by Moses, killed thousands of Egyptians (vii. 133, and notes 1091-92), because “they were steeped in arrogance,—a people given to sin.” In pursuing the Israelites in their flight, Pharaoh and his army were themselves overwhelmed in the sea.

\textsuperscript{3333.} The Egyptian midwives had orders to kill Israelite babies. Moses was saved from them, and his mother nursed the infant at her breast herself. But when the danger of discovery was imminent, she put him into a chest or basket, and floated him on the river Nile. It flowed by the King’s palace, and the chest with the baby was picked up, as related further on. The mother had no cause to fear or grieve afterwards, as the child grew up under her tender care and became afterwards one of the Prophets of Allah.
8. Then the people of Pharaoh
Picked him up (from the river):
(It was intended) that (Moses)
Should be to them an adversary
And a cause of sorrow:
For Pharaoh and Hāmān
And (all) their hosts were
Men of sin.

9. The wife of Pharaoh said:
"(Here is) a joy of the eye,
For me and for thee:
Slay him not. It may be
That he will be of use
To us, or we may adopt
Him as a son." And they
Perceived not (what they
Were doing).

10. And the heart
Of the mother of Moses
Became void:
She was going almost to
Disclose his (case), had We
Not strengthened her heart
(With faith), so that she
Might remain a (firm) believer.

3334. This was the Plan of Providence: that the wicked might cast a net round themselves by fostering the man who was to bring them to naught and be the instrument of their punishment,—or (looking at it from the other side) that Moses might learn all the wisdom of the Egyptians in order to expose all that was hollow and wicked in it.

3335. He was a darling to look at, and Pharaoh had apparently no son, but only a daughter, who afterwards shared his throne. This is on the supposition that the Pharaoh was Thothmes.

3336. In all life Providence so orders things that Evil is defeated by its own weapons. Not only is it defeated, but it actually, though unwittingly, advances the cause of Good!

3337. The mother's heart felt the gaping void at parting from her son; but her Faith in Allah's Providence kept her from betraying herself.
11. And she said to the sister Of (Moses), "Trace him". So she (the sister) watched him From a distance And they perceived not.

12. And We ordained that he Refused suck at first, until (His sister came up And) said: "Shall I Point out to you the people Of a house that will nourish And bring him up for you"\textsuperscript{3338} And take care of him."

13. Thus did We restore him To his mother, that her eye Might be comforted, that she Might not grieve, and that She might know that the promise Of Allah is true: but Most of them do not know.\textsuperscript{3339}

SECTION 2.

14. When he reached full age, And was firmly established\textsuperscript{3340} (In life), We bestowed on him Wisdom and knowledge: for thus Do We reward those Who do good.

3338. For you: i.e., on your behalf. Thus Moses got the benefit of his mother’s milk as well as the prestige and the opportunities of being brought up in the royal family, with the best of teachers to teach him Egyptian wisdom. In addition, there was the comfort to his mother.

3339. Allah’s promise is always true, but short-sighted people, if they are a little thwarted in their plan, do not understand that Allah’s wisdom, power, and goodness are far more comprehensive than any little plans which they may form.

3340. Full age may be taken to be mature youth, say between 18 and 30 years of age. By that time a person is fully established in life: his physical build is completed, and his mental and moral habits are formed. In this case, as Moses was good at heart,
15. And he entered the City
   At a time when its people
   Were not watching: and he
   Found there two men fighting,—
   One of his own people,\(^{(a)}\)
   And the other, of his foes.
   Now the man of his own
   People appealed to him
   Against his foe, and Moses
   Struck him with his fist
   And killed him.
   He said: “This is a work
   Of Satan: for he
   is
   An enemy that manifestly
   Misleads!”\(^{*}\)

16. He prayed: “O my Lord!
   I have indeed wronged my soul!
   Do Thou then forgive me!”
   So (Allah) forgave him: for He
   Is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

\(*\) = true and loyal to his people, and obedient and just to those among whom he lived, he
   was granted wisdom and knowledge from on high, to be used for the times
   of conflict which were coming for him. His internal development being complete, he now goes out
   into the outer world, where he is again tried and proved, until he gets
   his divine
   commission.

\(^{(a)}\) That may have been either the time of the noontime siesta, when all business
   is suspended even now in Egypt, or the time of night, when people are usually asleep.
   The latter is more probable, in view of verse 18 below. But there is also another
   suggestion. A guest in a Palace is not free to wander about at will in the plebeian quarters
   of the City at all sorts of hours, and this applies even more to an inmate of the Palace
   brought up as a son. Moses was therefore visiting the City privately and eluding the
   guards. His object may have been to see for himself how things were going on; perhaps
   he had heard that his people were being oppressed, as we may suppose that he had
   retained contact with his mother.

\(^{3342}\) His object was apparently to strike him so as to release the Israelite, not to
   kill the Egyptian. In fact he killed the Egyptian. This was unfortunate in more ways than
   one. His visit to the City was clandestine; he had taken the side of the weaker and
   despised party; and he had taken the life of an Egyptian. He was full of regrets and
   repentance, and he prayed to Allah, and obtained Allah’s forgiveness.
17. He said: “O my Lord! For that Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace on me, never Shall I be a help To those who sin!” 3343

18. In the morning, he was In the city, fearful And vigilant when Behold, the man who had, The day before, sought his help Called aloud for his help (Again). Moses said to him: “Thou art truly, one Erring manifestly.” 3344

19. Then, when he was about to lay His hands on their enemy 3345 The man said: “O Moses! Is it thy intention to slay me As thou slewest a man

3343. He takes a conscious and solemn vow to dedicate himself to Allah, and to do nothing that may in any way assist those who were doing wrong. This was his general idea, but no plan had yet shaped itself in his mind, until a second catastrophe brought matters to a head, and he was plunged in adventure.

3344. The man was an Israelite. But Moses was himself in a distracted mood, for the reasons given in n. 3342 above, and he was exasperated at this public appeal to him again.

3345. When Moses considered further that the Egyptian was unjust, he was going to intervene again, when he received a double warning, one from the Egyptian who was fighting, and the other from some man (Israelite or Egyptian) who was friendly to him, as explained below. We may suppose that after the first day’s fight, there had been a great deal of talk in the bazars, both among Israelites and Egyptians. Probably the Israelites were elated at finding a champion—perhaps more elated than they should have been, and in a provocative mood, which deserved Moses’s rebuke. Probably the Egyptians had discussed who this new champion was, and had already apprised the Palace, to which Moses had not dared to return.
Yesterday? Thou only desire
To become a tyrant
In the land, and not to be
One who sets things right!"\(^{3346}\)

20. And there came a man,
Running, from the furthest end\(^{3347}\)
Of the City. He said:
"O Moses! the Chiefs
Are taking counsel together
About thee, to slay thee:
So get thee away, for I
Do give thee sincere advice."

21. He therefore got away therefrom,\(^{3348}\)
Looking about, in a state
Of fear. He prayed:
"O my Lord! save me
From people given to wrong-doing."

SECTION 3.

22. Then, when he turned his face
Towards (the land of) Madyan,\(^{3349}\)
He said: "I do hope
That my Lord will show me
The smooth and straight Path."

\(^{3346}\) The Egyptian saw the situation. He said to Moses: 'Are you going to do the same with me? You are nothing but a bully! And you talk of setting things right! That is what you should do if you were true to yourself!'

\(^{3347}\) Apparently rumours had reached the Palace, a Council had been held, and the death of Moses had been suggested.

\(^{3348}\) Moses saw that his position was now untenable, both in the Palace and in the City, and indeed anywhere in Pharaoh's territory. So he suffered voluntary exile. But he did not know where to go to. His mind was in a state of agitation. But he turned to Allah and prayed. He got consolation, and felt that after all it was no hardship to leave Egypt, where there was so much injustice and oppression.

\(^{3349}\) East of Lower Egypt, for about 300 miles, runs the Sinai Peninsula, bounded on the south by the Gulf of Suez, and on the north by what was the Isthmus of Suez, now cut by the Suez Canal. Over the Isthmus ran the highroad to Palestine and Syria, but a fugitive could not well take that road, as the Egyptians were after him. If he could, =
23. And when he arrived at
The watering (place) in Madyan, 3350
He found there a group
Of men watering (their flocks),
And besides them he found
Two women who were keeping
Back (their flocks). He said:
“What is the matter with you?”
They said: “We cannot water
(Our flocks) until the shepherds
Take back (their flocks):
And our father is
A very old man.” 3351

24. So he watered (their flocks)
For them; then he turned back
To the shade, and said:
“O my lord!
Truly am I

= after crossing the Isthmus, plunge into the Sinai desert, east or south-east, he would be
in the Midianite territory, where the people would be Arabs and not Egyptians. He
turned thither, and again prayed to Allah for guidance.

3350. The first thing that a wanderer in a desert would make for would be an oasis
where he could get water from a spring or well, the shade of trees against the scorching
sun, and some human company. The Midianite watering place was probably a deep well,
as surface springs are rare in sandy deserts, where the water level is low, unless there
was a hill from which issued a spring.

3351. Here is a pretty little idyll, told in the fewest and most beautiful words
possible. Moses arrives at an oasis in the desert, weary and travel worn, with his mind
full of anxiety and uncertainty owing to his recent experiences in Egypt. He was thirsty
and would naturally seek water. At the well or spring he found shepherds (or perhaps
goat-herds) watering their flocks. As a stranger it was not for him to thrust himself among
them. He waited under the shade of a tree until they should finish. He noticed two
damsels, also waiting with their flocks, which they had come to water. His chivalry was
roused. He went at once among the goat-herds, made a place for the flocks of the
damsels, gave them water, and then resumed his place in the shade. They were modest
maidens, and had given him in three Arabic words the key of the whole situation. ‘Abu­
na shakheten Kabirun our father is a very old man, and therefore cannot come to water
the flocks; we therefore do the work; we could not very well thrust ourselves among these
men.’
In (desperate) need
Of any good
That Thou dost send me!”... 3352

25. Afterwards one of the (damsels)
Came (back) to him, walking
Bashfully. She said: “My father
Invites thee that he may
Reward thee for having watered2353
(Our flocks) for us.” So when
He came to him and narrated
The story, he said:
“Fear thou not: (well) hast thou
Escaped from unjust people.” 3354

3352. The maidens are gone, with smiles on their lips and gratitude in their hearts. What were the reflections of Moses as he returned to the shade of the tree? He returned thanks to Allah for the bright little vision which he had just seen. Had he done a good deed? Precious was the opportunity he had had. He had slaked his thirst. But he was a homeless wanderer and had a longing in his soul, which he dared not put into words. Those shepherds were no company for him. He was truly like a beggar in desperate need. For any little good that came his way, he was grateful. But what was this?—this vision of a comfortable household, presided over by an old man rich in flocks and herds, and richer still in two daughters, as modest as they were beautiful? Perhaps he would never see them again! But Allah was preparing another surprise for him.

3353. Scarcely had he rested, when one of the damsels came back, walking with bashful grace! Modestly she gave her message. ‘My father
is grateful for what you did
for us. He invites you, that he may thank you personally, and
at least give some return
for your kindness.’

3354. Nothing could have been more welcome than such a message, and through such a messenger. Moses went of course, and saw the old man. He found such a well-ordered patriarchal household. The old man was happy in his daughters and they in him. There was mutual confidence. They had evidently described the stranger to him in terms which made his welcome a foregone conclusion. On the other hand Moses had allowed his imagination to paint the father in something of the glorious colours in which his daughters had appeared to him like an angelic vision. The two men got to be friends at once. Moses told the old man his story,—who he was, how he was brought up, and what misfortunes had made him quit Egypt. Perhaps the whole household, including the daughters, listened breathlessly to his tale. Perhaps their wonder and admiration were mingled with a certain amount of pity—perhaps with some more tender feeling in the case of the girl who had been to fetch him. In any case the stranger had won his place in their hearts. The old man, the head of the household, assured him of hospitality and safety under his roof. As one with a long experience of life he congratulated him on his escape. ‘Who would live among unjust people? It is as well you are free of them!’
26. Said one of the (damsels):

"O my (dear) father! engage Him on wages: truly the best Of men for thee to employ is The (man) who is strong and trusty." 3356

27. He said: "I intend to wed One of these my daughters To thee, on condition that Thou serve me for eight years;3357 But if thou complete ten years, It will be (grace) from thee. But I intend not to place Thee under a difficulty: Thou wilt find me, Indeed, if Allah wills, One of the righteous." 

3355. A little time passes. A guest after all cannot stay for ever. They all feel that it would be good to have him with them permanently. The girl who had given her heart to him had spoken their unspoken thoughts. Why not employ him to tend the flocks? The father was old, and a young man was wanted to look after the flocks. And—there may be other possibilities.

3356. Strong and trusty: Moses had proved himself to be both, and these were the very qualities which a woman most admires in the man she loves.

3357. A little time passed, and at length the father broached the subject of marriage. It was not for the fugitive to suggest a permanent tie, especially when, in the wealth of this world, the girl's family was superior, and they had an established position, while he was a mere wanderer. The father asked if he would marry one of the daughters and stay with them for at least eight years, or if he liked, ten years, but the longer term was at his option. If he brought no dower, his service for that period was more than sufficient in lieu of dower. The particular girl intended was no doubt tacitly settled long before, by the mutual attraction of the young hearts themselves. Moses was glad of the proposal, and accepted it. They ratified it in the most solemn manner, by appealing to Allah. The old man, knowing the worth of his son-in-law, solemnly assured him that in any event he would not take advantage of his position to be a hard task-master or to insist on anything inconsistent with Moses's interests, should a new future open out to him. And a new and glorious future was awaiting him after his apprenticeship.
28. He said: "Be that (the agreement) 
   Between me and thee: 
   Whichever of the two terms 
   I fulfil, let there be 
   No injustice to me. 
   Be Allah a witness 
   To what we say."3358

SECTION 4.

29. Now when Moses had fulfilled 
The term, and was travelling3359 
With his family, he perceived 
A fire in the direction 
Of Mount Tur. He said 
To his family: "Tarry ye; 
I perceive a fire; I hope 
To bring you from there 
Some information, or a burning 
Firebrand, that ye may 
Warm yourselves."3360

3358. In patriarchal society it was not uncommon to have a marriage bargain of this kind conditional on a certain term of service. In this case the episode conveys two lessons. 
(1) A man destined to be a messenger of Allah is yet a man, and must pass through the ups and downs of life like any other man: only he will do it with more grace and distinction than other men. (2) The beautiful relations in love and marriage may themselves be a preparation for the highest spiritual destiny that may await a Messenger of Allah. A woman need not necessarily be a snare and a temptation: she may be the understanding help-mate that the Lady Khadija was to the holy Prophet.

3359. The episode in the desert, full of human interest, now closes, and we come to the threshold of the sacred Call to the divine ministry of Moses. Here we may compare this passage with that in xxvii. 7-14 and previous passages. In this passage we are told, after reference to Moses's preparation for his high destiny, of the particular sin of Arrogance and Sacrilege of which Pharaoh was guilty (xxviii 38-39), how it was punished, and with what instruments in the hands of Moses and Pharaoh. The notes on the earlier passage should be read, as explanations already given need not now be repeated.

3360. Note how the transition is effected from the happy life of Moses to the new prophetic mission.
30. But when he came
To the (Fire), he was called
From the right bank
Of the valley, from a tree\(^{3361}\)
In hallowed ground:
“O Moses! Verily
I am Allah, the Lord
Of the Worlds...

31. “Now do thou throw thy rod!”
But when he saw it
Moving (of its own accord)
As if it had been a snake,
He turned back in retreat,
And retraced not his steps:
“O Moses!” (it was said),
“Draw near, and fear not:
For thou art of those
Who are secure.\(^{3362}\)

32. “Thrust thy hand into
Thy bosom, and it will
Come forth white without stain
(Or harm), and draw thy hand
Close to thy side

\(^{3361}\) We are to suppose the appearance of a bush burning but not consumed (Exod. iii. 2), a device adopted by the Scottish Church in its armorial bearings. Scotland apparently took that emblem and motto (\textit{Nec tamen consumebatur}, 'nevertheless it was not consumed') from the Synod of the Reformed Church of France, which had adopted it in 1583. (I am indebted for this information to the Rev. D.Y. Robertson, Chaplain of the Church of Scotland in Simla). The real explanation of the Burning Bush will be found in xxvii. 8, n. 3245.

\(^{3362}\) The verbal meaning is: 'you have nothing to fear from what appears to be a snake: it is a snake, not for you, but for Pharaoh.' But there is a deeper meaning besides. Moses had now been called to a higher prophetic mission. He had to meet the hatred of the Egyptians and circumvent their trickery and magic. He had now the security of Faith: in all dangers and difficulties Allah would guide and protect him, for he was actually in Allah's service, one of the Elect.
(To guard) against fear.  
Those are the two credentials  
From thy Lord to Pharaoh  
And his Chiefs: for truly  
They are a people  
Rebellious and wicked."

33. He said: "O my Lord!  
I have slain a man  
Among them, and I fear  
Lest they slay me.  
And my brother Aaron—  
He is more eloquent in speech  
Than I: so send him  
With me as a helper,  
To confirm (and strengthen) me:  
For I fear that they may  
Accuse me of falsehood."

34. "And my brother Aaron—  
He is more eloquent in speech  
Than I: so send him  
With me as a helper,  
To confirm (and strengthen) me:  
For I fear that they may  
Accuse me of falsehood."

35. He said: "We will certainly  
Strengthen thy arm through  
Thy brother, and invest you both  
With authority, so they  
Shall not be able to  

3363. Literally, "draw thy wing close to thy side, (away) from fear". When a bird is frightened, it ruffles its wings and prepares to fly away, but when it is calm and composed, it sits with its wings drawn close to its sides, showing a mind secure from danger. Cf. also n. 2550 to xx. 22.

3364. It is not that Moses is not reassured from all fear on account of the apparent snake which his rod had become, or from the sacred and unfamiliar surroundings in which he found himself. On this point his heart has been completely assured. But he is still new to his mission, and the future is obscure to his mind. Pharaoh was after him, to take his life, and apparently with good cause, because one of Pharaoh's men had been slain at his hands. And now he is commanded to go to Pharaoh and rebuke him and his Chiefs. The inner doubts and difficulties of his human mind he frankly lays before his Lord, and asks for a little human and visible support, which is granted him at once, viz.; the help of his brother Aaron.

3365. To touch you: to approach you anywhere near, in the wonders and Signs that you will show them under the divine authority with which you are invested.
Touch you: with Our Signs
Shall ye triumph,—you two
As well as those
Who follow you.” 3366

36. When Moses came to them
With Our Clear Signs, they said:
"This is nothing but sorcery, 3367
Faked up: never did we
Hear the like among our fathers
Of old!" 3368

37. Moses said: “My Lord
Knows best who it is
That comes with guidance
From Him and whose End
Will be best in the Hereafter:
Certain it is that
The wrong-doers will not
prosper.” 3369

3366. The potency of Allah’s Light is such that its divine rays reach the humblest of those who seek after Him. The Prophets can certainly work wonders, but their sincere followers in Faith can do so also in their own spheres. Wonders may appeal to people, but they are not the highest signs of Allah’s workings, and they are around us every day in our lives.

3367. This is what Moses was thinking of when he had said: “They may accuse me of falsehood”. To accuse the purest Truth of lying is a favourite trick of those whose chief stock-in-trade is deception and sorcery and catching the attention of the vulgar by arts adapted to their ignorant minds!

3368. ‘As to this higher talk of the worship of the One true God, why, our ancestors have worshipped power and patronage, as concentrated in Pharaoh, from the most ancient times!’

3369. Cf. vi. 135. The only argument in such a case is an appeal to Allah, and to the ultimate Future. Both of these appeals require Faith. But even if you do not rely on anything so high, you can see that Falsehood or evils crystallised in ancestral customs are not going to do any one any good.
38. Pharaoh said: "O Chiefs! No god do I know for you but myself: therefore, O Hāmān! light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a lofty Palace, that I may mount up to the god of Moses: but as far as I am concerned, I think (Moses) is a liar!"

39. And he was arrogant and insolent in the land, beyond reason,-he and his hosts: they thought that they would not have to return to Us!"

40. So We seized him and his hosts, and We flung them into the sea: now behold what was the end of those who did wrong!

41. And We made them (but) leaders inviting to the Fire; and on the Day of Judgment no help shall they find.

3370. Pharaoh claimed, himself, to be God,-not only one god among many, but the only god: "I am your Lord Most High": lxix. 24. At any rate he did not see why his people should worship anyone but him.

3371. I understand his speech to his minister Hāmān to be sarcastic. But some commentators have taken it very seriously and imagined that he actually thought of reaching the heavens by building lofty towers.

3372. They did not believe in the Hereafter. They did not understand that every deed must have its inevitable consequence, good, or evil, unless the Grace of Allah intervenes to save us from ourselves!

3373. Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the sea in their pursuit of the Israelites: see vii. 130-136. They are the type of men who lead—only to Destruction. They invite, not to Peace and Happiness, but to the Fire of Wrath, mutual Envy, and Hatred.
42. In this world We made
A Curse to follow them.\(^{3374}\)
And on the Day of Judgment
They will be among
The loathed (and despised).

SECTION 5.

43. We did reveal to Moses
The Book after We had
Destroyed the earlier generations,
(To give) Insight to men,
And Guidance and Mercy,
That they might receive
admonition.\(^{3375}\)

44. Thou wast not on the Western\(^{3376}\)
Side when We decreed
The Commission to Moses,

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\(^{3374}\) Power and patronage may be lauded by sycophants and selfish place-hunters; but when they are misused, and when their exposure causes their fall, they suffer ignominy even in this life. If they manage to escape exposure while alive, it often happens that they are found out after their death, and the curses of many generations follow those whose oppressions and wrong-doing spoiled the fair face of Allah's earth. But even this is nothing to the true Punishment that will come in the Hereafter. There, true values will be restored, and some of the highest and mightiest will be in the lowest depths of degradation.

\(^{3375}\) After the destruction of the Pharaonic Tyranny and other similar Tyrannies before them, Allah began a new age of Revelation, the age of Moses and his Book. Humanity began as it were with a clean slate again. It was a full Revelation (or \(\text{Shar} ' \text{at} \)) which may be looked at from three points of view: (1) as Light or Insight for men, so that they should not grope in darkness; (2) as a Guide to show them the Way, so that they should not be misled into wrong Paths; and (3) as a Mercy from Allah, so that by following the Way they may receive Allah's Forgiveness and Grace. In vi. 91, we have a reference to Light and Guidance in connection with the Revelation of Moses, and in vi. 154 we have a reference to Guidance and Mercy in the same connection. Here all three are combined, with the substitution of \(\text{Bas} \text{air} \) for \(\text{N} \text{ur} \). \(\text{Bas} \text{air} \) is the plural of \(\text{Bas} \text{rat} \), and may also be translated Proofs, as I have done in vi. 104 Cf. also vii. 203, n. 1175, where the word is translated "Lights".

\(^{3376}\) The Sinai Peninsula is in the north-west corner of Arabia. But the reference here is, I think, to the western side of the valley of Tūwā. Mount Tur, where Moses received his prophetic commission, is on the western side of the valley.
Nor wast thou a witness
(Of those events).

45. But We raised up (new)
Generations, and long were the
ages\textsuperscript{3377}
That passed over them;
But thou wast not a dweller
Among the people of Madyan,
Rehearsing Our Signs to them;
But it is We Who send
Messengers (with inspiration).\textsuperscript{3378}

46. Nor wast thou at the side
Of (the Mountain of) Tür
When We called (to Moses).
Yet (art thou sent)
As a Mercy from thy Lord,
To give warning to a people\textsuperscript{3379}
To whom no warner had come
Before thee: in order that
They may receive admonition.

47. If (We had) not (sent thee
To the Quraish),—in case
A calamity should seize them
For (the deeds) that their hands
Have sent forth, they might say:

\textsuperscript{3377}. That is, there were many generations that passed between Moses and the holy Prophet. Yet he knew by inspiration of the events of those times. Even if he had lived then, he could not have known the events that took place among the Midianites, except by inspiration, as he did not dwell among them.

\textsuperscript{3378}. 'Though thou wast not among the Midianites, Our inspiration has told thee of the momentous events that took place among them when Moses was with them. This is itself a Sign that should make thy people understand.'

\textsuperscript{3379}. This people was the Quraish. 'Though thou didst not see how Moses was invested with the prophetic office at Mount Tür, thou hast had similar experience thyself, and We have sent thee to the Quraish to warn them of all their sins, and to repent and come into the Faith'.
"Our Lord! why didst Thou not send us a messenger? We should then have followed the Signs and been amongst those who believe!"

48. But (now), when the Truth has come to them from Ourselves, they say, "Why are not (Signs) sent to him, like those which were sent to Moses?"

Do they not then reject (The Signs) which were formerly sent to Moses? They say: "Two kinds of sorcery, each assisting the other!"

And they say: "For us, we reject all (such things)!"

3380. Now that a warner has come among them with all the authority that previous Messengers possessed and with all the knowledge which can only come by divine inspiration, they have no excuse left whatever. They cannot say, "No warner came to us." If any evil comes to them, as the inevitable result of their ill-deeds, they cannot blame Allah and say that they were not warned. Cf. xx. 134.

3381. When a Revelation is sent to them, in the Qur'an, adapted to all their needs and the needs of the time they live in, they hark back to antiquity. The holy Prophet was in many respects like Moses, but the times in which he lived were different from the times of Moses, and his age did not suffer from the deceptions of sorcery, like that of Moses. The remedies which his age and future ages required (for his Message was universal) were different. His miracle of the Qur'an was different and most permanent than the Rod and the Radiant-White Hand of Moses. But supposing that the Quraysh had been humoured in their insincere demands, would they have believed? Did they believe in Moses? They were only put up by the Jews to make objections which they themselves did not believe in.

3382. Moses was called a sorcerer by the Egyptians, and the wonderful words of the Qur'an were called sorcery by the Quraysh. As the Qur'an confirmed the Message of Moses, the Quraysh objectors said that they were in collusion. The Quraysh did not believe in Allah's Revelation at all.
49. Say: “Then bring ye
A Book from Allah,
Which is a better Guide
Than either of them,
That I may follow it!
(Do), if ye are truthful!”

50. But if they hearken not\[3383\]
To thee, know that they
Only follow their own lusts:
And who is more astray
Than one who follows his own
Lusts, devoid of guidance
From Allah? For Allah guides not
People given to wrong-doing.

SECTION 6.

51. Now have We brought them
The Word in order that
They may receive admonition.\[3384\]

52. Those to whom We sent
The Book before this,—they
Do believe in this (Revelation);

53. And when it is recited
To them, they say: “We
Believe therein, for it is
The Truth from our Lord:

---3383. They were challenged to produce something better, to be a guide in life. But as they could not, it was evident that their objections were fractious. They were only following their own selfish lusts of power, monopoly, and exploitation of the poor and ignorant. How can such people receive guidance?

3384. Before this the Quraish might have said that the Word of Allah had come to the Hebrews in their tongue or in Greek, which was used by the Hebrews in the time of Jesus. Now that Word is brought to their own doors, in their own Arabic tongue, by a man of their own race and family. Surely they have no excuse now for remaining strangers to the higher moral and spiritual law.
Indeed we have been Muslims (Bowing to Allah's Will) From before this."\textsuperscript{3385}

54. Twice will they be given\textsuperscript{3386}
Their reward, for that they Have persevered, that they avert Evil with Good, and that They spend (in charity) out of What We have given them.

55. And when they hear vain talk, They turn away therefrom And say: "To us our deeds, And to you yours;\textsuperscript{3387} Peace be to you: we Seek not the ignorant."

56. It is true thou wilt not Be able to guide every one\textsuperscript{3388} Whom thou lovest; but Allah Guides those whom He will And He knows best those Who receive guidance.

\textsuperscript{3385}. There were Christians and Jews who recognised that Islam was a logical and natural development of Allah's revelations as given in earlier ages, and they not only welcomed and accepted Islam, but claimed, and rightly, that they had always been Muslims. In that sense Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus had all been Muslims.

\textsuperscript{3386}. Their credit is twofold, in that before they knew Islam, they followed the earlier Law in truth and sincerity, and when they were offered Islam, they readily recognised and accepted it, suffered in patient perseverance for its sake, and brought forth the fruits of righteousness.

\textsuperscript{3387}. The righteous do not encourage idle talk or foolish arguments about things sacred. If they find themselves in some company in which such things are fashionable, they leave politely. Their only rejoinder is: "We are responsible for our deeds, and you for yours; we have no ill-will against you; we wish you well, and that is why we wish you to know of the knowledge we have received; after that knowledge you cannot expect us to go back to the Ignorance which we have left."

\textsuperscript{3388}. The immediate occasion for this was the death of Abū Talib, an uncle whom the holy Prophet loved dearly and who had befriended and protected him. The Prophet was naturally anxious that he should die in the profession of the true Faith, but the pagan =
57. They say: "If we were
To follow the guidance with thee,
We should be snatched away\textsuperscript{3389}
From our land." Have We not
Established for them a secure
Sanctuary, to which are brought
As tribute fruits of all kinds,—
A provision from Ourselves?
But most of them understand not.

58. And how many towns
We destroyed, which exulted
In their life (of ease and plenty)!
Now those habitations of theirs,
After them, are deserted,—
All but a (miserable) few!
And We are their heirs!\textsuperscript{3390}

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\textsuperscript{3389} Some Quraish said: "We see the truth of Islam, but if we abandon our people, we shall lose our hold on the land, and other people will dispossess us." The answer is twofold, one literal and the other of deeper import. (1) 'Your land? Why, the sanctuary of Makkah is sacred and secure because Allah has made it so. If you obey Allah's Word, you will be strengthened, not weakened.' (2) 'Makkah is the symbol of the Fortress of Spiritual Well-being. The Fruit of every Deed comes or should come as a tribute to Spiritual Well-being. What are you afraid of? It is Allah's Fortress. The more you seek Allah, the stronger you are in the Fortress.'

\textsuperscript{3390} A life of ease and plenty is nothing to boast of. Yet peoples or cities or civilisations grow insolently proud of such things. There were many such in the past, which are now mere names! Their very sites are deserted in most cases, or buried in the debris of ages. India is full of such sites nearly everywhere. The sites of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro are the most ancient hitherto unearthed in India, and they are themselves in layers covering centuries of time! And how many more there may be, of which we do not know even names! Fatehpur-Sikri was a magnificent ruin within a single generation. And there are thousands of Qasbas once flourishing and now reduced to small villages or altogether deserted. But God is merciful and just. He does not destroy or degrade a people until they have had full opportunities of turning in repentance to Him and they have deliberately rejected His Law and continued in the practice of iniquity.
59. Nor was thy Lord the one
To destroy a town until
He had sent to its Centre
A messenger, rehearsing to them
Our Signs; nor are We
Going to destroy a population
Except when its members
Practise iniquity.

60. The (material) things which
Ye are given are but
The conveniences of this life
And the glitter thereof;\(^{3391}\)
But that which is with Allah
Is better and more enduring:
Will ye not then be wise?

SECTION 7.

61. Are (these two) alike?—
One to whom We have made
A goodly promise, and who
Is going to reach its (fulfilment),\(^{3392}\)
And one to whom We have
Given the good things
of this Life,
but who, on the Day
Of judgment, is to be among
Those brought up (for
punishment)?

\(^{3391}\) The good things of this life have their uses and serve their convenience. But they are fleeting and their value is infinitely lower than that of Truth and Justice and Spiritual Well-being, the gifts which come as it were from Allah. No wise soul will be absorbed in the one and neglect the other, or will hesitate for a moment if it comes to be a choice between them.

\(^{3392}\) The two classes of people are: (1) those who have faith in the goodly promise of Allah to the righteous, and who are doing everything in life to reach the fulfilment of that promise, i.e., those who believe and work righteousness, and (2) those who are ungrateful for such good things in this life as Allah has bestowed on them, by worshipping wealth or power or other symbols or idols of their fancy, i.e., those who reject Faith and lead evil lives, for which they will have to answer in the Hereafter. The two classes are poles asunder, and their future is described below.
62. That Day (Allah) will
Call to them, and say:
“Where are My ‘partners’?—
Whom ye imagined (to be such)?”

63. Those against whom the charge \(^{3393}\)
Will be proved, will say:
“Our Lord! These are the ones
Whom we led astray:
We led them astray, as we
Were astray ourselves: we free
Ourselves (from them) to you.
It was not us they worshipped.” \(^{3394}\)

64. It will be said (to them):
“Call upon your ‘partners’
(For help)”: they will call
Upon them, but they will not
Listen to them; and they
Will see the Chastisement (before
them);

(How they will wish)
‘If only they had been
Open to guidance!’

65. That Day (Allah) will \(^{3395}\)
Call to them, and say:

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3393. This and the next verse are concerned with the examination of those who neglected truth and righteousness and went after the worship of false gods. These were the “partners” they associated with Allah. In so far as they were embodied in false or wicked leaders, the leaders will disown responsibility for them. ‘We ourselves went wrong, and they followed our example, because it suited them: they worshipped, not us, but their own lusts.’

3394. Cf. x. 28 False worship often names others, but really it is the worship of Self. The others whom they name will have nothing to do with them when the awful Penalty stands in the sight of both. Then each wrong-doer will have to look to his own case. The wicked will then realise the gravity of the situation and wish that they had accepted the true guidance of Allah’s Messengers.

3395. Now we come to the examination of those who rejected or persecuted Allah’s Messengers on the earth. It may be the same men as those mentioned in xxviii. 62-64, but this is a different count in the charge.
"What was the answer
Ye gave to the messengers?"

66. Then the arguments that day
Will be obscure to them.3396
And they will not be able
(Even) to question each other.

67. But any that (in this life)
Had repented, believed, and worked
Righteousness, haply
He shall be one of the
Successful.

68. Thy Lord does create and choose
As He pleases:3397 no choice
Have they (in the matter):
Glory to Allah! and far
Is He above the partners
They ascribe (to Him)!

69. And thy Lord knows all
That their hearts conceal
And all that they reveal.3398

70. And He is Allah: there is
No god but He. To Him
Be praise, at the first
And at the last:

3396. In their utter confusion and despair their minds will be blank. The past will seem to them unreal, and the present unintelligible, and they will not even be able to consult each other, as every one’s state will be the same.

3397. As He pleases: according to His own Will and Plan. Allah is not dependent on other people for advice or help. He has no partners. All creation is an act of His Will, and no one can direct Him how or why certain things should be, because He is supreme in wisdom and knowledge. He chooses His messengers also by His own unfettered choice. Inspiration or spiritual knowledge and dignity cannot be judged of by our relative or temporary standards. Worldly greatness or even wisdom do not necessarily go with spiritual insight.

3398. Men may form all sorts of vain wishes or conceal their designs. But Allah’s Will is supreme, and nothing can withstand its fulfilment.
For Him is the Command,
And to Him shall ye 
(All) be brought back.

71. Say: See ye? If Allah
Were to make the Night\(^3399\)
Perpetual over you to the Day
Of Judgment, what god
Is there other than Allah,
Who can give you light?
Will ye not then hearken?

72. Say: See ye? If Allah
Were to make the Day
Perpetual over you to the Day
Of Judgment, what god
Is there other than Allah,
Who can give you a Night
In which ye can rest?
Will ye not then see?\(^3400\)

3399. In the physical world the Night and the Day are both blessings, the one for 
rest and the other for work, and the alternation itself is one of the mercies of Allah, 
and none but He can give us these blessings. If we were perpetually resting, or screened 
from the light, our faculties would be blunted and we should be worse than dead. If we 
were perpetually working, we should be tired, and we should also be dead 
in another 
way. This daily miracle keeps us alive and prepares us, in this our probationary life, for 
our final destiny in the Hereafter. In the same way our spiritual strivings require 
periodical alternations of rest in the form of attention to our temporal concerns: hence 
the justification of a good and pure life on the plane of this earth also. Also, in the 
world's history, there are periods when a living messenger stimulates intense spiritual 
activity, and periods when it is comparatively quiescent (the so-called Dark Ages); but 
both are examples of the working of Allah's Plan of wisdom and mercy. But this applies 
only up to the Day of Judgment. After that we shall be on another plane altogether.

3400. In verse 71 was mentioned a “perpetual Night,” for which the faculty of 
“hearkening” was appropriate, as all light was shut out. In this verse a perpetual Day 
is mentioned, for which the faculty of “seeing” is appropriate. Through many doors can 
the higher knowledge enter our souls. Shall we not use each of them as the occasion 
demands?
73. It is out of His Mercy
That He has made for you
Night and Day,—that ye
May rest therein, and that
Ye may seek of His Grace;—
And in order that ye
May be grateful.

74. The Day that He will\textsuperscript{3401}
Call on them, He will say:
“Where are My ‘partners’?
Whom ye imagined (to be such)?”

75. And from each people
Shall We draw a witness,\textsuperscript{3402}
And We shall say: “Produce
Your Proof”: then shall they
Know that the Truth is with
Allah (alone), and the (lies)
Which they invented will
Leave them in the lurch.\textsuperscript{3403}

SECTION 8.

76. Qārūn was doubtless,\textsuperscript{3404}
Of the people of Moses; but
He acted insolently towards them:

\textsuperscript{3401} C.f. xxviii. 62 above. The reminiscence of the words closes and rounds off the argument of this Section.

\textsuperscript{3402} C.f. iv. 41. The Prophet from each People or Nation will bear testimony that he preached the true gospel of Unity, and the People who rejected him will be asked to show the Proof or authority on which they rejected him: C.f. ii. 111.

\textsuperscript{3403} In that new world, all the fancies or lies, which had been invented in this world of reflected or relative truths mixed with illusions, will have vanished, and left those in the lurch who relied on them. C.f. vi. 24.

\textsuperscript{3404} Qārūn is identified with the Korah of the English Bible. His story is told in Num. xvi. 1-35. He and his followers, numbering 250 men, rose in rebellion against Moses and Aaron, on the ground that their position and fame in the congregation entitled them to quality in spiritual matters with the Priests,—that they were as holy as any, and they claimed to burn incense at the sacred Altar reserved for the Priests. They had an
Such were the treasures We had bestowed on him, that Their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men.

Behold, his people said to him: “Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches).

77. “But seek, with the (wealth) Which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, Nor forget thy portion in this World: but do thou good, As Allah has been good To thee, and seek not (Occasions for) mischief in the land: For Allah loves not those Who do mischief.”

= exemplary punishment: “the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods: they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.”

3405. Qărūn’s boundless wealth is described in the Midrashim, or the Jewish compilations based on the oral teachings of the Synagogues, which however exaggerate the weight of the keys to be the equivalent of the load of 300 mules!

3406. Usbat: a body of men, here used indefinitely. It usually implies a body of 10 to 40 men. The old-fashioned keys were big and heavy, and if there were hundreds of treasure-chests, the keys must have been a great weight. As they were travelling in the desert, the treasures were presumably left behind in Egypt, and only the keys were carried. The disloyal Qărūn had left his heart in Egypt, with his treasures.

3407. That is, ‘spend your wealth in charity and good works. It is Allah Who has given it to you, and you should spend it in Allah’s cause. Nor should you forget the legitimate needs of this life, as misers do, and most people become misers who think too exclusively of their wealth’. If wealth is not used properly, there are three evils that follow: (1) its possessor may be a miser and forget all claims due to himself and those about him; (2) he may forget the higher needs of the poor and needy, or the good causes which require support; and (3) he may even misspend on occasions and cause a great deal of harm and mischief. Apparently Qărūn had all three vices.
78. He said: “This has been given to me because of a certain Knowledge which I have.”

Did he not know that Allah had destroyed, before him, (Whole) generations,—which were Superior to him in strength and greater in the amount (Of riches) they had collected? But the wicked are not Called (immediately) to account For their sins.

79. So he went forth among His people in the (pride Of his worldly) glitter. Said those whose aim is The Life of this World: “Oh! that we had the like Of what Qarun has got! For he is truly a lord Of mighty good fortune!”

80. But those who had been granted (True) knowledge said: “Alas For you! The reward of Allah (In the Hereafter) is best

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3408. He was so blind and arrogant that he thought that his own merit, knowledge, and skill or cleverness had earned him his wealth, and that now, on account of it, he was superior to everybody else and was entitled to ride rough-shod over them. Fool!—he was soon pulled up by Allah.

3409. Even Qarun was given a long run of enjoyment with his fabulous wealth before he had to be removed for the mischief he was doing.

3410. When he was in the hey-day of his glory, worldly people envied him and thought how happy they would be if they were in his place. Not so the people of wisdom and discernment. They knew a more precious and lasting wealth, which is described in the next verse.
For those who believe
And work righteousness: but this
None shall attain, save those
Who steadfastly persevere
(in good).”

81. Then We caused the earth\textsuperscript{3411}
To swallow up him and
His house; and he had not
(The least little) party
To help him against Allah,
Nor could he defend himself.

82. And those who had envied
His position the day before
Began to say on the morrow:
“Ah! It is indeed Allah
Who enlarges the provision\textsuperscript{3412}
Or restricts it, to any
Of His servants He pleases!

3411. See n. 3404 above. Cf. also xvi. 45 and n. 2071. Besides the obvious moral
in the literal interpretation of the story, that material wealth is fleeting and may be a
temptation and a cause of fall, there are some metaphorical implications that occur to
me. (1) Material wealth has no value in itself, but only a relative and local value. (2)
In body he was with Israel in the wilderness, but his heart was in Egypt with its fertility
and its slavery. Such is the case of many hypocrites, who like to be seen in righteous
company but whose thoughts, longings, and doing are inconsistent with such company.
(3) There is no good in this life but comes from Allah. To think otherwise is to set up
a false god besides Allah. Our own merits are so small that they should never be the
object of our idolatry. (4) If Qārūn on account of his wealth was setting himself up
in rivalry with Moses and Aaron, he was blind to the fact that spiritual knowledge is far
above any little cleverness in worldly affairs. Mob-leaders have no position before spiritual
guides.

3412. Provision or Sustenance, both literally and figuratively: wealth and material
things in life as well as the things that sustain our higher and spiritual faculties. The
rabble, that admired Qārūn’s wealth when he was in worldly prosperity, now sees the
other side of the question and understands that there are other gifts more precious and
desirable, and that these may actually be withheld from men who enjoy wealth and
worldly prosperity. In fact it is false prosperity, or no prosperity in the real sense of the
word, which is without spiritual well-being.
Had it not been that Allah
Was gracious to us, He
Could have caused the earth
To swallow us up! Ah!
Those who reject Allah
Will assuredly never prosper.”

SECTION 9.

83. That Home of the Hereafter
We shall give to those
Who intend not high-handedness
Or mischief on earth: And the End is (best)
For the righteous.

84. If any does good, the reward
To him is better than
His deed; but if any
Does evil, the doers of evil
Are only punished (to the extent)
Of their deeds.

85. Verily He Who ordained
The Qur-ān for thee, will bring

3413. *High-handedness* or arrogance, as opposed to submission to the Will of Allah, Islam. *Mischief*, as opposed to doing good, bringing forth fruits of righteousness. It is the righteous who will win in the end.

3414. A good deed has its sure reward, and that reward will be better than the merits of the doer. An evil deed may be forgiven by repentance, but in any case will not be punished with a severer penalty than justice demands.

3415. That is: order in His wisdom and mercy that the Qur-ān should be revealed, containing guidance for conduct in this life and the next, and further ordered that it should be read out and taught and its principles observed in practice. It is because of this teaching and preaching that the holy Prophet was persecuted, but as Allah sent the Qur-ān, He will see that those who follow it will not eventually suffer, but be restored to happiness in the Place of Return, for which see next note.
Thee back to the Place\textsuperscript{3416} Of Return. Say: “My Lord Knows best who it is That brings true guidance, And who is in manifest error.”\textsuperscript{3417}

86. And thou hadst not expected That the Book would be Sent to thee except as A Mercy from thy Lord:\textsuperscript{3418} Therefore lend not thou support In any way to those Who reject (Allah’s Message).\textsuperscript{3419}

87. Let no one turn you away From Allah’s revelations After they have been revealed To thee: and invite (men)

\textsuperscript{3416} Place of Return: (1) a title of Makkah; (2) the occasion when we shall be restored to the Presence of our Lord. It is said that this verse was revealed at \textit{Juhfa}, on the road from Makkah to Madinah, a short distance from Makkah on the Hijrat journey. The Prophet was sad at heart, and this was given as consolation to him. If this was the particular occasion, the general meaning would refer the Place of Return to the occasion of the Resurrection, when all true values will be restored, however they may be disturbed by the temporary interference of evil in this life.

\textsuperscript{3417} Allah knows the true from the false, and if we are persecuted for our Faith and attacked or spoken ill of because we dare to do right, our surest refuge is an appeal to Allah rather than to men.

\textsuperscript{3418} Revelation and the preaching of Truth may in the beginning bring persecution, conflict, and sorrow in its train; but in reality it is the truest mercy from Allah, which comes even without our expecting it, as it came to the Prophets without their consciously asking for it. This is proved in the history of Moses related in this Sûra, and the history of the holy Prophet which it is meant to illustrate.

\textsuperscript{3419} If Allah’s Message is unpalatable to evil and is rejected by it, those who accept it may (in their natural human feelings) sometimes wonder that such should be the case, and whether it is really Allah’s Will that the conflict which ensues should be pursued. Any such hesitation would lend unconscious support to the aggressions of evil and should be discarded. The servant of Allah stands forth boldly as His \textit{Mujâhid} (fighter of the good fight), daring all, and knowing that Allah is behind him.
To thy Lord and be not
Of the company of those
Who join gods with Allah.\[3420\]

88. And call not, besides Allah,
On another god. There is
No god but He. Everything
(That exists) will perish
Except His Face.\[3421\]
To Him belongs the Command,
And to Him will ye
(All) be brought back.

3420. The soldier of Allah, having taken up the fight against evil, and knowing that he is in touch with the true Light, never yields an inch of ground. He is always to the fore in inviting others to his own ranks, but he himself refuses to be with those who worship anything else but Allah.

3421. This sums up the lesson of the whole Sūra. The only Eternal Reality is Allah. The whole phenomenal world is subject to flux and change and will pass away, but He will endure for ever.
This Sūra is the last of the series begun with S. xvii, in which the growth of the man as an individual is considered, especially illustrated by the way in which the great Prophets were prepared for their work and received their mission, and the nature of Revelation in relation to the environments in which it was promulgated. (See Introduction to S. xvii). It also closes the sub-series beginning with S. xxvi, which is concerned with the spiritual Light, and the reactions to it at certain periods of religious history. (See Introduction to S. xxvi.)

The last Sūra closed with a reference to the doctrine of the Ma'ād, or final Return of man to Allah. This theme is further developed here, and as it is continued in the subsequent three Sūras, it forms a connecting link between the present series and those three Sūras.

In particular, emphasis is laid here on the necessity of linking actual conduct with the reception of Allah's revelation, and reference is again made to the stories of Noah, Abraham, and Lot among the Prophets, and the stories of Midian, Ād, Thamūd, and Pharaoh among the rejecters of Allah's Message. This world's life is contrasted with the real Life of the Hereafter.

Chronologically the main Sūra belongs to the late Middle Makkan period, but the chronology has no significance except as showing how clearly the vision of the Future was revealed long before the Hijrat, to the struggling Brotherhood of Islām.

Summary.—Belief is tested by trial in life and practical conduct: though Noah lived 950 years, his people refused Faith, and Abraham's generation threatened to burn Abraham (xxix. 1-27).

Lot's people not only rejected Allah's Message but publicly defied him in sin; the Ād and the Thamūd had intelligence but misused it, and Qārūn, Pharaoh, and Hāmān perished for their overweening arrogance: they found their worldly power as frail as a spider's web (xxix. 28-44).

The Qur-ān as a revelation stands on its own merits and is a Sign: it teaches the distinction between Right and Wrong, and shows the importance and excellence of the Hereafter (xxix. 45-69).
Al-‘Ankabūt, or the Spider.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M. 3422

2. Do men think that
They will be left alone
On saying, “We believe”, 3423
And that they will not
Be tested?

3. We did test those
Before them, and Allah will
Certainly know 3424 those who are
True from those who are false.

4. Do those who practise
Evil think that they
Will outstrip Us?
Evil is their judgment! 3425

3422. We are asked to contrast, in our present life the real inner life against the outer life, and learn from the past about the struggles of the soul which upholds Allah’s Truth, against the environment of evil, which resists it, and to turn our thoughts to the Ma‘ād, or man’s future destiny in the Hereafter.

3423. Mere lip profession of Faith is not enough. It must be tried and tested in the real turmoil of life. The test will be applied in all kinds of circumstances, in individual life and in relation to the environment around us, to see whether we can strive constantly and put Allah above Self. Much pain, sorrow, and self-sacrifice may be necessary, not because they are good in themselves, but because they will purify us, like fire applied to a goldsmith’s crucible to burn out the dross.

3424. The word “know” is used here more in the sense of testing than of acquiring knowledge. Allah is All-Knowing: He needs no test to increase His own knowledge, but the test is to burn out the dross within ourselves, as explained in the last note.

3425. If the enemies of Truth imagine that they will “be first” by destroying Truth before it takes root, they are sadly at fault, for their own persecution may help to plant Allah’s Truth more firmly in men’s hearts.
5. For those whose hopes are in the meeting with Allah, the Term (appointed) By Allah is surely coming: And He hears and knows (All things).

6. And if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls: For Allah is free of all needs from all creation.

7. Those who believe and work righteous deeds,—from them shall We blot out all misdeeds that they have committed, and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds.

3426. The men of Faith look forward to Allah. Their quest is Allah, and the object of their hopes is the meeting with Allah. They should strive with might and main to serve Him in this life, for this life is short, and the Term appointed for their probation will soon be over.

3427. The Term (ajal) may signify: (1) the time appointed for death, which ends the probation of this life; (2) the time appointed for this life, so that we can prepare for the Hereafter; the limit will soon expire. In either case the ultimate meaning is the same. We must strive now and not postpone anything for the future. And we must realise and remember that every prayer we make to Allah is heard by Him, and that every unspoken wish or motive of our heart, good or bad, is known to Him, and goes to swell our spiritual account.

3428. All our striving ensues to our own spiritual benefit. When we speak of serving Allah, it is not that we confer any benefit on Him. For He has no needs, and is independent of all His Creation. In conforming to His Will, we are seeking our own good, as in yielding to evil we are doing harm to ourselves.

3429. In striving to purify our Faith and our Life, we are enabled to avoid the consequences of our misdeeds for Allah will forgive any evil in our past, and help to the attainment of a Future based on the best of what we have done rather than on the poor average of our own merits. The atonement or expiation is by Allah's Mercy, not by our merits or the merits or sacrifice of anyone else.
8. We have enjoined on man Kindness to parents: but if They (either of them) strive (To force) thee to join With Me (in worship) Anything of which thou hast No knowledge, obey them not. Ye have (all) to return To Me, and I will Tell you (the truth) Of all that ye did.

9. And those who believe And work righteous deeds, Them shall We admit To the company of the Righteous.

10. Then there are among men Such as say, “We believe In Allah”; but when they suffer Affliction in (the cause of) Allah, They treat men’s oppression As if it were the Wrath Of Allah! And if help Comes (to thee) from thy Lord,

3430. That is, no certainty. In matters of faith and worship, even parents have no right to force their children. They cannot and must not hold up before them any worship but that of the One True God.

3431. Children and parents must all remember that they have all to go before Allah’s tribunal, and answer, each for his own deeds. In cases where one set of people have lawful authority over another set of people (as in the case of parents and children), and the two differ in important matters like that of Faith, the latter are justified in rejecting authority: the apparent conflict will be solved when the whole truth is revealed to all eyes in the final Judgment.

3432. The picking up again of the words which began verse 7 above shows that the same subject is now pursued from another aspect. The striving in righteous deeds will restore fallen man to the society of the Righteous.
They are sure to say, 3433
"We have (always) been
With you!" Does not Allah
Know best all that is
In the hearts of all Creation!

11. And Allah most certainly knows
Those who believe, and as certainly
Those who are Hypocrites. 3434

12. And the Unbelievers say
To those who believe:
"Follow our path, and we
Will bear (the consequences) 3435
Of your faults." Never
In the least will they
Bear their faults: in fact
They are liars!

13. They will bear their own
Burdens, and (other) burdens
Along with their own, 3436

3433. Cf. ix. 56, and other passages where the cunning of the Hypocrites is exposed.
The man who turns away from Faith in adversity and only claims the friendship of the
Faithful when there is something to be gained by it, is worthy of a double condemnation:
first because he rejected Faith and Truth, and secondly because he falsely pretended to
be of those whom he feared or hated in his heart. But nothing in all creation is concealed
from Allah.

3434. Cf. xxix. 3 above. The general opposition between Truth and Falsehood is now
brought down to the specific case of the Hypocrites, who are against the Faith militant
but swear friendship with it when it seems to be gaining ground. The argument is rounded
off with the next two verses.

3435. Besides the hypocrite there is another type of man who openly scoffs at Faith.
'Take life as we take it,' he says; 'we shall bear your sins.' As if they could! Each soul
bears its own burdens, and no one else can bear them. The principle also applies to the
type of man who preaches vicarious atonement, for, if followed to its logical conclusion,
it means both injustice and irresponsibility, and puts quite a different complexion on the
nature of sin.

3436. Besides the burden of their own infidelity, they will bear the burden of
deluding others with falsehood.
And on the Day of Judgment
They will be called to account
For their falsehoods.

SECTION 2.

14. We did send Noah
To his people, and he tarried
Among them a thousand years\textsuperscript{3437}
Less fifty: but the Deluge
Overwhelmed them while they
(Persisted in) sin.

15. But We saved him
And the Companions
Of the Ark, and We made
The (Ark) a Sign
For all Peoples!

16. And (We also saved)
Abraham: behold, he said\textsuperscript{3438}
To his people, “Serve Allah
And fear Him: that
Will be best for you—
If ye understand!

\textsuperscript{3437} The story of Noah and his Flood is not told here. It is told in other places; e.g., see xi. 25-48 or xxvi. 105-22. It is only referred to here to point out that Noah's period lasted a long time, 950 years. (Cf. Gen. ix. 28-29, where his whole age is declared to have been 950 years, of which 350 years were after the Flood). In spite of this long period, his contemporaries failed to listen, and they were destroyed. But the story of the Ark remains an everlasting Sign and Warning to mankind—a Sign of deliverance to the righteous and of destruction to the wicked.

\textsuperscript{3438} The story of Abraham has been told in various phases in different passages. The ones most germane to the present passage are: xxi. 51-72 (his being cast into the fire and being saved from it); and xix. 41-49 (his voluntary exile from the home of his fathers). Here the story is not told but is referred to in order to stress the following points; (1) Abraham’s people only responded to his preaching by threatening to burn him (xxix. 16-18, 24); (2) evil consorts with evil but will have a rude awakening (xxix. 25); (3) the good adhere to the good, and are blessed (xxix. 26-27). Note that the passage xxix. 19-23 is a parenthetical comment, though some Commentators treat a portion of it as part of Abraham's speech.
17. "For ye do worship idols besides Allah, and ye invent falsehood. The things that ye worship besides Allah have no power to give you sustenance: then seek ye sustenance from Allah. Serve Allah, and be grateful to Him: to Him ye will return."

18. "And if ye reject (the Message), so did generations before you: and the duty of the messenger is only to preach publicly (And clearly)."

19. See they not how Allah originates creation, then repeats it: truly that is easy for Allah.

20. Say: "Travel through the earth and see how Allah did originate creation; so will Allah produce a later creation: for Allah has power over all things.

3439. **Sustenance:** in the symbolic as well as the literal sense. Seek from Allah all that is necessary for your upkeep and development, and for preparing you for your future Destiny. Lay all your hopes in Him and in no one else. Dedicate yourselves to His worship. He will give you all that is necessary for your growth and well being, and you should show your gratitude to Him by conforming your will entirely to His.

3440. The originating of creation is the creation of primeval matter. The repetition of the process of creation goes on constantly, for at every moment new processes are being called into being by the creative power of Allah, and according to His Laws. And the final creation as far as man is concerned will be in the Ma'ad, when the whole world as man sees it will be entirely newly created on a different plane. As far as Allah is concerned, there is nothing final,—no first and last, for He is infinite. He was before our First and will be after our Last.

3441. **Travel through the earth:** again, literally as well as symbolically. If we actually go through this wide earth, we shall see the wonderful things in His Creation—the Grand Canyon and the Niagaras in America, beautiful harbours like that at Sydney in Australia,
21. “He punishes whom He pleases, 
   And He grants mercy to whom 
   He pleases, and towards Him 
   Are ye turned.”

22. “Not on earth nor in heaven 
   Will ye be able (fleeing) 
   To frustrate (His Plan), 
   Nor have ye, besides Allah, 
   Any protector or helper.”

SECTION 3.

23. Those who reject the Signs 
   Of Allah and the Meeting 
   With Him (in the Hereafter),— 
   It is they who shall despair 
   Of My mercy: it is they, 
   Who will (suffer) 
   A most grievous Chastisement

= mountains like Fujiyama, the Himalayas, and Elburz in Asia, the Nile with its wonderful cataracts in Africa, the Fiords of Norway, the Geyser of Iceland, the city of the midnight sun in Tromsoe, and innumerable wonders everywhere. But wonders upon wonders are disclosed in the constitution of matter itself, the atom, and the forces of energy, as also in the instincts of animals, and the minds and capacities of man. And there is no limit to these things. Worlds upon worlds are created and transformed every moment, within and presumably beyond man’s vision. From what we know we can judge of the unknown.

3442. I think ilaihi tuqlabun is better translated “towards Him are ye turned” than “towards Him will be your return”, as it implies not only the return of man to Allah in the Hereafter (turja’un in verse 17 above) but also the fact explained in verse 22 that man’s needs are always to be obtained from Allah: man cannot frustrate Allah’s designs, and can have no help or protection except from Allah: man has always to face Allah, whether man obeys Allah or tries to ignore Allah. Man will never be able to defeat Allah’s Plan. According to His wise Will and Plan, He will grant His grace or withhold it from man.

3443. The emphasis is on “they” (ulâika). It is only the people who ignore or reject Allah’s Signs and reject a Hereafter, that will find themselves in despair and suffering. Allah’s Mercy is open to all, but if any reject His Mercy, they must suffer.
24. So naught was the answer of (Abraham's) people except that they said: "Slay him or burn him." But Allah did save him from the Fire.\textsuperscript{3444} Verily in this are Signs for people who believe.

25. And he said: "For you, ye have taken (for worship) Idols besides Allah, out of mutual love and regard\textsuperscript{3445} between yourselves in this life; but on the Day of Judgment ye shall disown each other and curse each other: and your abode will be the Fire, and ye shall have none to help."

26. But Lut believed him:\textsuperscript{3446} He said: "I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise."

3444. See xxi. 66-70. Abraham was cast into the fire, but he was unhurt, by the grace of Allah. So righteous people suffer no harm from the plots of the wicked. But they must leave the environment of evil even if they have to forsake their ancestral home, as Abraham did.

3445. In sin and wickedness there is as much log-rolling as in politics. Evil men humour each other and support each other; they call each other's vice by high-sounding names. They call it mutual regard or friendship or love; at the lowest, they call it toleration. Perhaps they flourish in this life by such arts. But they deceive themselves, and they deceive each other. What will be their relations in the Hereafter? They will disown each other when each has to answer on the principle of personal responsibility. Each will accuse the others of misleading him, and they will curse each other. But there will then be no help, and they must suffer in the Fire.

3446. Lot was a nephew of Abraham. He adhered to Abraham's teaching and faith and accepted voluntary exile with him, for Abraham left the home of his fathers in Chaldaea and migrated to Syria and Palestine, where Allah gave him increase and prosperity, and a numerous family, who upheld the flag of Unity and the Light of Allah.
27. And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained Among his progeny Prophethood\(^3447\)
And Revelation, and We Granted him his reward In this life; and he will be In the Hereafter Of the Righteous.\(^3448\)

28. And (remember) Lüt: behold, He said to his people: “Ye do commit lewdness, Such as no people in Creation\(^3449\) (Ever) committed before you.

29. “Do ye indeed approach men, And cut off the highway?\(^3450\) And practise wickedness (Even) in your councils?” But his people gave no answer But this: they said: “Bring us the Wrath of Allah If thou tellest the truth.”\(^3451\)

\(^{3447}\) Isaac was Abraham’s son and Jacob his grandson, and among his progeny was included Ismā’īl the eldest son of Abraham. Each of these became a fountain-head of Prophecy and Revelation, Isaac and Jacob through Moses, and Ismā’īl through the holy Prophet Muhammad. Jacob got the name of “Israel” at Bethel: Gen. 32:28; 35:10, and his progeny got the title of “The Children of Israel”.

\(^{3448}\) Cf. xxix. 9, and iv. 69, n. 586.

\(^{3449}\) Cf. vii. 80. A discreet reference is made to their unspeakable crimes, which were against the laws of all nature.

\(^{3450}\) They infested highways and committed their horrible crimes not only secretly, but openly and publicly, even in their assemblies. Some Commentators understand “cutting off the highway” to refer to highway robberies: this is possible, and it is also possible that the crimes in their assemblies may have been injustice, rowdiness, etc. But the context seems to refer to their own special horrible crime, and the point here seems to be that they were not ashamed of it and that they practised it publicly. Degradation could go no further.

\(^{3451}\) This is another instance of their effrontery, in addition to that mentioned in vii. 82: the two supplement each other. Here the point emphasised is that they did not believe in Allah or His Punishment, and dared Allah’s Prophet Lot to bring about the Punishment if he could. And it did come and destroy them.
30. He said: “O my Lord!
Help Thou me against people
Who do mischief!”

SECTION 4.

31. When Our Messengers came
To Abraham with the good news, They said: “We are indeed
Going to destroy the people
Of this township: for truly
They are wicked men.”

32. He said: “But there is Lūt there.” They said:
“We know well who
Is there: we will certainly
Save him and his following—
Except his wife: she is
Of those who lag behind!”

33. And when Our Messengers
Came to Lūt, he was
Grieved on their account,
And felt himself powerless
(To protect) them: but they said:
“Fear thou not, nor grieve:

3452. See xi. 69-76. The angels, who were coming on the mission to destroy the people who were polluting the earth with their crimes, called on their way on Abraham to give the good news of the birth of a son to him in his old age. When they told him their destination, he feared for his nephew who he knew was there. They reassured him and then came on to Lot.

3453. By translating “township” I imply the two neighbouring populations of Sodom and Gomorrah, who had already gone too far in their crime, their shamelessness, and their defiance, to profit by any mercy from Allah.

3454. She was not loyal to her husband. Tradition says that she belonged to the wicked people, and was not prepared to leave them. She had no faith in the mission either of her husband or of the angels who had come as his guests.

3455. This part of the story may be read in greater detail in xi. 77-83.
34. "For we are going to Bring down on the people Of this township a Punishment From heaven, because they Have been wickedly rebellious."

35. And We have left thereof An evident Sign For any people who (Care to) understand.

36. To the Madyan (people) (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. Then he said: "O my people! Serve Allah, and fear the Last Day: nor commit evil On the earth, with intent To do mischief."

37. But they rejected him: Then the mighty Blast Seized them, and they lay Prostrate in their homes By the morning.

3456. The Punishment was a rain of brimstone, which completely overwhelmed the Cities, with possibly an earthquake and a volcanic eruption (see xi. 82).

3457. The whole tract on the east side of the Dead Sea (where the Cities were situated) is covered with sulphureous salts and is deadly to animal and plant life. The Dead Sea itself is called in Arabic the Bahr Lût (the sea of Lot). It is a scene of utter desolation, that should stand as a Symbol of the Destruction that awaits Sin.

3458. The story of Shu'aib and the Madyan people is only referred to here. It is told in xi. 84-95. Their besetting sin was fraud and commercial immorality. Their punishment was a mighty Blast, such as accompanies volcanic eruptions. The point of the reference here is that they went about doing mischief on the earth, and never thought of the Ma'ād or the Hereafter, the particular theme of this Sūra. The same point is made by the brief references in the following two verses to the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and to Qārūn,
38. (Remember also) the Ād and the Thamūd (people). Clearly will appear to you from the traces of their buildings (Their fate): Satan made their deeds alluring to them, and kept them back from the Path, though they were keen-sighted.

39. (Remember also) Qārūn, Pharaoh, and Hāmān: there came to them Moses with Clear Signs but they behaved with insolence on the earth; yet they could not overreach (Us).

40. Each one of them We seized for his crime: of them, against some We sent a violent tornado (with showers).

= Pharaoh, and Hāmān, though the besetting sin in each case was different. The Midianites were a commercial people and trafficked from land to land; their frauds are well described as spreading “mischief on the earth”.

3459. For the Ād people see vii. 65-72, and n. 1040, and for the Thamūd, vii. 73-79, and n. 1043. The remains of their buildings show (1) that they were gifted with great intelligence and skill; (2) that they were proud of their material civilisation; and (3) their destruction argues how the greatest material civilisation and resources cannot save a People who disobey Allah’s moral law.

3460. They were so arrogant and self-satisfied, that they missed the higher purpose of life, and strayed clean away from the Path of Allah. Though their intelligence should have kept them straight, Evil made them crooked and led them and kept them astray.

3461. For Qārūn see xxviii. 76-82; Pharaoh is mentioned frequently in the Qur-ān, but he is mentioned in association with Hāmān in xxviii. 6; for their blasphemous arrogance and defiance of Allah see xxviii. 38. They thought such a lot of themselves, but they came to an evil end.

3462. For āḥāṣīb (violent tornado with showers of stones), see xvii. 68; this punishment as inflicted on the Cities of the Plain, of which Lot preached (liv. 34). Some Commentators think that this also applied to the Ād, but their punishment is described as by a violent and unseasonable cold wind (xli. 16; liv. 19 and lxix. 6), such as blows in sand-storms in the Ahqāf, the region of shifting sands which was in their territory.
Of stones); some were caught
By a (mighty) Blast;3463 some
We caused the earth3464
To swallow up; and some
We drowned (in the waters).3465
It was not Allah Who
Wronged them:
They wronged themselves.

41. The parable of those who
Take protectors other than Allah
Is that of the Spider,
Who builds (to itself)
A house; but truly
The flimsiest of houses3466

3463. For saihat (Blast) see xi. 67 and n. 1561, as also n. 1047 to vii. 78 and n. 1996 to xv. 73. This word is used in describing the fate of (1) the Thamūd (xi. 67); Madyan (xi. 94); the population to which Lūt preached (xv. 73); and the Rocky Tract (Hijr, xv. 83), part of the territory of the Thamūd; also in the Parable of the City to which came three Prophets, who found a single-believer (xxxvi. 29).

3464. This was the fate of Qārūn: see xxviii. 81. Cf. also xvi. 45 and n. 2071.

3465. This was the fate of the hosts of Pharaoh and Hāmān (xxviii. 40) as well as the wicked generation of Noah (xxvi. 120).

3466. The Spider’s house is one of the wonderful Signs of Allah’s creation. It is made up of fine silk threads spun out of silk glands in the spider’s body. There are many kinds of spiders and many kinds of spider’s houses. Two main types of houses may be mentioned. There is the tubular nest or web, a silk-lined house or burrow with one or two trap-doors. This may be called his residential or family mansion. Then there is what is ordinarily called a spider’s web, consisting of a central point with radiating threads running in all directions and acting as tie-beams to the quasi-circular concentric threads that form the body of the web. This is his hunting box. The whole structure exemplifies economy in time, material, and strength. If an insect is caught in the net, the vibration set up in the radiating threads is at once communicated to the spider, who can come and kill his prey. In case the prey is powerful, the spider is furnished with poison glands with which to kill his prey. The spider sits either in the centre of the web or hides on the under-side of a leaf or in some crevice, but he always has a single thread connecting him with his web, to keep him in telephonic communication. The female spider is much bigger than the male, and in Arabic the generic gender of ‘Ankabut is feminine.
Is the Spider’s house;—
If they but knew.

42. Verily Allah doth know
Of (every thing) whatever
That they call upon
Besides Him: and He is
Exalted (in power), Wise.

43. And such are the Parables
We set forth for mankind,
But only those understand them
Who have Knowledge.

44. Allah created the heavens
And the earth in truth;
Verily in that is a Sign
For those who believe.

3467. Most of the facts in the last note can be read into the Parable. For their thickness the spider’s threads are very strong from the point of view of relativity, but in our actual world they are flimsy, especially the threads of the gossamer spider floating in the air. So is the house and strength of the man who relies on material resources however fine or beautiful relatively; before the eternal Reality they are as nothing. The spider’s most cunning architecture cannot stand against a wave of a man’s hand. His poison glands are like the hidden poison in our beautiful worldly plans which may take various shapes but have seeds of death in them.

3468. The last verse told us that men, out of spiritual ignorance, build their hopes on flimsy unsubstantial things (like the spider’s web) which are broken by a thousand chance attacks of wind and weather or the actions of animals or men. If they cannot fully grasp their own good, they should seek His Light. To Him everything is known,—men’s frailty, their false hopes, their questionable motives, the false gods whom they enthrone in their midst, the mischief done by the neglect of Truth, and the way out for those who have entangled themselves in the snare of evil. He is All-Wise and is able to carry out all He wills, and they should turn to Him.

3469. Parables seem simple things, but their profound meaning and application can only be understood by those who seek knowledge and by Allah’s grace attain it.

3470. Cf. vi. 73 and n. 896. In all Allah’s Creation, not only is there evidence of intelligent Purpose, fitting all parts together with wisdom, but also of supreme Goodness and cherishing Care, by which all needs are satisfied and all the highest and truest cravings fulfilled. These are like beckoning signals to lead on those who pray and search in Faith.
SECTION 5.

45. Recite what is sent\(^{3471}\)
Of the Book by inspiration
To thee, and establish
Regular Prayer: for Prayer
Restrains from shameful
And evil deeds;
And remembrance of Allah
Is the greatest (thing in life)
Without doubt. And Allah knows
The (deeds) that ye do.

46. And dispute ye not
With the People of the Book,
Except in the best way,\(^{3472}\) unless
It be with those of them
Who do wrong\(^{3473}\)
But say, “We believe
In the Revelation which has
Come down to us and in that
Which came down to you;

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3471. The tilāwat of the Qur-ān implies: (1) rehearsing or reciting it, and publishing it abroad to the world; (2) reading it to ourselves; (3) studying it to understand it as it should be studied and understood (ii. 121); (4) meditating on it so as to accord our knowledge and life and desires with it. When this is done, it merges into real Prayer, and Prayer purges us of anything (act, plan, thought, motive, words) of which we should be ashamed or which would work injustice to others. Such Prayer passes into our inmost life and being, for then we realise the Presence of Allah, and that is true zikr (or remembrance), for remembrance is the bringing to mind of things as present to us which might otherwise be absent to us. And that is the greatest thing in life. It is subjective to us: it fills our consciousness with Allah. For Allah is in any case always present and knows all.

3472. Mere disputations are futile. In order to achieve our purpose as true standard-bearers for Allah, we shall have to find true common grounds of belief, as stated in the latter part of this verse, and also to show by our urbanity, kindness, sincerity, truth, and genuine anxiety, for the good of others, that we are not cranks or merely seeking selfish or questionable aims.

3473. Of course those who are deliberately trying to wrong or injure others will have to be treated firmly, as we are guardians of each other. With them there is little question of finding common ground or exercising patience, until the injury is prevented or stopped.
Our God and your God
Is One; and it is to Him
We submit (in Islam).”

47. And thus⁴⁷⁵ (it is) that We
Have sent down the Book
To thee. So the People
Of the Book believe therein,⁴⁷⁶
As also do some of these⁴⁷⁷
(Pagan Arabs): and none
But Unbelievers reject Our Signs.

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3474. That is, the religion of all true and sincere men of Faith is, or should be, one;
and that is the ideal of Islam.

3475. It is in this spirit that all true Revelation comes from Allah. Allah is One, and
His Message cannot come in one place or at one time to contradict His Message in
another place or at another time in spirit, though there may be local variations according
to the needs or understanding of men at any given time or place.

3476. The sincere Jews and Christians found in the holy Prophet a fulfilment of their
own religion. For the names of some Jews who recognised and embraced Islam, see n.
3227 to xxvi. 197. Among the Christians, too, the Faith slowly won ground. Embassies
were sent by the holy Prophet in the 6th and 7th years of the Hijrat to all the principal
countries round Arabia, viz., the capital of the Byzantine Empire (Constantinople), the
capital of the Persian Empire (Madāin), the Sasanian capital known to the West by the
Greek name of Ctesiphon, (about thirty miles south of modern Bagdād), Syria, Abyssinia,
and Egypt. All these (except Persia) were Christian countries. In the same connection
an embassy was also sent to Yamāma in Arabia itself (east of the Hijāz) where the Banū
Hanīfa tribe was Christian, like the Hārīth tribe of Najrān who voluntarily sent an
embassy to Madinah. All these countries except Abyssinia eventually became Muslim, and
Abyssinia itself has a considerable Muslim population now and sent some Muslim converts
to Madinah in the time of the Prophet himself. As a generalisation it is true that the
Jewish and the Christian peoples as they existed in the seventh century of the Christian
era have been mainly absorbed by Islam, as well as the lands in which they
predominated. Remnants of them built up new nuclei. The Roman Catholic Church
conquered new lands among the northern (Germanic) Pagans and the Byzantine Church
among the eastern (Slavonic) Pagans, and the Protestantism of the 16th century gave a
fresh stimulus to the main ideas for which Islam stands, viz., the abolition of priestcraft,
the right of private judgment, the simplification of ritual, and the insistence upon the
simple, practical, everyday duties of life.

3477. The Pagan Arabs also gradually came in until they were all absorbed in Islam.
48. And thou wast not (able) To recite a Book before This (Book came), nor art thou (Able) to transcribe it With thy right hand: In that case, indeed, would The talkers of vanities Have doubted.

49. Nay, here are Signs Self-evident in the hearts Of those endowed with knowledge: And none but the unjust Reject Our Signs.

50. Yet they say: “Why Are not Signs sent down To him from his Lord?”

3478. The holy Prophet was not a learned man. Before the Qur-ān was revealed to him, he never claimed to proclaim a Message from Allah. He was not in the habit of preaching eloquent truths as from a Book, before he received his Revelation, nor was he able to write or transcribe with his own hand. If he had had these worldly gifts, there would have been some plausibility in the charge of the talkers of vanities that he spoke not from inspiration but from other people’s books, or that he composed the beautiful verses of the Qur-ān himself and committed them to memory in order to recite them to people. The circumstances in which the Qur-ān came bear their own testimony to its truth as from Allah.

3479. “Knowledge” (‘ilm) means both power of judgment in discerning the value of truth and acquaintance with previous revelations. It implies both literary and spiritual insight. To men so endowed, Allah’s revelations and Signs are self-evident. They commend themselves to their hearts, minds, and understandings, which are typified in Arabic by the word ṣadr, “breast”.

3480. Cf. the last clause of verse 47 above. There the argument was that the rejection of the Qur-ān was a mark of Unbelief. Now the argument is carried a stage farther. Such rejection is also a mark of injustice, a deliberate perversity in going against obvious Signs, which should convince all honest men.
Say: "The Signs are indeed with Allah: and I am indeed a clear Warner." 3481

51. And is it not enough For them that We have Sent down to thee The Book which is rehearsed To them? Verily, in it Is Mercy and a Reminder To those who believe. 3482

SECTION 6.

52. Say: "Enough is Allah For a Witness between me And you: He knows What is in the heavens 3483 And on earth." And it is Those who believe in vanities And reject Allah, that Are the losers. 3484

3481. See last note. In the Qur-an, as said in verse 49, are Signs which should carry conviction to all honest hearts. And yet the Unbelievers ask for Signs! They mean some special kinds of Signs or Miracles, such as their own foolish minds dictate. Everything is possible for Allah, but Allah is not going to humour the follies of men or listen to their disingenuous demands. He has sent a Messenger to explain His Signs clearly, and to warn them of the consequences of rejection. Is it not enough?

3482. The perspicuous Qur-an, explained in detail by Allah's Messenger, in conjunction with Allah's Signs in nature and in the hearts of men, should be enough for all. It is mere fractious opposition to demand vaguely something more. Cf. also vi. 124, and n. 946.

3483. The test of a Revelation is whether it comes from Allah or not. This is made clear by the life and teachings of the Messenger who brings it. No fraud or falsehood can for a moment stand before Allah. All the most hidden things in heaven and earth are open before Him.

3484. If Truth is rejected, Truth does not suffer. It is the rejecters who suffer and perish in the end.
53. They ask thee
To hasten on the Punishment\(^{3485}\)
(For them): had it not been
For a term (of respite)
Appointed, the Punishment
Would certainly have come
To them: and it will
Certainly reach them,—
Of a sudden, while they
Perceive not!

54. They ask thee
To hasten on the Punishment:\(^{3486}\)
But, of a surety,
Hell will encompass
The rejecters of Faith!—

55. On the Day that
The Punishment shall cover them
From above them and
From below them,\(^{3487}\)
And (a Voice) shall say:
"Taste ye (the fruits)
Of your deeds"!\(^{3488}\)

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3485. Cf. xxii. 47 and n. 2826. The rejecters of Faith throw out a challenge out of bravado: "Let us see if you can hasten the punishment on us!" This is a vail taunt. Allah's Plan will take its course, and can neither be delayed nor hastened. It is out of His Mercy that He gives respite to sinners,—in order that they may have a chance of repentance. If they do not repent, the Punishment must certainly come to them—and on a sudden, before they perceive that it is coming! And then it will be too late for repentance.

3486. The challenge of the wicked for Punishment was answered in the last verse by reference to Allah's merciful Respite, to give chances of repentance. It is answered in this verse by an assurance that if no repentance is forthcoming, the Punishment will be certain and of an all-pervasive kind. Hell will surround them on all sides, and above them and below them.

3487. Cf. a similar phrase in vi. 65.

3488. This is not merely a reproach, but a justification of the Punishment. "It is you who brought it on yourselves by your evil deeds: blame none but yourselves. Allah's Mercy gave you many chances: His Justice has now overtaken you!"
56. O My servants who believe!
   Truly, spacious is My Earth: \(3489\)
   Therefore serve ye Me--
   (And Me alone)!
57. Every soul shall have
   A taste of death. \(3490\)
   In the end to Us
   Shall ye be brought back.
58. But those who believe
   And work deeds of righteousness--
   To them shall We give
   A Home in Heaven, \(3491\)
   Lofty mansions beneath which
   Flow rivers,--to dwell therein
   For aye;--an excellent reward
   For those who do (good)!--
59. Those who persevere in patience,
   And put their trust
   In their Lord and Cherisher.

3489. There is no excuse for any one to plead that he could not do good or was forced to evil by his circumstances and surroundings, or by the fact that he lived in evil times. We must shun evil and seek good, and Allah's Creation is wide enough to enable us to do that, provided we have the will, the patience, and the constancy to do it. It may be that we have to change our village or city or country; or that we have to change our neighbours or associates; or to change our habits or our hours, our position in life or our human relationships, or our callings. Our integrity before Allah is more important than any of these things, and we must be prepared for exile (or Hijrat) in all these senses. For the means with which Allah provides us for His service are ample, and it is our own fault if we fail.

3490. Cf. iii. 185, n. 491, and xxi. 35 and n. 2697. Death is the separation of the soul from the body when the latter perishes. We should not be afraid of death, for it only brings us back to Allah. The various kinds of hijrat or exile, physical and spiritual, mentioned in the last note, are also modes of death in a sense: what is there to fear in them?

3491. The goodly homes mentioned in xvi. 41 referred to this life, but it was stated there that the reward of the Hereafter would be greater. Here the simile of the Home is referred to Heaven: it will be beautiful; it will be picturesque, with the sight and sound of softly-murmuring streams; it will be lofty or sublime; and it will be eternal.
53. 60. How many are the creatures
That carry not their own sustenance? It is Allah
Who feeds (both) them and you:
For He hears and knows
(All things).

61. If indeed thou ask them
Who has created the heavens
And the earth and subjected
The sun and the moon
(To His Law), they will
Certainly reply, “Allah”.
How are they then deluded
Away (from the truth)?

62. Allah enlarges the sustenance
(Which He gives) to whichever
Of His servants He pleases;
And He (similarly) grants
By (strict) measure, (as He pleases):
For Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

3492. If we look at the animal creation, we see that many creatures seem almost helpless to find their own food or sustain their full life, being surrounded by many enemies. Yet in the Plan of Allah they find full sustenance and protection. So does man. Man’s needs—as well as helplessness—are by many degrees greater. Yet Allah provides for him as for all His creatures. Allah listens to the wish and cry of all His creatures and He knows their needs and how to provide for them all. Man should not therefore hesitate to suffer exile or persecution in Allah’s Cause.

3493. Cf. xxiii. 84-89. “Them” in both passages refers to the sort of inconsistent men who acknowledge the power of Allah, but are deluded by false notions into disobedience of Allah’s Law and disregard of Allah’s Message.

3494. Cf. xiii. 2, and xxiii. 85. The perfect order and law in Allah’s universe should be Signs to man’s intelligence to get his own will into tune with Allah’s Will; for only so can he hope to attain his full development.

3495. Cf. xiii. 26. Unequal gifts are not a sign of chaos in Allah’s universe. Allah provides for all according to their real needs and their most suitable requirements, according to His perfect knowledge and understanding of His creatures.
63. And if indeed thou ask them:\(^{3496}\)
Who it is that sends down
Rain from the sky,
And gives life therewith
To the earth after its death,
They will certainly reply,
"Allah!" Say, "Praise be
To Allah!" But most
Of them understand not.

SECTION 7.

64. What is the life of this world
But amusement and play?\(^{3497}\)
But verily the Home
Of the Hereafter,--that is
Life indeed, if they but knew.

65. Now, if they embark
On a boat, they call
On Allah, making their devotion
Sincerely (and exclusively) to
Him;\(^{3498}\)

3496. In xxix. 61 above, the point was that there is a certain type of man that realises
the power of Allah, but yet goes after false ideas and false worship. Here the point is
that there is another type of man to whom the goodness of Allah is made clear by rain
and the gifts of nature and who realises the daily, seasonal, and secular changes which
evidence Allah's goodness in giving us life (physical and spiritual) and reviving us after
we seem to die,--and who yet fails to draw the right conclusion from it and to make his
own life true and beautiful, so that when his period of probation in this transitory life
is ended, he can enter into his eternal heritage. Having come so far, such men fail
at the crucial stage. At that stage they ought to have praised and glorified Allah and
accepted His Grace and Light, but they show their want of true understanding by failing
to profit by Allah's gifts.

3497. Cf. vi. 32. Amusement and play have no lasting significance except as preparing
us for the serious work of life. So this life is but an interlude, a preparation for the real
Life, which is in the Hereafter. This world's vanities are therefore to be taken for what
they are worth; but they are not to be allowed to deflect our minds from the requirements
of the inner life that really matters.

3498. Cf. vii. 29, where I have slightly varied the English phrase according to the
context.
But when He has delivered
Them safely to (dry) land,
Behold, they give a share
(Of their worship to others)!—

66. Disdaining ungratefully Our gifts,
And giving themselves up
To (worldly) enjoyment! But soon
Will they know.

67. Do they not then see
That We have made
A Sanctuary secure, and that
Men are being snatched away
From all around them?

Then, do they believe in that
Which is vain, and reject
The Grace of Allah?

3499. Such folly results in the virtual rejection (even though it may not be express) of Allah and His Grace. It plunges man into the pleasures and vanities that merely delude and are bound to pass away. This delusion, however, will come to an end when the true Reality of the Hereafter will shine forth in all its splendour.

3500. If they want evidences of their folly in the phenomenal world itself, they will see sacred Sanctuaries where Allah's Truth abides safely in the midst of the Deluge of broken hopes, disappointed ambitions and unfulfilled plans in the world around. The immediate reference was to the Sanctuary of Makkah and the gradual progress of Islam in the districts surrounding the Quraish in the midst of the trying Makkan period. But the general application holds good for all times and places.

It was shown in the last verse that the life of this world is fleeting, and that the true life—which matters—is the Life in the Hereafter. In contrast with this inner reality is now shown the shortsighted folly of man. Where he faces the physical dangers of the sea, which are but an incident in the phenomenal world, he actually and sincerely seeks the help of Allah; but when he is safely back on land, he forgets the Realities, plunges into the pleasures and vanities of fleeting phenomena, and his devotion, which should be given exclusively to Allah, is shared by idols and vanities of his own imagination.
68. And who does more wrong\textsuperscript{3501} than he who invents
A lie against Allah
Or rejects the Truth
When it reaches him?
Is there not a home
In Hell for those who
Reject Faith?

69. And those who strive\textsuperscript{3502}
In Our (Cause),—We will
Certainly guide them
To Our Paths:\textsuperscript{3503}
For verily Allah
Is with those
Who do right.

\textsuperscript{3501} Cf. vi. 21. Even from a worldly point of view those who reject Allah's Truth are at a disadvantage. But those who deliberately invent lies and set up false gods for worship,—what punishment can we imagine for them except a permanent deprivation of Allah's grace, and a home in Hell?

\textsuperscript{3502} “Strive in Our Cause.” All that man can do is to strive in Allah's Cause. As soon as he strives with might and main, with constancy and determination, the Light and Mercy of Allah come to meet him. They cure his defects and shortcomings. They provide him with the means by which he can raise himself above himself. They point out the Way, and all the Paths leading up to it. See next note.

\textsuperscript{3503} The Way of Allah (\textit{sirāt-ul-Mustaqim}) is a Straight Way. But men have strayed from it in all directions. And there are numerous Paths by which they can get back to the Right Way, the way in which the purity of their own nature, and the Will and Mercy of Allah require them to Walk. All these numerous Paths become open to them if once they give their hearts in keeping to Allah and work in right Endeavour (\textit{Jihād}) with all their mind and soul and resources. Thus will they get out of the Spider's web of this frail world and attain to eternal Bliss in the fulfilment of their true Destiny.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ar-Rūm, 30.

This Sūra, as remarked in the Introduction to the last Sūra, deals with the question of Ma'ād or the Final End of Things, from various points of view. In the last Sūra, we saw that Revelation was linked up with Life and Conduct, and Time (looking backwards and forwards) figured forth the frailty of this Life. In this Sūra the Time theme and its mystery are brought into relation with human history in the foreground and the evolution of the world in all its aspects in the background. The corruption introduced by man is cleared away by Allah, Whose Univeral Plan points to the Hereafter. We shall see that the next two Sūras (xxxi. and xxxii.) present the theme in other aspects. All four are introduced with the Abbreviated Letters A.L.M.

The chronology of this Sūra is significant. It was revealed about the 7th or the 6th year before the Hijrat, corresponding to 615-16 of the Christian era, when the tide of Persian conquest over the Roman Empire was running strong, as explained in Appendix VI (to follow this Sūra). The Christian Empire of Rome had lost Jerusalem to the Persians. At that time it seemed outside the bounds of human possibility, even to one intimately acquainted with the inner resources and conditions of the Persian and Roman armies and empires, that the tables would be turned and the position reversed within the space of eight or nine years. The pro-Persian Pagan Quraish rejoiced exceedingly, and redoubled their taunts and persecution against the holy Prophet, whose Message was a renewal of the Message of Christ preached in Jerusalem. Then was this passage xxx. 1-6 revealed, clearly foreshadowing the final defeat of Persia (Appendix VI 14-16) as a prelude to the destruction of the Persian Empire. There is no doubt about the prophecy and its fulfilment. For the exulting Pagans of Makkah laid a heavy wager against the fulfilment of the prophecy with Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr, and they lost it on its fulfilment.

But the rise and fall even of such mighty empires as the Persian and Roman Empires, were but small events on the chequer-board of Time, compared to a mightier movement that was taking birth in the promulgation of Islam. In the seventh or sixth year before the Hijrat, Islam was struggling in the world like the still small voice in the conscience of humanity. It was scarcely heeded, and when it sought to insist upon its divine claim, it was insulted, assaulted, persecuted, boycotted, and (as it seemed) suppressed. The agony of Tāīf (two years before the Hijrat) and the murder-plot on the eve of the Hijrat were yet to come. But the purpose of Allah is not to be thwarted. Badr (A.H. 2 = A.D. 624), rightly called the critical Day of Decision, began to redress the balance of outward events in early
Islam, in the same year in which Issus (Appendix No. 6) began to redress the balance of outward events in Perso-Roman relations. Mightier events were yet to come. A new inner World was being created through Islam. This spiritual Revolution was of infinitely greater moment in world-history. The toppling down of priestcraft and false worship, the restoration of simplicity in faith and life, the rehabilitation of this life as the first step to the understanding of the Hereafter, the displacement of superstition and hair-splitting theology by a spirit of rational enquiry and knowledge, and the recognition of the divine as covering not merely an isolated thing called “Religion” but the whole way of Life. Thought, and Feeling,—this was and is the true Message of Islam and its mission. Its struggle—its fight—continues, but it is not without effect, as may be seen in the march of centuries in world-history.

Summary.—The ebb and flow of worldly power—as symbolised in the conflict of the Persian and Roman Empires—are but outward events: the deeper meaning is in the working of Allah’s Universe—how Good and Evil reach their final End (xxx. 1-19).

The changes and changing variety in Allah’s Creation, physical, moral, and spiritual; yet point to Unity in Nature and Religion: man should not break away from that Unity, but glorify Him, the One, for there is none like unto Him (xxx. 20-40).

The hands of men have wrought corruption and mischief: but Allah purifies the moral world as He does the world of physical nature, strengthening the weak and pulling down the mighty in due season: wait therefore in patience and constancy, and be not depressed (xxx. 41-60).
Ar-Rum, or The Romans.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M. 3504

2. The Romans 3505
   Have been defeated—

3. In a land close by:
   But they, (even) after
   (This) defeat of theirs,
   Will soon be victorious—3506

4. Within a few years, 3507
   With Allah is the Command
   In the Past
   And in the Future:

3504. See n. 25 to ii. 1 and Introduction to this Sūra.

3505. The remarkable defeats of the Roman Empire under Heraclius and the straits to which it was reduced are reviewed in Appendix No. 6 (to follow this Sūra). It was not merely isolated defeats; the Roman Empire lost most of its Asiatic territory and was hemmed in on all sides at its capital, Constantinople. The defeat, “in a land close by” must refer to Syria and Palestine, Jerusalem was lost in 614-15 A.D., shortly before this Sūra was revealed.

3506. The Pagan Quraish of Makkah rejoiced at the overthrow of Rome by Persia. They were pro-Persian, and in their heart of hearts they hoped that the nascent movement of Islam, which at that time was, from a worldly point of view, very weak and helpless, would also collapse under their persecution. But they misread the true Signs of the times. They are told here that they would soon be disillusioned in both their calculations, and it actually so happened at the battle of Issus in 622 (the year of Hijrat) and in 624, when Heraclius carried his campaign into the heart of Persia (see Appendix No: 6) and the Makkhan Quraish were beaten off at Badr.

3507. Bidh’un in the text means a short period—a period of from three to nine years. The period between the loss of Jerusalem (614-15) by the Romans and their victory at Issus (622) was seven years, and that to the penetration of Persia by Heraclius was nine years. See last note.
On that Day shall
The Believers rejoice—

5. With the help of Allah.
He gives victory to whom He will,
And He is Exalted in Might,
Most Merciful.

6. (It is) the promise of Allah.
Never does Allah fail
From His promise:
But most men know not.

7. They know but the outer
(Things) in the life
Of this world: but
Of the Hereafter
They are heedless.

8. Do they not reflect
In their own minds?

3508. See n. 3506 and Appendix No: 6. The battle of Badr (2 A.H. = 624 A.D.) was a real time of rejoicing for the Believers and a time of disillusionment for the arrogant Quraish, who thought that they could crush the whole movement of Islam in Madinah as they had tried to do in Makkah, but they were signally repulsed. See n. 352 to iii. 13.

3509. "Whom He will." As explained elsewhere, Allah's Will or Plan is not arbitrary: it is full of the highest wisdom. His Plan is formed in mercy, so as to safeguard the interests of all his creatures, against the selfish aggrandizement of any section of them. And He is able to carry out His Plan in full, and there is no power that can stop or delay His Plan.

3510. The promise refers to the Decision of all things by the Command of Allah, Who will remove all troubles and difficulties from the path of His righteous Believers, and help them to rejoice over the success of their righteous Cause. This refers to all times and all situations. The righteous should not despair in their darkest moments, for Allah's help will come. Ordinarily men are puffed up if they score a seeming temporary success against the righteous, and do not realise that Allah's Will can never be thwarted.

3511. Men are misled by the outward show of things, though the inner reality may be quite different. Many seeming disasters are really godsend if we only understood.

3512. ĀKHIRAT: may refer to the End of things or enterprises in history as well as the Hereafter in the technical theological sense.
Not but in truth
And for a term appointed,
Did Allah create the heavens
And the earth, and all
Between them: yet are there
Truly many among men
Who deny the meeting
With their Lord
(At the Resurrection)!

9. Do they not travel
Through the earth, and see
What was the End
Of those before them?
They were superior to them
In strength: they tilled
The soil and populated it
In greater numbers than these
Have done: there came to them
Their messengers with Clear
(Signs),
(Which they rejected, to their
Own destruction): it was not
Allah who wronged them, but
They wronged their own souls.

3513. Cf. xv. 85. Here the argument is about the ebb and flow of worldly power,
and the next clause is appropriately added, “and for a term appointed”. Let not any one
who is granted worldly power or advantage run away with the notion that it is permanent.
It is definitely limited in the high Purpose of Allah, which is just and true. And an
account will have to be given of it afterwards on basis of strict personal responsibility.

3514. It is therefore all the more strange that there should be men who not only
forget themselves but even deny that there is a return to Allah or an End or Hereafter,
when a full reckoning will be due for this period of probation. They are asked to study
past history, as in the next verse.

3515. Let not any generation think that it is superior to all that went before it. We
may be “heirs to all the ages, in the foremost files of times.” That is no reason for
arrogance, but on the contrary adds to our responsibility. When we realise what
flourishing cities and kingdoms existed before, how they flourished in numbers and
prosperity, what chances they were given, and how they perished when they disobeyed
the law of Allah, we shall feel a sense of humility, and see that it was rebellion and
self-will that brought them down. Allah was more than just. He was also merciful. But
they brought about their own ruin.
10. In the long run evil\textsuperscript{3516} will be the End of those who do evil; for that they rejected the Signs of Allah, and held them up to ridicule.

SECTION 2.

11. It is Allah Who begins the creation;\textsuperscript{3517} then repeats it; then shall ye be brought back to Him.

12. On the Day when the Hour will come\textsuperscript{3518} the guilty will be struck dumb with despair.

\textsuperscript{3516} The Arabic superlative feminine, referring to the feminine noun ‘Aqibat, I have translated by “Evil”. In this life good and evil may seem to be mixed up, and it may be that somethings or persons that are evil get what seem to be good rewards or blessings, while the opposite happens to the good. But this is only a temporary appearance. In the long run Evil will have its own evil consequences, multiplied cumulatively. And this, because evil not only rejected Allah’s Message of Good but laughed at Good and misled others.

\textsuperscript{3517} Nothing exists of its own accord or fortuitously. It is Allah Who originates all creation. What appears to be death may be only transformation: for Allah can and does recreate. And His creative activity is continuous. Our death is but a phenomenal event. What we become after death is the result of a process of recreation by Allah, Who is both the source and the goal of all things. When we are brought back to him, it will be as conscious and responsible beings, to receive the consequences of our brief life on this earth.

\textsuperscript{3518} The Hour will be established: in due time the Hour will come when Judgment will be established, and the seeming disturbance of balance in this world will be redressed. Then the Good will rejoice, and the Guilty, faced with the Realities, will lose all their illusions and be struck dumb with despair.
13. No intercessor will they have Among their “Partners”, And they will (themselves) Reject their “Partners”.

14. On the Day when The Hour will come That Day shall (all men) Be sorted out.

15. Then those who have believed And worked righteous deeds, Shall be made happy In a Mead (of Delight).

16. And those who have rejected Faith and falsely denied Our Signs and the meeting Of the Hereafter,—such Shall be brought forth to Punishment.

17. So glory be to Allah, When ye reach eventide And when ye rise In the morning;

3519. False worship will then appear in its true colours. Anything to which we offered the worship due to Allah alone, will vanish instead of being of any help. Indeed the deluded false worshippers, whose eyes will now be opened, will themselves reject their falsehoods, as the Truth will now shine with unquestioned splendour.

3520. In the fullness of time good and evil will all be sorted out and separated. The good will reach their destination of felicity in rich and luscious, well-watered meadows, which stand as the type of all that is fair to see and pleasant to feel. The evil will no longer imagine that they are enjoying good fortune, for the testing time will be over, and the grim reality will stare them in the face. They will receive their just Punishment.

3521. The special times for Allah’s remembrance are so described as to include all our activities in life,—when we rise early in the morning, and when we go to rest in the evening; when we are in the midst of our work, at the decline of the sun, and in the late afternoon. It may be noted that these are all striking stages in the passage of the sun through our terrestrial day, as well as stages in our daily working lives. On this are based the hours of the five canonical prayers afterwards prescribed in Madinah; viz. (1) early morning before sunrise (Fajr); (2) when the day begins to decline, just after noon =
18. Yea, To Him be praise,
   In the heavens and on earth;
   And in the late afternoon
   And when the day
   Begins to decline.

19. It is He Who brings out
   The living from the dead,
   And brings out the dead\(^{3522}\)
   From the living, and Who
   Gives life to the earth\(^{3523}\)
   After it is dead:
   And thus shall ye be
   Brought out (from the dead).

SECTION 3.

20. Among His Signs is this,
    That He created you\(^{3524}\)
    From dust; and then—
    Behold, ye are men
    Scattered (far and wide)!

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\(^{3522}\) Cf. x. 31. From dead matter Allah's creative act produces life and living matter, and even science has not yet been able to explain the mystery of life. Life and living matter again seem to reach maturity and again die, as we see every day. No material thing seems to have perpetual life. But again we see the creative process of Allah constantly at work, and the cycle of life and death seems to go on.

\(^{3523}\) Cf. ii. 164. The earth itself, seemingly so inert, produces vegetable life at once from a single shower of rain, and in various ways sustains animal life. Normally it seems to die in the winter in northern climates, and in a drought everywhere, and the spring revives it in all its glory. Metaphorically many movements, institutions, organisations, seem to die and then to live again, all under the wonderful dispensation of Allah. So will our personality be revived when we die on this earth, in order to reap the fruit of this our probationary life.

\(^{3524}\) Cf. xviii. 37 and n. 2379. In spite of the lowly origin of man's body, Allah has given him a mind and soul by which he can almost compass the farthest reaches of Time and Space. Is this not enough for a miracle or Sign? From a physical point of view, see how man, a creature of dust, scatters himself over the farthest corners of the earth!
21. And among His Signs
   Is this, that He created
For you mates from among\(^{3525}\)
   Yourself, that ye may
Dwell in tranquility with them,\(^{3526}\)
   And He has put love
   And mercy between your (hearts):
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.

22. And among His Signs
   Is the creation of the heavens
And the earth, and the variations\(^{3527}\)
   In your languages
   And your colours: verily
In that are Signs
For those who know.

23. And among His Signs
   Is the sleep that ye take

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\(^{3525}\). This refers to the wonderful mystery of sex. Children arise out of the union of the sexes. And it is always the female sex that bring forth the offspring, whether female or male. And the father is as necessary as the mother for bringing forth daughters.

\(^{3526}\). Cf. vii. 189. Unregenerate man is pugnacious in the male sex, but rest and tranquility are found in the normal relations of a father and mother dwelling together and bringing up a family. A man's chivalry to the opposite sex is natural and Allah-given. The friendship of two men between each other is quite different in quality and temper from the feeling which unspoilt nature expects as between men and women. There is a special kind of love and tenderness between them. And as woman is the weaker vessel, that tenderness may from a certain aspect be likened to mercy, the protecting kindness which the strong should give to the weak.

\(^{3527}\). The variations in languages and colours may be viewed from the geographical aspect or from the aspect of periods of time. All mankind were created of a single pair of parents; yet they have spread to different countries and climates and developed different languages and different shades of complexions. And yet their basic unity remains unaltered. They feel in the same way, and are all equally under Allah's care. Then there are the variations in time. Old languages die out and new ones are evolved. New conditions of life and thought are constantly evolving new words and expressions, new syntactical structures, and new modes of pronunciation. Even old races die, and new races are born.
By night and by day, and the quest that ye (Make for livelihood) Out of His Bounty: verily In that are Signs For those who hearken.

24. And among His Signs, He shows you the lightning, By way both of fear And of hope, and He sends...
Down rain from the sky
And with it gives life to
The earth after it is dead:
Verily in that are Signs
For those who are wise.

25. And among His Signs is this,
That heaven and earth
Stand by His Command:
Then when He calls you,
By a single call, from the earth,
Behold, ye (straightway) come forth.

26. To Him belongs every being
That is in the heavens
And on earth: all are
Devoutly obedient to Him.

27. It is He Who begins
The creation;
Then repeats it; and
For Him it is most easy.

= found receptive or worthy of the irresistible perspicuous Message of Allah, and hopes that
we may receive it in the right spirit and be blessed by its mighty power of transformation
to achieve spiritual well-being. Note that the repetition of the phrase “gives life to the
earth after it is dead” connects this verse, with verse 19 above; in other words, the
Revelation, which we must receive with wisdom and understanding, is a Sign of Allah’s
own power and mercy, and is vouchsafed in order to safeguard our own final Future.

3531. In the physical world, the sky and the earth, as we see them, stand
unsupported, by the artistry of Allah. They bear witness to Allah, and in—that our
physical life depends on them—the earth for its produce and the sky for rain, the heat
of the sun, and other phenomena of nature—they call to our mind our relation to Allah
Who made them and us. How can we then be so dense as not to realise that our higher
Future—our Ma‘ād—is bound up with the call and the mercy of Allah?

3532. All nature in Creation not only obeys Allah, but devoutly obeys Him, i.e.,
glories in its privilege of service and obedience. Why should we not do likewise? It is
part of our original unspoilt nature, and we must respond to it, as all beings do, by their
very nature.

3533. Cf. xxx. 11 above, where the same phrase began the argument about the
beginning and end of all things being with Allah. This has been illustrated by reference
to various Signs in Creation, and now the argument is rounded off with the same phrase.
To Him belongs the loftiest Similitude (we can think of) In the heavens and the earth: For He is Exalted in Might, Full of wisdom.

SECTION 4.

28. He does propound To you a similitude From yourselves: Do ye have partners Among those whom your right hands Possess, to share as equals In the wealth We have Bestowed on you? Do ye Fear them as ye fear

3534. Allah’s glory and Allah’s attributes are above any names we can give to them. Human language is not adequate to express them. We can only form some idea of them at our present stage by means of Similitudes and Parables. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3535. One way in which we can get some idea of the things higher than our own plane is to think of Parables and Similitudes. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3536. Allah is far higher above His Creation than any, the highest, of His creatures can be above any, the lowest, of His creatures. And yet would a man share his wealth on equal terms with his dependants? Even what he calls his wealth is not really his own, but given by Allah. It is “his” in common speech by reason merely of certain accidental circumstances. How then can men raise Allah’s creatures to equality with Allah in worship?

3537. Men fear each other as equals in a state of society at perpetual warfare. To remove this fear they appoint an authority among themselves—a King or sovereign authority whom they consider just—to preserve them from this fear and give them an established order. But they must obey and revere this authority and depend upon this authority for their own tranquillity and security. Even with their equals there is always the fear of public opinion. But men do not fear, or obey, or revere those who are their slaves or dependents. Man is dependent on Allah. And Allah is the Sovereign authority in an infinitely higher sense. He is in no sense dependent on us, but we must honour and revere Him and fear to disobey His Will or His Law. “The fear of Allah is the beginning of wisdom.”
Each other? Thus do We
Explain the Signs in detail
To a people that understand.\textsuperscript{3538}

29. Nay, the wrong-doers (merely)
Follow their own desires
Being devoid of knowledge.
But who will guide those
Whom Allah leaves astray?\textsuperscript{3539}
To them there will be
No helpers.

30. So set thou thy face
Truly to the religion being
upright,\textsuperscript{3540}
The nature in which
Allah has made mankind:
No change (there is)
In the work (wrought)\textsuperscript{3541}
By Allah: that is

\textsuperscript{3538. Cf. vi. 55, and vii. 32, 174, etc.}

\textsuperscript{3539. The wrong-doers--those who deliberately reject Allah's guidance and break
Allah's Law--have put themselves out of the region of Allah's mercy. In this they have
put themselves outside the pale of the knowledge of what is for their own good. In such
a case they must suffer the consequences of the personal responsibility which flows from
the grant of a limited free-will. Who can then guide them or help them?}

\textsuperscript{3540. For \textit{Hanif} see n. 134 to ii. 135. Here "true" is used in the sense in which we
say, "the magnetic needle is true to the north." Those who have been privileged to receive the Truth should never hesitate or swerve, but remain constant, as men who know.}

\textsuperscript{3541. As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true,
free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own
position in the Universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true
nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of a horse is to be swift. But
man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching.
This may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or
forbidden, and deflected from the love of his fellow-men and the pure worship of the
One True God. The problem before the Prophets is to cure this crookedness, and to
restore human nature to what it should be under the Will of Allah.}
The true Religion:\textsuperscript{3542}
But most among mankind
Know not.

31. Turn ye in repentance\textsuperscript{3543}
To Him, and fear Him:
Establish regular prayers,
And be not ye among those
Who join gods with Allah,-

32. Those who split up
Their Religion, and become
(Mere) Sects,—each party
Rejoicing in that which\textsuperscript{3544}
Is with itself!

33. When trouble touches men,
They cry to their Lord\textsuperscript{3545}
Turning back to Him
In repentance: but when
He gives them a taste
Of Mercy from Himself,

\textsuperscript{3542} Din \textit{Qaiyim} here includes the whole life, thoughts and desires of man. The
“standard Religion,” or the Straight Way is thus contrasted with the various human
systems that conflict with each other and call themselves separate “religions” or “sects”
(see verse 32 below). Allah’s standard Religion is one, as Allah is One.

\textsuperscript{3543} “Repentance” does not mean sackcloth and ashes, or putting on a gloomy
pessimism. It means giving up disease for health, crookedness (which is abnormal) for
the Straight Way, the restoration of our nature as Allah created it from the falsity
introduced by the enticements of Evil. To revert to the simile of the magnetic needle
(n. 3540 above), if the needle is held back by obstructions, we must restore its freedom,
so that it points true again to the magnetic pole.

\textsuperscript{3544} A good description of self-satisfied sectarianism as against real Religion. See
n. 3542 above.

\textsuperscript{3545} Cf. x. 12. It is trouble, distress, or adversity that makes men realise their
helplessness and turns their attention back to the true Source of all goodness and
happiness. But when they are shown special Mercy—often more than they deserve—they
forget themselves and attribute it to their own cleverness, or to the stars, or to some
false ideas to which they pay court and worship, either to the exclusion of Allah or in
addition to the lip-worship which they pay to Allah. Their action in any case amounts
to gross ingratitude; but in the circumstances it looks as if they had gone out of their
way to show ingratitude.
Behold, some of them
Pay part-worship to
Other gods besides their Lord,—

34. (As if) to show their ingratitude
For the (favours) We have
Bestowed on them! Then enjoy
(Your brief day); but soon
Will ye know (your folly).\(^{3546}\)

35. Or have We sent down
Authority to them, which
Speaks to them?\(^{3547}\)
The things to which
The pay part-worship?

36. When We give men
A taste of Mercy,\(^{3548}\)
They exult thereat:
And when some evil
Afflicts them because of
What their (own) hands
Have sent forth, behold,
They are in despair!

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\(^{3546}\) Cf. xvi. 54. They are welcome to their fancies and false worship, and to the enjoyment of the pleasures of this Life, but they will soon be disillusioned. Then they will realise the true values of the things they neglected and the things they cultivated.

\(^{3547}\) Their behaviour is exactly as if they were satisfied within themselves that they were entitled or given a licence to worship God and Mammon. In fact the whole thing is their own invention or delusion.

\(^{3548}\) Cf. xxx. 33. In that passage the unreasonable behaviour of men in sorrow and in affluence is considered with reference to their attitude to Allah: in distress they turn to Him, but in prosperity they turn to other things. Here the contrast in the two situations is considered with reference to men’s inner psychology: in affluence they are puffed up and unduly elated, and in adversity they lose all heart. Both attitudes are wrong. In prosperity men should realise that it is not their merits that deserve all the Bounty of Allah, but that it is given out of Allah’s abundant generosity; in adversity they should remember that their suffering is brought on by their own folly and sin, and humbly pray for Allah’s grace and mercy, in order that they may be set on their feet again. For, as the next verse points out, Allah gives opportunities, gifts, and the good things of life to every one, but in a greater or less measure, and at some time or other, according to His All-Wise Plan, which is the expression of His holy and benevolent Will.
37. See they not that Allah
Enlarges the provision and
Restricts it, to whomsoever He pleases? Verily in that
Are Signs for those who believe.

38. So give what is due
To kindred, the needy,
And the wayfarer,
That is best for those
Who seek the Countenance, Of Allah, and it is they
Who will prosper.

39. That which you give in usury
For increase through the property
Of (other) people, will have No increase with Allah:
But that which you give
For charity, seeking
The Countenance of Allah,

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3549. Cf. xxviii. 82 and n. 3412. Also see last note. Allah's grant of certain gifts to some, as well as His withholding of certain gifts from others, are themselves Signs (trials or warnings) to men of faith and understanding.

3550. For Wajh (Face, Countenance), see n. 114 to ii. 112. Also see vi. 52.

3551. In both this life and the next. See n. 29 to ii. 5.

3552. Ribâ (literally 'usury' or 'interest') is prohibited, for the principle is that any profit which we should seek should be through our own exertions and at our own expense, not through exploiting other people or at their expense, however we may wrap up the process in the spacious phraseology of high finance or City jargon. But we are asked to go beyond this negative precept of avoiding what is wrong. We should show our active love for our neighbour by spending of our own substance or resources or the utilisation of our own talents and opportunities in the service of those who need them. Then our reward or recompense will not be merely what we deserve. It will be multiplied to many times more than our strict account. According to Commentators this verse specially applies to those who give to others, whether gifts or services, in order to receive from them greater benefits in return. Such seemingly good acts are void of any merit and deserve no reward from Allah, since He knows the real intention behind such ostensibly good deeds.

3553. Seeking the “Face” or “Countenance” of Allah, i.e., out of our pure love for the true vision of Allah’s own Self. See also n. 3550 above.
Mischief has appeared
On land and sea because
Of (the meed) that the hands
Of men have earned,\(^{3556}\)
That (Allah) may give them
A taste of some of their
(Will increase): it is
These who will get
A recompense multiplied.

40. It is Allah Who has
Created you: further, He has
Provided for your sustenance;
Then He will cause you
To die; and again He will
Give you life. Are there
Any of your (false) “Partners”\(^{3554}\)
Who can do any single
One of these things?
Glory to Him! and High
Is He above the partners\(^{3555}\)
They attribute (to Him)!

SECTION 5.

41. Mischief has appeared
On land and sea because
Of (the meed) that the hands
Of men have earned,\(^{3556}\)
That (Allah) may give them
A taste of some of their

3554. The persons or things or ideas to which we give part-worship, while our whole and exclusive worship is due to Allah, are the “Partners” we set up. Do we owe our existence to them? Do they sustain our being? Can they take our life or give it back to us? Certainly not. Then how foolish of us to give them part-worship!

3555. Cf. x. 18 and similar passages.

3556. Allah’s Creation was pure and good in itself. All the mischief or corruption was introduced by Evil, viz., arrogance, selfishness, etc. See n. 3541 to xxx. 30 above. As soon as the mischief has come in, Allah’s mercy and goodness step in to stop it. The consequences of Evil must be evil, and this should be shown in such partial punishment as “the hands of men have earned,” so that it may be a warning for the future and an invitation to enter the door of repentance.
Deeds: in order that they\textsuperscript{3557} may turn back (from evil).

42. Say: "Travel through the earth
And see what was the End
Of those before (you):
Most of them were\textsuperscript{3558} idolaters.

43. But set thou thy face
To the right Religion,
Before there come from Allah
The Day which there is\textsuperscript{3559} No chance of averting:
On that Day shall men
Be divided (in two).\textsuperscript{3560}

44. Those who reject Faith
Will suffer from that rejection:
And those who work righteousness
Will make provision
For themselves
(In heaven):

\textsuperscript{3557} The ultimate object of Allah's justice and punishment is to reclaim man from Evil, and to restore him to the pristine purity and innocence in which he was created. The Evil introduced by his possession of a limited free-will should be eliminated by the education and purification of man's own will. For, with his will and motives purified, he is capable of much greater heights than a creature not endowed with any free-will.

\textsuperscript{3558} If you contemplate history and past experience (including spiritual experience), you will find that evil and corruption tended to destroy themselves, because they had false idols for worship, false standards of conduct, and false goals of desire.

\textsuperscript{3559} We should recover the balance that has been upset by Evil and Falsehood before it is too late. For a Day will surely come when true values will be restored and all falsehood and evil will be destroyed. Nothing but repentance and amendment can avert the consequences of Evil. When the Day actually comes, repentance will be too late: for the impassable barrier between Evil and Good will have been fixed, and the chance of return to Allah's pattern will have been lost.

\textsuperscript{3560} The sharp division will then have been accomplished between the unfortunate ones who rejected Truth and Faith and will suffer for their rejection, and the righteous who will attain Peace and Salvation: see next verse. Note that the state of the Blessed will not be merely a passive state. They will actively earn and contribute to their own happiness.
45. That He may reward those  
Who believe and work righteous  
Deeds, out of His Bounty.\[3561\]  
For He loves not those  
Who reject Faith.\[3562\]

46. Among His Signs is this,\[3563\]  
That He sends the Winds,  
As heralds of Glad Tidings,  
Giving you a taste  
Of His Mercy,-\[3564\]  
That the ships may sail  
By His Command  
And that ye may seek\[3565\]  
Of His Bounty: in order  
That ye may be grateful.

47. We did indeed send,  
Before thee, messengers  
To their (respective) peoples,

\[3561\] Though the repose and bliss will have been won by the righteous by their own efforts, it must not be supposed that their own merits were equal to the reward they will earn. What they will get will be due to the infinite Grace and Bounty of Allah.

\[3562\] In form this clause is (here as elsewhere) negative, but it has a positive meaning: Allah loves those who have faith and trust in Him, and will, out of His Grace and Bounty, reward them in abundant measure.

\[3563\] The theme of Allah’s artistry in the physical and the spiritual world was placed before us above in xxx. 20-27. Then, in verse 28-40, we were shown how man and nature were pure as they came out of the hand of Allah, and how we must restore this purity in order to fulfill the Will and Plan of Allah. Now we are told how the restorative and purifying agencies are sent by Allah Himself,—in both the physical and the spiritual world.

\[3564\] Cf. vii. 57 and n. 1036 and xxv. 48 and n. 3104.

\[3565\] In the physical world, the winds not only cool and purify the air, and bring the blessings of rain, which fertilises the soil, but they help international commerce and intercourse among men through sea-ways and now by air-ways. Those who know how to take advantage of these blessings of Allah prosper and rejoice, while those who ignore or fail to understand these Signs perish in storms. So in the spiritual world: heralds of glad tidings were sent by Allah in the shape of Messengers: those who profited by their Message prospered and those who ignored or opposed the Clear Signs perished, see next verse.
And they came to them
With Clear Signs: then,
To those who transgressed,
We meted out Retribution:
And it was a duty incumbent upon
Us
To aid those who believed.

48. It is Allah Who sends
The Winds, and they raise
The Clouds: then does He
Spread them in the sky
As He wills, and break them
Into fragments, until thou seest
Rain-drops issue from the midst
Thereof: then when He has
Made them reach such
Of His servants as He wills,
Behold, they do rejoice!–

49. Even though, before they received
(The rain)–just before this–
They were dumb with despair!

50. Then behold (O man!)–
The tokens of Allah’s Mercy!–
How He gives life
To the earth after
Its death: verily the Same

3566. Again the Parable of the Winds is presented from another aspect, both physical
and spiritual. In the physical world, see their play with the Clouds: how they suck up
the moisture from terrestrial water, carry it about in dark clouds as needed, and break
it up with rain as needed. So Allah’s wonderful Grace draws up men’s spiritual aspirations
from the most unlikely places and suspends them as dark mysteries, according to His holy
Will and Plan: and when His Message reaches the hearts of men even in the smallest
fragments, how its recipients rejoice, even though before it, they were in utter despair!

3567. See last note.

3568. After the two Parables about the purifying action of the Winds and their
fertilising action, we now have the Parable of the earth that dies in winter or drought
and lives again in spring or rain, by Allah’s Grace: so in the spiritual sphere, man may
be dead and may live again by the Breath of Allah and His Mercy if she will only place
himself in Allah’s hands.
Will give life to the men
Who are dead: for He
Has power over all things.

51. And if We (but) send
A Wind from which
They see (their tilth)
Turn yellow,-behold,
They become, thereafter,
Ungrateful (Unbelievers)!

52. So verily thou canst not
Make the dead to hear,
Nor canst thou make
The deaf to hear
The call, when they show
Their backs and turn away.

53. Nor canst thou lead back
The blind from their straying:
Only those wilt thou make
To hear, who believe
In Our Signs and submit
(Their wills in Islam).

3569. Another Parable from the forces of nature. We saw how the Winds gladdened,
vivified, and enriched those who utilised them in the right spirit. But a wind might be
destructive to tilth in certain circumstances: so the blessings of Allah may—by the wrong-
doers resisting and blaspheming—bring punishment to the wrong-doers. Instead of taking
the punishment in the right spirit—in the spirit in which Believers of Allah take their
misfortunes,—the Unbelievers curse and deepen their sin!

3570. The marvels of Allah’s creation can be realised in a general way by every one
who has a disposition to allow such knowledge to penetrate his mind. But if men, out
of perversity, kill the very faculties which Allah has given them, how can they then
understand? Besides the men who deaden their spiritual sense, there are men who may
be likened to the deaf, who lack one faculty but to whom an appeal can be made through
other faculties, such as the sense of sight; but if they turn their backs and refuse to be
instructed at all, how can the Truth reach them?

3571. See last note. Then there is the case of men about whom the saying holds true,
that none are so blind as those who will not see. They prefer to stray in paths of wrong
and of sense-pleasures. How can they be guided in any way? The only persons who gain
by spiritual teaching are those who bring a mind to it—who believe and submit their wills
to Allah’s Will. This is the central doctrine of Islam.
54. It is Allah Who
Created you in a state
Of (helpless) weakness, then
Gave (you) strength after weakness,
Then, after strength, gave (you)
Weakness and a hoary head. 3572
He creates whatever He wills,
And it is He Who has
All knowledge and power.

55. On the Day that
The Hour (of reckoning)
Will be established, 3573
The transgressors will swear
That they tarried not
But an hour: thus were
They used to being deluded!

56. But those endued with knowledge
And faith will say:
"Indeed ye did tarry,
Within Allah's Decree,
To the Day of Resurrection,

3572. What was said before about the people who make Allah's teaching of "of none effect" does not mean that Evil will defeat Allah. On the contrary we are asked to contemplate the mysteries of Allah's wisdom with another Parable. In our physical life we see how strength is evolved out of weakness and weakness out of strength. The helpless babe becomes a lusty man in the pride of his manhood, and then sinks to a feeble old age: and yet there is wisdom in all these stages in the Universal Plan. So Allah carries out His Plan in this world "as He wills", i.e., according to His Will and Plan, and none can gainsay it. And His Plan is wise and can never be frustrated.

3573. Whatever the seeming inequalities may be now—when the good appear to be weak and the strong seem to oppress—will be removed when the balance will be finally redressed. That will happen in good time, indeed so quickly that the Transgressors will be taken by surprise. They were deluded by the fact that what they took to be their triumph or their freedom to do what they liked was only a reprieve, a "Term Appointed", in which they could repent and amend and get Allah's Mercy. Failing this, they will then be up against the Penalties which they thought they had evaded or defied.
And this is the Day 3574
Of Resurrection: but ye—
Ye did not know!"

57. So on that Day no excuse
Of theirs will
Avail the Transgressors, 3575
Nor will they be allowed
To make amends.

58. Verily We have propounded
For men, in this Qur-an.
Every kind of Parable:
But if thou bring to them
Any Sign, the Unbelievers 3576
Are sure to say, “Ye
Do nothing but talk vanities.”

59. Thus does Allah seal up 3577
The hearts of those
Who understand not.

3574. The men of knowledge and faith knew all along of the true values—of the things of this ephemeral life and the things that will endure and face them at the End,—unlike the wrong-doers who were content with falsehoods and were taken by surprise, like ignorant men, when they faced the Realities.

3575. It will be no use for those who deliberately rejected the clearest warnings in Allah’s Message to say: “Oh we did not realise this!” The excuse will be false, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that they would then be asked to seek Grace by repentance. It will then be too late.

3576. Things of the highest moment have been explained in the Qur-an from various points of view, as in this Sûra itself, by means of parables and similitudes drawn from nature and from our ordinary daily life. But whatever the explanation, however convincing it may be to men who earnestly seek after Truth, those who deliberately turn their backs to Truth can find nothing convincing. In their eyes the explanations are mere “vain talk” or false arguments.

3577. When an attitude of obstinate resistance to Truth is adopted, the natural consequence (by Allah’s Law) is that the heart and mind get more and more hardened with every act of deliberate rejection. It becomes more and more impervious to the reception of Truth, just as a sealed envelope is unable to receive any further letter or message after it is sealed. Cf. also ii. 7 and n. 31.
60. So patiently persevere: for Verily the promise of Allah Is true: nor let those Excite thee, who have (Themselves) no certainty of faith.

3578. The Prophet of Allah does not slacken in his efforts or feel discouraged because the Unbelievers laugh at him or persecute him or even seem to succeed in blocking his Message. He has firm faith, and he knows that Allah will finally establish His Truth. He goes on in his divinely entrusted task, with patience and perseverance, which must win against the levity of his opponents, who have no faith or certainty at all to sustain them.
APPENDIX No. 5

FIRST CONTACT OF ISLAM WITH WORLD MOVEMENTS

The contemporary Roman and Persian Empires (see xxx. 2-7 and notes).

The conflict between the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and the Persian King Khusrau Parwiz (Chosroes II) is referred to in Sūra xxx. (Rûm). It will therefore be convenient now to review very briefly the relations of these two great empires and the way in which they gradually decayed before the rising sun of Islam. The story has not only a political significance, but a deep spiritual significance in world history.

2. If we take the Byzantine Empire as a continuation of the Empire that grew out of the Roman Republic, the first conflict took place in B.C. 53, when the Consul Crassus (famous for his riches) was defeated in his fight with the Parthians. If we go back further, to the time of the Greek City States, we can refer back to the invasion of Greece by Xerxes in B.C. 480-479 and the effective repulse of that invasion by sea and land by the united co-operation of the Greek States. The Persian Empire in those days extended to the western (Mediterranean) coast of Asia Minor. But as it included the Greek cities of Asia Minor, there was constant intercourse in war and peace between Persia and the Hellenic (Greek) world. The cities in Greece proper had their own rivalries and jealousies, and Greek cities or parties often invoked the aid of the Great King (Shahin shah of Persia) against their opponents. By the Peace of Antalcidas, B.C. 387, Persia became practically the suzerain power of Greece. This was under the Achæmenian Dynasty of Persia.

3. Then came the rise of Macedonia and Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire (B.C. 330). This spread the Hellenic influence as far east as Central Asia, and as far south as Syria (including Palestine), Egypt, and Northern Africa generally. Rome in its expansion westwards reached the Atlantic, and in its expansion eastwards absorbed the territories of Alexander's successors, and became the mistress of all countries with a Mediterranean seacoast. The nations of the Roman Empire "insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people" (Gibbon, chap. ii).

4. Meanwhile there were native forces in Persia which asserted themselves and established (A.D. 10) the Dynasty of the Arsacids (Ashkāniān). This was mainly the outcome of a revolt against Hellenism, and its spear-point was in Parthia. The Arsacids won back Persia proper, and established the western
boundary of Persia in a line drawn roughly from the eastern end of the Black Sea southwards to the Euphrates at a point north-east of Palmyra. This would include the region of the Caucasus (excluding the Black Sea coast) and Armenia and Lower Mesopotamia, in the Persian Empire. And this was the normal boundary between Persia and the Roman Empire until the Islamic Empire wiped out the old Monarchy of Persia and a great part of the Byzantine Empire, and annexed Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and gradually Asia Minor, finally extinguishing the whole of the Byzantine Empire.

5. Another stage in Persian history was reached when the Arsacids were overthrown and the Sāsānians came into power under Ardashir I, A.D. 225. The Sāsānian Empire was in a sense a continuation of the Achæmenian Empire, and was a reaction against the corruptions of the Zoroastrian religion which had crept in under the Parthian Dynasty of the Arsacids. But the religious reforms were only partial. There was some interaction between Christianity and the Zoroastrian religion. For example, the great mystic Mānī, who was a painter as well as a religious leader, founded the sect of Manichæism. He flourished in the reign of Shāpūr I (A.D. 241-272) and seems to have preached a form of Gnostic faith, in which Alexandrian philosophy was mixed with Christian doctrine and the old Persian belief in the dual principle of Good and Evil. The Sāsānians failed to purify religion and only adhered to fire-worship as the chief feature of their cult. In manners and morals they succumbed to the vices of arrogance, luxury, sensuality, and monopoly of power and privilege, which it is the office of Religion to denounce and root out. That office was performed by Islam.

6. When the seat of the Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople (Byzantium) in the time of Constantine (A.D. 330), the conflict between Rome and Persia became more and more frequent. The true Peninsula of Arabia was never conquered either by Rome or by Persia, although its outlying parts were absorbed in either the one or the other at various times. It is interesting to notice that the Roman Emperor Philip (A.D. 244-249) was a born Arab and that the architecture of the Nabataeans in the city of Petra and in Hijr shows a mixture of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and indigenous Arab cultures.

7. Arabia received the cultural influences of Persia and the Byzantine Empire, but was a silent spectator of their conflicts until Islam was brought into the main currents of world politics.

8. The Yemen coast of Arabia, which was easily accessible by sea to Persia, was the battle-ground between the Persian Empire and the Abyssinian Empire just across the Red Sea. Abyssinia and Arabia had had cultural and political relations for many centuries. Amharic, the ruling language of Abyssinia, is closely allied to Arabic, and the Amharic people went as colonists and conquerors from Arabia through Yemen. Shortly before the birth of holy Prophet, Abyssinia had been in occupation of Yemen for some time, having displaced a Jewish dynasty. The Abyssinians professed the Christian religion,
and although their Church was doctrinally separate from the Byzantine Church, there was a great deal of sympathy between the Byzantines and the Abyssinians on account of their common Christian religion. One of the Abyssinian viceroys in Yemen was Abraha, who conceived the design of destroying the Temple at Makkah. He led an expedition, in which elephants formed a conspicuous feature, to invade Makkah and destroy the Ka'ba. He met a disastrous repulse, which is referred to in the Qur'an (Sura cv.). This event was in the year of the Prophet's birth, and marks the beginning of the great conflict which enabled Arabia eventually to obtain a leading place among the nations of the world. The year usually given for the Prophet's birth is 570 A.D., though the date must be taken as only approximate, being the middle figure between 569 and 571, the extreme possible limits. The Abyssinians having been overthrown, the Persians were established in Yemen, and their power lasted there until about the 7th year of the Hijra (approximately 628 A.D.), when Yemen accepted Islam.

9. The outstanding event in Byzantine history in the 6th century was the reign of Justinian (527-565) and in Persian history the reign of Anaushirvân (531-579). Justinian is well-known for his great victories in Africa and for the great Digest he made of Roman Law and Jurisprudence. In spite of the scandalous life of his queen Theodora, he occupies an honourable place in the history of the Roman Empire. Anaushirvân is known in Persian history as the "Just King". They were contemporary rulers for a period of 34 years. In their time the Roman and the Persian Empires were in close contact both in peace and war. Anaushirvân just missed being adopted by the Roman Emperor. If the adoption had come off, he would have become one of the claimants to the Byzantine throne. He invaded Syria and destroyed the important Christian city of Antioch in 540-541. It was only the able defence of Belisarius, the Roman general, which saved the Roman Empire from further disasters in the east. On the other hand the Turanian Avars, driven in front of the Turks, had begun the invasion of Constantinople from the western side. Justinian also made an alliance with the Abyssinians as a Christian nation, and the Abyssinians and the Persians came to conflict in Yemen. Thus world conditions were hemming in Arabia on all sides. It was Islam that not only saved Arabia but enabled it to expand and to play a prominent part in world history after the annihilation of the Persian Empire and the partial destruction of the Byzantine Empire.

10. The sixth century of the Christian era and the first half of the seventh century were indeed a marvellous period in the world's history. Great events and transformations were taking place throughout the then known world. We have referred to the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire which dominated the civilised portions of Europe, Africa and Western Asia. The only two other countries of note in history in those days were India and China. In India there was the glorious period of Harsha Vardhana (606-647 A.D.), in which art, science, and literature flourished, political power was on a healthy basis, and religious enquiry was bringing India and China into close relationship. The
famous Chinese Buddhist traveller Yuang-Chwang (or Yüang-Tsang or Hsüan-Tsang) performed his pious pilgrimage to India in 629-45. In China the glorious T'ang Dynasty was established in 618. The Chinese art of that Dynasty led the world. In political power Chinese extended from the Pacific in the east to the Persian Gulf on the west. There was unity and peace, and China—hitherto more or less isolated—received ambassadors from Persia, Constantinople, Magadha, and Nepal, in 643. But all this pomp and glitter had in it the seeds of decay. Persia and Byzantium collapsed in the next generation. India was in chaos after Harsha's death. The Chinese Empire could not long remain free from the "Barbarians": the Great Wall, begun in the third century B.C., was soon to be out of date. By about 683 the Khitans from the north-west and the Tibetans from the south were molesting China. The Germans, the Goths and the Vandals were pressing further and further into the Roman Empire. From Asia the Avars and the Turks were pressing both on the Romans and the Persians, and sometimes playing off the one against the other. The simpler and less sophisticated nations, with their ruder but more genuine virtues, were gaining ground. Into all that welter came the Message of Islam, to show up, as by galvanic action, the false from the truth, the empty from the eternal, the decrepit and corrupt from the vigorous and pure. The ground of History was being prepared for the New Birth in Religion.

11. Anaushîrwan was succeeded on the Persian throne by an unworthy son Hurmuz (579-590). Had it not been for the talents of his able General Bahram, his Empire would have been ruined by the invasions of the Turks on one side and of the Romans on the other. Eventually Bahram rebelled, and Hurmuz was deposed and killed. His son Khusrau Parwiz (Chosroes II) took refuge with the Byzantine Emperor Maurice, who practically adopted him as a son and restored him to the Persian throne with Roman arms. Khusrau reigned over Persia from 590 to 628. It was to him that the holy Prophet addressed one of his letters, inviting him to Islam towards the end of his life. It is not certain whether the letter was actually delivered to him or to his successor, as it is not easy to calculate precisely synchronous dates of the Christian era with those of the earliest years of the Hijri era.

12. In Arabic and Persian records the term Kîsrâ refers usually to Khusrau Parwiz (Chosroes II) and sometimes to Khusrau Anaushîrwân (Chosroes I), while the term Khusrau is usually treated as generic,—as the title of the Kings of Persia generally. But this is by no means always the case. "Kîsrâ" is an Arabic form of "Khusrau". The name of Anaushîrwan has been shortened from the time of Firdausi onwards to Nûshîrwân. The Pehlevi form is Anoshek-ruwân, "of immortal soul".

13. The Roman Emperor Maurice (582-602) had a mutiny in his army, and his capital revolted against him. The army chose a simple centurion called Phocas as Emperor and executed Maurice himself. The usurper Phocas ruled from 602 to 610, but his tyranny soon disgusted the Empire. Heraclius, the
governor (exarch) of a distant province in Africa, raised the standard of rebellion, and his young son, also called Heraclius, was sent to Constantinople to depose Phocas and assume the reins of power. It was this younger Heraclius, who ascended the throne of Constantinople in 610 and ruled till 642, who figures in Muslim history as Hiraq.

14. Khosrau Parwiz called himself the son of the Emperor Maurice. During his refuge at Constantinople he had married a Byzantine wife. In Nizami's Romance she is known as Maryam. According to some historians she was a daughter of the Emperor Maurice, but Gibbon throws doubt on that relationship. In any case he used the resources of the Persian Empire to fight the usurper Phocas. He invaded the Byzantine Empire in 603. The war between the Persians and the Romans became a national war and continued after the fall of Phocas in 610. The Persians had sweeping victories, and conquered Aleppo, Antioch, and the chief Syrian cities, including Damascus in 611. Jerusalem fell to their arms in 614-615, just 8 to 7 years before the sacred Hijrat. The city was burnt and pillaged, the Christians were massacred, the churches were burnt, the burial-place of Christ was itself insulted, and many relics, including the "true Cross" on which the Christians believed that Christ had been crucified, were carried away to Persia. The priests of the Persian religion celebrated an exultant triumph over the priests of Christ. In this pillage and massacre the Persians were assisted by crowds of Jews, who were discontented with the Christian domination, and the Pagans to whom any opportunity of plunder and destruction was in itself welcome. It is probably this striking event—this victory of the Persians over the Roman Empire—which is referred to in Sūra XXX (Rūm) of the Qurān. The Pagan Arabs naturally sides with the Persians in their destructive zeal, and thought that the destruction of the Christian power of Rome would also mean a setback to the Message of the Prophet, the true successor of Jesus. For our holy Prophet had already begun his mission and the promulgation of Allah's Revelation in A.D. 610. While the whole world believed that the Roman Empire was being killed by Persia, it was revealed to him that the Persian victory was short-lived and that within a period of a few years the Romans would conquer again and deal a deadly blow at the Persians. The Pagan Arabs, who were then persecuting the holy Prophet in Makkah hoped that their persecution would destroy the holy Prophet's new Revelation. In fact both their persecution and the deadly blows aimed by the Persians and the Romans at each other were instruments in Allah's hands for producing those conditions which made Islam thrive and increase until it became the predominant power in the world.

15. The Persian flood of conquest did not stop with the conquest of Jerusalem. It went on to Egypt, which was also conquered and annexed to the Persian Empire in 616. The Persian occupation reached as far as Tripoli in North Africa. At the same time another Persian army ravaged Asia Minor and reached right up to the gates of Constantinople. Not only the Jews and Pagan Arabs, but the various Christian sects which had been persecuted as heretics
by the Romans, joined in the fray and helped the Persians. The condition of Heraclius became indeed pitiable. With all these calamities, he had to deal with the Avars who were attacking from the other side of Constantinople, which was practically in a state of siege. Famine and pestilence added to the horrors of the situation.

16. In these desperate circumstances Heraclius conceived a brilliant plan. He knew that the Persians were weak in sea power. He used his sea power to attack them in the rear in 622 (the year of the Hijra) he transported his army by sea through the Ægean Sea to the bay just south of the Taurus Mountains. He fought a decisive battle with the Persians at Issus, in the same plain in which Alexander the Great had defeated the Persians of his day in his famous march to Syria and Egypt. The Persians were taken by surprise and routed. But they had still a large force in Asia Minor, which they could have brought into play against the Romans if Heraclius had not made another and equally unexpected dash by sea from the north. He returned to Constantinople by sea, made a treaty with the Avars, and with their help kept the Persians at bay round the capital. Then he led three campaigns, in 623, 624 and 625, along the southern shore of the Black Sea and took the Persians again in the rear in the region round Trebizond and Kars. Through Armenia he penetrated into Persia and got into Mesopotamia. He was now in a position to strike at the very heart of the Persian Empire. A decisive battle was fought on the Tigris near the city of Mosul in December 627. Before this battle, however, he had taken care to get the alliance of the Turks and with their help to relieve Constantinople in 626 against the Persians and the treacherous Avars who had then joined the Persians.

17. Heraclius celebrated his triumph in Constantinople in March 628. Peace was then made between the two Empires on the basis of the status quo ante. Heraclius, in pursuance of a vow he had made, went south in the autumn to Emessa (Hims) and from there marched on foot to Jerusalem to celebrate his victories, and restore to its place the holy Cross which had been carried away by the Persians and was returned to the Emperor as a condition of peace. Heraclius's route was strewn with costly carpets, and he thought that the final deliverance had come for his people and his empire. Either on the way, or in Jerusalem, he met a messenger from the holy Prophet, carrying a letter inviting him to the True Faith as renewed in the living Messenger of the age. He apparently received the messenger with courtesy. But he did not realise the full import of the new World which was being shaped according to Allah's plans, and the future that was opening out through the new Revelation. Perhaps in his heart he felt impressed by the story which he heard from the Arabs about the holy Prophet, but the apparent grandeur of his empire and the pride of his people prevented him from openly accepting the renewed Message of Allah. He caused a search to be made for any Arab who was sufficiently acquainted with the Prophet to tell him something about him. Abû Sufyân was then trading in a caravan in Syria. He was a cousin of the Prophet, and belonged to the
Umaiya branch of the family. He was sent for to Jerusalem (Elia Capitolina).

18. When Abū Sufyān was called to the presence of Heraclius, the Emperor questioned him closely about this new Prophet. Abū Sufyān himself was at that time outside Islam and really an enemy of the Prophet and of his Message. Yet the story he told—of the truth and the sincerity of the holy Prophet, of the way in which the poor and the lowly flocked to him, of the wonderful increase of his power and spiritual influence, and the way in which people who had once received the Light never got disillusioned or went back to their life of ignorance, and above all the integrity with which he kept all his covenants—made a favourable impression on the mind of Heraclius. That story is told in dramatic detail by Bukhārī and other Arabian writers.

19. The relations of the Persian Monarch with Islam were different. He—either Khusrau Parwīz or his successor—received the holy Prophet’s messenger with contumely and tore up his letter. “So will his kingdom be torn up,” said the holy Prophet when the news reached him. The Persian Monarch ordered his Governor in Yemen to go and arrest the man who had so far forgotten himself as to address the grandson of Anaushirwān on equal terms. When the Persian Governor tried to carry out his Monarch’s command, the result was quite different from what the great Persian King of Kings had expected. His agent accepted the truth of Islam, and Yemen was lost as a province to the Persian Empire and became a portion of the new Muslim State. Khusrau Parwīz died in February 628. He had been deposed and imprisoned by his own cruel and undutiful son, who reigned only for a year and a half. There were nine candidates for the Persian throne in the remaining four years. Anarchy reigned supreme in the Sāsānian Empire, until the dynasty was extinguished by the Muslim victory at the battle of Madiān in 637. The great and glorious Persian monarchy, full of pride and ambition, came to an ignominious end, and a new chapter opened for Persia under the banner of Islam.

20. The Roman Empire itself began to shrink gradually, loosing its territory, not to Persia, but to the new Muslim Power which absorbed both the ancient Empires. This Power arose in its vigour to proclaim a new and purified creed to the whole world. Already in the last seven years of Heraclius’s reign (635-642) several of the provinces nearest to Arabia had been annexed to the Muslim Empire. The Muslim Empire continued to spread on, in Asia Minor to the north and Egypt to the south. The Eastern Roman Empire became a mere shadow with a small bit of territory round its capital. Constantinople eventually surrendered to the Muslim arms in 1453.

21. That was the real end of the Roman Empire. But in the wonderful century in which the Prophet lived, another momentous Revolution was taking place. The Roman Pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) was creating a new Christianity as the old Christianity of the East was slowly dying out. The Patriarch of Constantinople had claimed to be the Universal Bishop, with
jurisdiction over all the other bishops of Christendom. This had been silently but gradually questioned by the Popes of Rome. They had been building up a liturgy, a church organisation and a body of discipline for the clergy, different from those of the Holy Orthodox Church. They had been extending their spiritual authority in the Barbarian provinces of Gaul and Spain. They had been amassing estates and endowments. They had been accumulating secular authority in their own hands. Pope Gregory the Great, converted the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Great Britain to his form of Christianity. He protected Italy from the ravages of the Franks and Lombards and raised the See of Rome to the position of a Power which exercised ample jurisdiction over the Western world. He was preparing the way for the time when one of his successors would crown under his authority the Frankish Charlemagne as Emperor of Rome and of the West (A.D. 800), and another of his successors would finally break away from the Orthodox Church of Constantinople in 1054 by the Pope’s excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople and Greeks.

References:—Among Western writers, the chief authority is Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: mainly chapters 40-42, and 45-46: I have given references to other chapters in the body of this Appendix: his delineation of the characters of Heraclius and Chosroes II is brief but masterly, L. Drapierrezon’s French monograph, L ‘Empereur Heraclius (Paris, 1869) throws further light on an interesting personality. A.J. Butler’s Arab Conquest of Egypt (Oxford, 1902) gives a good account of Heraclius. The famous French dramatist Corneille has left a Play on Heradius, but it turns more on an intricate and imaginary plot in the early life of Heradius than on the character of Heradius as Emperor. Nizami, in his Khusrav-o-Shirin (571 H. = 1175-66 A.D.) makes a reference at the end of his Romance to the holy Prophet’s letter to the Persian King, and does attempt in the course of the Romance a picture of the King’s character. He is a sort of wild Prince Hal before he comes to the throne. Shirin is an Armenian princess in love with Khusrav: she marries Khusrav after the death of his first wife Maryam, daughter of the Roman Emperor, and mother of the undutiful son who killed Khusrav and seized his throne. Among the other Eastern writers, we find a detailed description of the interview of Abū Sufyān in Būkhārī’s Sahih (book on the beginning of Inspiration): the notes in the excellent English translation of Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) are helpful. Tabars Historical is as usual valuable. Mirkhond’s (Khawīn-Shāb) Raoudhat-Us-Safā (translated by Rehatsek) will give English readers a summary (at second hand) of the various Arabic authorities. Maulana Shibli’s otherwise excellent Sīrat-un-Nabi is in this respect disappointing. Maulana Zafar ‘Ali’s Galaba-i-Rūm (Urdu, Lahore, 1926) is interesting for its comments.

A note on the Persian capitals may be interesting. So long as Persia was under the influence of the Semitic Elamites, the chief residence of the rulers was at Susa, near the modern Dizful, about 50 miles north-east of Shustar. In the Medirc or Median period (say B.C. 700 to 550) the capital was, as we should expect, in the highlands of Media, in Ecbatana, the site of the modern city of Hamadān, 180 miles west of modern Tīhrān. Ecbatana remained even in Sāsānian times the summer capital of Persia. With the Achaemenians (B.C. 550 to 330) we come to a period of full national and imperial life. Susa was the chief Achaemenian capital from the time of Darius I onwards, though Persepolis (Istakhr) in the mountain region near modern Shīrāz, and about 40 miles north-
east of Shīrāz, was used as the city of royal burial. Alexander himself, as Ruler in Persia, died in Babylon. Later, when the centre of gravity moved north and north-east, other sites were selected. The Arsacids (Ashkāniān) or Parthians were a tribal power, fitly called in Arabic the mulāk-ut-tawā; and had probably no fixed or centralised capital. The Sāsānians took over a site where there were a number of cities, among which were Ctesiphon and Seleucia on opposite banks of the river Tigris. This site is about 45 miles north of the old site of Babylon and 25 miles below the later city of Baghdad. Ctesiphon and Seleucia were Greek cities founded by one of Alexander's successors. Seleucia being named after Seleucus. This complex of seven cities was afterwards called by the Arabic name of Madāin ("the Cities"). The Takht-i-Kisrā (or Arch of Ctesiphon) still stands in a ruinous condition on this site. This seems to have been the chief capital of the Sāsānians at the Arab conquest, which may be dated either from the battle of Qādisiyya or that of Madāin (both fought in 637 A.D.), after which Persia which then included 'Iraq came into the Muslim Empire. The 'Abbāsī Empire built Baghdād for its capital under Manṣūr in 762 A.D. When that Empire was broken up in 1258 A.D. there was some confusion for two centuries. Then a national Persian Empire, the Şafwī (1499-1736) arose, and Shāh Šālim established his capital in the north-west corner in Ṭabrīz. Shāh 'Abbās the Great (1587-1628) had his capital at the more central city of ʻIsphān (or ʻIsfahān). After the Şafwī dynasty confusion reigned again for about four decades, when the Afghans were in the ascendant. When the Qāchār (or Qājār) dynasty (1795-1925) was firmly established under Āga Muḥammad Khān, ʻĪbrāhīm (Teheran), near the Caspian, where his family originated, became the capital, and it still remains the capital under the modern Pehlevi Dynasty.
APPENDIX 6.

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF ISLAM

(See paras. 11 and 8 of Appendix 5.)

The dates after the Hijrat, when given according to the Arabian Calendar, can usually be calculated exactly according to other Calendars, but it is not possible to synchronise exactly the earliest dates of the Arabian Calendar with the dates of the Christian Calendar, and for two reasons. In the first place, there seems to have been some discrepancy between the Calendars in Madinah and in Makkah. In the second place, the Arabian Calendar was roughly lunisolar, before the years of Farewell Pilgrimage (Zul-Hijjah, 10 H. = March 632). The Pagan Arabs were in the habit of counting months by the appearance of the moon, but irregularly intercalating a month once in about three years to bring the calendar up into conformity with the seasons. They did not do it on any astronomical calculations or on any system, but just as it suited their own selfish purposes, thus often upsetting all the old-established conventions about the months of peace and security from war and thus getting an unfair advantage for the clique in power in Makkah over their enemies (see my n. 1295 to ix. 36). Unless exact mathematical calculations are applied and reduced to a well-established system, there is apt to be confusion, and this can well be taken advantage of by arbitrary cliques in power. After the holy Prophet's adoption of the purely lunar calendar for ecclesiastical purposes, there is no confusion. Every date after A.H. 10 is exactly convertible into a corresponding date in any other accurate calendar. Wüstenfeld's and other Comparative Tables of Muslim and Christian dates may therefore be relied upon for dates after A.H. 10, but much caution is necessary in synchronisation for earlier dates.

Mualānā Shibli, in his Sirat-un-Nabī, Vol. I, p. 124 (edition of 1336 H. 1918 C.), adopts for the Prophet's Brithday the date 20th April 571, following Maḥmūd Pāshā. They go on the basis of an astronomical event, the total eclipse of the sun that was visible in Madinah on the day that the Prophet's son Ibrāhīm was taken to the mercy of Allah. But there is no agreement among the authorities as to the exact date either by the Christian or the Arabian Calendar. Shiblī, following Maḥmūd Pāshā, takes the date of the eclipse to be the 7th November 632. Muir (Life, ed. 1923, p. 429), assumes some date in June or July 631. L. Caetani (Chronographia Islamica, A.H. 10) gives the date of the eclipse as 4th or 5th July 631, which he synchronises with the 28th or 29th of Rabi' I, A.H. 10, but he quotes authorities for the death of Ibrāhīm as on the 16th June 631, synchronising it with the 10th of Rabi' I. A.H. 10. There is something wrong here, as the death and the eclipse occurred on the same day. Wāqidī gives the month as Rabi' I, A.H. 10, and gives Ibrāhīm a
life of 15 months. But if Abū Dā-ūd and Baihaqī are correct, Ibrāhīm lived only 2 months and 10 days, and as his date of birth is given in Zul-Hijjah A.H. 8, the date of death according to these authorities would be in Rabi‘ I, A.H. 9. On a review of all the authorities I feel inclined to accept the date for the eclipse and the death of Ibrāhīm as 28th or 29th of Rabi‘ I, A.H. 10 = 4th or 5th July 631. But this cannot be asserted with certainty. The French work of reference, L’art de vérifier les dates, Paris 1818 (Vol. I, p. 310), gives the date of the solar eclipse as the 3rd of August 631, 2-30 P.M. and according to the system adopted in that book, the corresponding Hijra date would be the 28th Rabī‘ II, A.H. 10.

Even if this particular date was certain and exact, a certain amount of uncertainty remains in counting dates backwards. Most authorities assume purely lunar year of 354 days for working backwards. Probably the Muslims in Madinah counted in this way even before the lunar year was fixed exactly in A.H. 10. But the mass of Pagan Arabs in Makkah and elsewhere probably were all the time intercalating a month roughly once in three years, as has been stated before, until their power was utterly destroyed by the conquest of Makkah; and therefore precise exactitude in pre-Conquest date or in the counting of people’s ages in years before 8-10 A.H. is unattainable. See a note on this subject in Margoliouth’s Life of the Prophet (p. xix. of the 3rd edition) and in Muir’s Life (p. x. of the 1923 edition).

The date of the actual Hijrat as given in Caetani may be accepted as Sept-Oct. 622, being in the month of Rabi‘ I. If the ninth of that month be accepted as the date of departure from the cave of Thaur, the best synchronised date would be 22nd September 622 C. But as the first month of the Arab year was (and is) Muharram, the Hijrī year I is counted as beginning on the 15th or 16th July 622 (= 1 Muḥarram A.H. 1). The formal adoption of the Hijrī era in official documents date from the Khilāfat of Ḥadhrat ‘Umar,—from the year 17-18 H. according to Ṭabarī.

Sir Wolseley Haig’s Comparative Tables of Muhhammadan and Christian Dates (London, Luzac, 1932), gives in a handy form three comparative Tables which enable the synchronisation of Hijrī years from A.H. 1 to A.H. 1421. The main Table for these years was printed earlier at the end of S. Haim’s New English-Persian Dictionary, Teheran, 1931. The exact title of Wüstenfeld’s German Tables is: Wüstenfeld-Mahler, Vergleichungs-Tabellen, Leipzig, 1926 (2nd edition).
INTRODUCTION TO SURAT Luqman, 31.

The argument of the Final End of Things is here continued from another point of view. What is Wisdom? Where shall she be found? Will she solve the mysteries of Time and Nature, and that world higher than physical Nature, which brings us nearer to Allah? "Yes," is the answer; "if, as in the advice of Luqman the Wise, human wisdom looks to Allah in true worship, ennobles every act of life with true kindness, but avoids the false indulgence that infringes the divine law,—and in short follows the golden mean of virtue." And this is indicated by every Sign in nature.

The chronology of this Sura has no significance. In the main, it belongs to the late Makkah period.

Summary,—The earnest seekers after righteousness receive guidance, unlike the seekers after vanity, who perish: all Creation bears witness to this: Wisdom, as expounded by Luqman the Wise, is true service to Allah, and consists in moderation (xxxi. 1-19)

True Wisdom is firm and enduring, and discerns Allah's Law in the working of His Creation: it looks to the Final End of Things, whose mystery is only known to Allah (xxxi. 20-34).
Sūra Luqmān 31 Āyat 1-5

Luqmān (the Wise).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M. 3579

2. These are Verses
   Of the Wise Book,- 3580

3. A Guide and a Mercy
   To the Doers of Good,- 3581

4. Those who establish regular Prayer,
   And give zakat
   And have sure faith in
   The Hereafter. 3582

5. These are on (true) guidance 3583
   From their Lord; and these
   Are the ones who will prosper.

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3579. See n. 25 to ii. 1 and Introduction to S. xxx.

3580. This Sūra relates to Wisdom, and the Qur-ān is appropriately called the Wise Book, or the Book of Wisdom. In verse 12 below there is a reference to Luqmān the Wise. “Wise” in this sense (Ḥakīm) means not only a man versed in knowledge human and divine, but one carrying out in practical conduct (ʿamal) the right course in life to the utmost of his power. His knowledge is correct and practical, but not necessarily complete: for no man is perfect. Such an ideal involves the conception of a man of heroic action as well as of deep and workman-like knowledge of nature and human nature,—not merely dreams or speculation. That ideal was fulfilled in a most remarkable degree in the holy Prophet, and in the sacred Book which was revealed through him. “The Wise Book” (Kitāb-ul-Ḥakīm) is one of the titles of the Qur-ān.

3581. A guide to all, and, to those who accept its guidance, a source of mercy as leading them to Salvation.

3582. The righteous are distinguished here by three marks, which are summed up in the phrase “doers of good”, viz.: (1) they yearn towards Allah in duty, love, and prayer, (2) they love and serve their fellow-men in charity, (3) they win peace and rest for themselves in the assured hope of the Future.

3583. They get these blessings because they submit their will to Allah’s Will and receive His guidance. They will do well in this life (from the highest standpoint) and they will reach their true Goal in the Future.
6. But there are, among men,
   Those who purchase idle tales,\textsuperscript{3584}
   Without knowledge (or meaning),
   To mislead (men) from the Path
   Of Allah and throw ridicule
   (On the Path): for such
   There will be a humiliating
   Chastisement.

7. When Our Signs are rehearsed
   To such a one, he turns\textsuperscript{3585}
   Away in arrogance, as if
   He heard them not, as if
   There were deafness in both
   His ears: announce to him
   A grievous Chastisement.

8. For those who believe
   And work righteous deeds,
   There will be Gardens
   Of Bliss,—

9. To dwell therein. The promise
   Of Allah is true: and He
   Is Exalted in power,\textsuperscript{3586}
   Wise.

10. He created the heavens
    Without any pillars that ye\textsuperscript{3587}

\textsuperscript{3584} Life is taken seriously by men who realise the issues that hang upon it. But there are men of a frivolous turn of mind who prefer idle tales to true Realities and they are justly rebuked here. In the time of the holy Prophet there was a pagan Nadhr ibn al-Harith who preferred Persian romances to the Message of Allah, and turned away ignorant men from the preaching of Allah's Word.

\textsuperscript{3585} Such men behave as if they had heard nothing of serious import, or laugh at serious teaching. The loss will be their own. They will miss the higher things of life and be left out of Allah's blessings. Ignorance and arrogance are in most cases the causes of their fall.

\textsuperscript{3586} He is Exalted in power, and can carry out His Will, and nothing can stop the carrying out of His promise. He is also infinitely Wise: His promise is therefore full of meaning: it is not merely without purpose: it has a place in the Universal Plan.

\textsuperscript{3587} Cf. xiii. 2 and n. 1800.
Can see; He set
On the earth mountains:\[3588\]
Standing firm, lest it
Should shake with you;
And He scattered through it
Beasts of all kinds.:\[3589\]
We send down rain:\[3590\]
From the sky, and produce
On the earth every kind
Of noble creature, in pairs.:\[3591\]

11. Such is the Creation of Allah:
Now show Me\[3592\] what is there
That others besides Him
Have created: nay, but
The Transgressors are
In manifest error.

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3588. Cf. xvi. 15 and n. 2038.
3589. Cf. ii. 164 and n. 166.

3590. Note the change of the pronoun at this stage in the verse. Before this, Allah was spoken of in the third person, "He", and the acts of Creation referred to were acts that in the main were completed when the universe as we see it came into being, though its slow age-long evolution continues. After this, Allah speaks in the first person "We"—the plural of honour, as explained before (see n. 56 to ii. 38); and the processes spoken of are those that go on continually before us, as in the case of rain and the growth of the vegetable kingdom. In some way the creation of the heavens and the earth and animal life on it may be considered impersonal to man, while the processes of rain and vegetation may be considered in special personal relationship to him.

3591. I think that sex life in plants is referred to, as in xiii. 3, where see n. 1804, though the pairs here may refer to animals also. "Noble" (karīm) may refer to the more beneficent plants and trees (and animals), which Allah has created for man's use.

3592. The transition from "We" in the last verse to "Me" in this verse means a still more personal relation to Allah: (see n. 56 to ii. 38): as we are now asked about the true worship of Allah, as against the false worship of others besides Allah.
SECTION 2.

12. We bestowed (in the past) Wisdom on Luqman:
   "Show (thy) gratitude to Allah."
   Any who is (so) grateful
   Does so to the profit
   Of his own soul: but if
   Any is ungrateful, verily Allah is free of all wants,
   Worthy of all praise.

13. Behold, Luqman said To his son admonishing him
   "O my son!
   Join not in worship
   (Others) with Allah: for False worship is indeed
   The highest wrong-doing."

14. And We have enjoined on man (To be good) to his parents:

3593. The sage Luqmân, after whom this Sûra is called, belongs to Arab tradition. Very little is known of his life. He is usually associated with a long life, and his title is *Mu'ammar* (the long-lived). He is referred by some to the age of the ‘Ad people, for whom see n. 1040 to vii. 65. He is the type of perfect wisdom. It is said that he belonged to a humble station in life, being a slave or a carpenter, and that he refused worldly power and a kingdom. Many instructive apologetics are credited to him, similar to Æsop’s Fables in Greek tradition. The identification of Luqman and Æsop has no historical foundation, though it is true that the traditions about them have influenced each other.

3594. Cf. xiv. 8. The basis of the moral Law is man’s own good, and not any benefit to Allah, for Allah is above all needs, and “worthy of all praise”; i.e., even in praising Him, we do not advance His glory. When we obey His Will, we bring our position into conformity with our own nature as made by Him.

3595. Luqmân is held up as a pattern of wisdom, because he realised the best in a wise life in this world, as based upon the highest Hope in the inner life. To him, as in Islam, true human wisdom is also divine wisdom: the two cannot be separated. The beginning of all wisdom, therefore, is conformity with the Will of Allah (xxxi. 12). That means that we must understand our relations to Him and worship Him aright (xxxi. 13). Then we must be good to mankind, beginning with our own parents (xxxi. 14). For the two duties are not diverse, but one. Where they appear to conflict, there is something wrong with the human will (see n. 3597).
3596. The set of milk teeth in a human child is completed at the age of two years, which is therefore the natural extreme limit for breast-feeding. In our artificial life the duration is much less.

3597. Where the duty to man conflicts with the duty to Allah, it means that there is something wrong with the human will, and we should obey Allah rather than man. But even here, it does not mean that we should be arrogant or insolent. To parents and those in authority, we must be kind, considerate, and courteous, even where they command things which we should not do and therefore disobedience becomes our highest duty.

The worship of things other than Allah is the worship of false things, things which are alien to our true knowledge, things that go against our own pure nature as created by Allah.

3598. In any apparent conflict of duties our standard should be Allah's Will, as declared to us by His command. That is the way of those who love Allah: and their motive in disobedience to parents or human authority where disobedience is necessary by Allah's Law is not self willed rebellion or defiance, but love of Allah, which means the true love of man in the highest sense of the word. And the reason we should give is: "Both you and I have to return to Allah; therefore not only must I follow Allah's Will, but you must command nothing against Allah's Will."
And I will tell you
All that ye did. 3599

16. “O my son!” (said Luqmān), 3600
“If there be (but) the weight
Of a mustard-seed and
It were (hidden) in a rock, 3601
Or (anywhere) in the heavens or
On earth, Allah will bring it
Forth: for Allah is subtle and
Aware. 3602

17. “O my son! establish
Regular prayer, enjoin what is
Just, and forbid what is wrong:
And bear with patient constancy
Whate’er betide thee; for this
Is firmness (of purpose)
In (the conduct of) affairs.

18. “And swell not thy cheek 3603
(For pride) at men.

3599. These conflicts may appear to us strange and puzzling in this life. But in
Allah’s Presence we shall see their real meaning and significance. It may be that that was
one way in which our true mettle could be tested: for it is not easy to disobey and love
man at the same time.

3600. Verses 14-15 are not the direct speech of Luqmān but flow by way of
commentary on his teaching. He was speaking as a father to his son, and he could not
very well urge respect for himself and draw the son’s attention to the limitations of filial
obedience. These verses may be supposed to be general directions flowing from Luqmān’s
teaching to men, and not directed to his son; though in either case, as Luqmān got
wisdom from Allah, it is divine principles that are enunciated.

3601. The mustard-seed is proverbially a small, minute thing, that people may
ordinarily pass by. Not so Allah. Further emphasis is laid by supposing the mustard-seed
to be hidden beneath a rock or in the cleft of a rock, or to be lost in the spacious expanse
of the earth or of the heavens. To Allah everything is known, and He will bring it forth,
i.e., take account of it.

3602. For Latif as a title applied to Allah, see n. 2844 to xxii. 63.

3603. The word “cheek” in English, too, means arrogance or effrontery, with a
slightly different shade added, viz.: effrontery from one in an inferior position to one in
a superior position. The Arabic usage is wider, and includes smug self-satisfaction and
a sense of lofty superiority.
Nor walk in insolence
Through the earth:
For Allah loveth not
Any arrogant boaster.

19. “And be moderate
In thy pace, and lower\(^{3604}\)
Thy voice; for the harshest
Of sounds without doubt
Is the braying of the ass.”

SECTION 3.

20. Do ye not see
That Allah has subjected\(^{3605}\)
To your (use) all things
In the heavens and on earth,
And has made His bounties
Flow to you in exceeding
Measure, (both) seen and
unseen?\(^{3606}\)

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\(^{3604}\) The “Golden Mean” is the pivot of the philosophy of Luqmān as it is of the philosophy of Aristotle and indeed of Islam. And it flows naturally from a true understanding of our relation to Allah and His universe and to our fellow-creatures, especially man. In all things be moderate. Do not go the pace, and do not be stationary or slow. Do not be talkative and do not be silent. Do not be loud and do not be timid or half-hearted. Do not be too confident, and do not be cowed down. If you have patience, it is to give you constancy and determination, that you may bravely carry on the struggle of life. If you have humility, it is to save you from unseemly swagger, not to curb your right spirit and your reasoned determination.

\(^{3605}\) Allah’s Creation is independent of man. But Allah, in His infinite mercy, has given man the faculty to subdue the forces of nature and to penetrate through high mysteries with his powers of reason and insight. But this is not merely a question of power. For in His Universal Plan, all are safeguarded. But man’s destiny, as far as we can see, is noble to the highest degree.

\(^{3606}\) Allah’s grace and bounties work for us at all times. Sometimes we see them, and sometimes we do not. In things which we can apprehend with our senses, we can see Allah’s grace, but even in them, sometimes it works beyond the sphere of our knowledge. In the inner or spiritual world, sometimes, when our vision is clear, we can see it working, and often we are not conscious of it. But it works all the same.
Yet there are among men
Those who dispute about Allah,
Without knowledge and without
Guidance, and without a Book³⁶⁰⁷
To enlighten them!

21. When they are told to follow
The (Revelation) that Allah
Has sent down, they say:
“Nay, we shall follow
The ways that we found
Our fathers (following).” ³⁶⁰⁸
What! even if it is
Satan beckoning them
To the Chastisement
Of the (Blazing) Fire?

22. Whoever submits
His whole self to Allah,
And is a doer of good,
Has grasped indeed
The firmest hand-hold:³⁶⁰⁹
And to Allah shall
All things return.³⁶¹⁰

23. But if any reject Faith,
Let not his rejection
Grieve thee: to Us³⁶¹¹

³⁶⁰⁷. Such men lack knowledge, as they make no use of their intellects but are swayed by their passions; they lack guidance, as they are impatient of control; and the fruits of revelation, or spiritual insight, do not reach them, as they reject Faith and Revelation.

³⁶⁰⁸. They do not realise that in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, there is constant progress for the live ones: they are spiritually dead, as they are content to stand on ancestral ways, many of them evil, and leading to perdition.

³⁶⁰⁹. Cf. ii. 256 and n. 301.

³⁶¹⁰. Cf. xxii. 41. Everything goes back to Allah. He is our final Goal, as He is the final Goal of all things.

³⁶¹¹. The man of God should not grieve because people reject Faith. He should do his duty and leave the rest to Allah. Every soul must return to Allah for his reckoning. Allah knows everything, and His Universal Plan is full of wisdom.
Is their Return, and We
Shall tell them the truth
Of their deeds: for Allah
Knows well all that is
In (men's) hearts.

24. We grant them their pleasure
For a little while: 3612
In the end shall We
Drive them to
A chastisement unrelenting.

25. If thou ask them,
Who it is that created
The heavens and the earth. 3613
They will certainly say,
"Allah", Say: "Praise be to
Allah!" 3614
But most of them
Know not.

26. To Allah belong all things
In heaven and earth: verily
Allah is He (that is)
Free of all wants,
Worthy of all praise. 3615

3612. Cf. ii. 126. The respite in this life is of short duration. The ultimate Penalty
of Evil is such as cannot be quenched. Cf. xiv. 17. It will be too late then to repent.

3613. Cf. xxiii. 84-89, and xxix. 61 and n. 3493. Men will acknowledge that Allah
created the heavens and the earth, and yet fail to understand the love and goodness of
Allah in continuing to cherish and maintain them with His gifts. Even if they allow this,
they sometimes yet fall short of the corollary, that He is the only One to be worshipped,
and run after their own false gods in the shapes of their fancies and lusts. They do not
do the duties which, if they rightly understood their own nature and position, they should
take a delight in doing.

3614. This ejaculation expresses our satisfaction that at least this is recognised,—that
the Creator of the whole world is Allah. It is a pity that they do not go further and
recognise other facts and duties (see the last note).

3615. Cf. above, xxxi. 12. There was begun the argument about showing gratitude
to Allah, introducing Luqman's teaching and philosophy. Such gratitude is shown by our
understanding His love and doing our duty to Him by serving our fellow-men. For Allah =
27. And if all the trees
On earth were pens
And the Ocean (were ink),
With seven Oceans behind it
To add to its (supply),
Yet would not the Words of Allah be exhausted
(In the writing): for Allah
Is Exalted in power,
Full of Wisdom.

28. And your creation
Or your resurrection
Is in no wise but
As an individual soul:
For Allah is He Who
Hears and sees (all things).

29. Seest thou not that
Allah merges Night into Day; And He merges Day into Night;

3616. "Words of Allah": his wonderful Signs and Commandments are infinite and cannot be expressed if all the trees were made into pens, and all the wide Ocean, multiplied seven times, were made into ink. Any Book of His Revelation would deal with matters which man can understand and use in his life: there are things that man can never fathom. Nor would any praise that we could write with infinite resources be adequate to describe His power, glory, and wisdom.

3617. Allah's greatness and infinitude are such that He can create and cherish not only a whole mass, but each individual soul, and He can follow its history and doings until the final Judgment. This shows not only Allah's glory and Omnipotence: it also shows the value of each individual soul in His eyes, and lifts individual responsibility right up into relations with Him.

3618. Cf. xxii. 61 and n. 2841. Even when we can form a conception of Allah's infinitude by His dealings with each individual in His Creation as in verse 28 above, it is still inadequate. What is an individual himself? What is his relation to the universal Laws of Allah? In outer nature we can see that there is no clear-cut line between night and day: each merges into the other. Yet the sun and moon obey definite laws. Though =
SECTION 4.

30. That is because Allah is
The Truth and because
Whatever else they invoke\textsuperscript{3619}
Besides Him is Falsehood;
And because Allah,—He is
The Most High, Most Great.

31. Seest thou not that
The ships sail through
The Ocean by the grace
Of Allah?—that He may
Show you of His Signs?
Verily in this are Signs
For all who constantly persevere\textsuperscript{3620}
And give thanks.

\begin{align*}
\text{That He has subjected the sun} \\
\text{And the moon (to His Law),} \\
\text{Each running its course} \\
\text{For a term appointed; and} \\
\text{That Allah is well acquainted} \\
\text{With all that ye do?}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{3619} Cf. xxii. 62 and note 2842 and 2843. All the wonderful complexities, gradations, and nuances, that we find in Creation, are yet blended in one harmonious whole, that obeys Law and exemplifies Order. They therefore point to the One True God. He is the only Eternal Reality. Anything put up in competition or equality with Him is only Falsehood. For He is higher and greater than anything we can imagine.

\textsuperscript{3620} Even the things that man makes are, as using the forces of Nature, evidence of the grace of Allah, Who has subdued these wonderful forces to the use of man. But this gift of mastery can only be understood and appreciated by constant perseverance, combined with a recognition of the divine gifts ("giving thanks"). \textit{Sabbar} is an intensive form from \textit{sabr} and I have indicated it by the adverb "constantly".
32. When a wave covers them
   Like the canopy (of clouds),
   They call upon Allah,
   Offering Him sincere devotion.\(^{3621}\)
   But when He has delivered them
   Safely to land, there are
   Among them those that falter\(^{3622}\)
   Between (right and wrong).
   But none reject Our Signs
   Except only a perfidious
   Ungrateful (wretch)!

33. O mankind! do your duty
   To your Lord and fear
   (The coming of) a Day
   When no father can avail
   Aught for his son, nor
   A son avail aught
   For his father.\(^{3623}\)
   Verily, the promise of Allah
   Is true: let not then
   This present life deceive you,
   Nor let the Chief Deceiver\(^{3624}\)
   Deceive you about Allah.

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3621. Cf. vii. 29. Unlike the people mentioned in the last verse, who constantly seek Allah's help and give thanks for His mercies by using them aright and doing their duty, there is a class of men whose worship is merely inspired by terror. When they are in physical danger—the only kind of danger they appreciate,—e.g., in a storm at sea, they genuinely think of Allah. But once the danger is past, they become indifferent or wish to appear good while dallying with evil. See next verse.

3622. They halt between two opinions. They are not against good, but they will not eschew evil. They are a contrast to those who “constantly persevere and give thanks”. But such an attitude amounts really to “perfidious ingratitude”.

3623. On the Day of Reckoning no one can help another. The most loving father cannot help his son or be a substitute for him, and vice versa. Each will have his own personal responsibilities.

3624. The Chief Deceiver is Satan. It may make us forget that Time is fleeting and delude us by suggesting that the Reckoning may not come, whereas it is certain to come, because Allah's promise is true. We must not play with Time nor be deceived by appearances. The Day may come to-day or to-morrow or when we least expect it.
3625. The question of Knowledge or Mystery governs both clauses here, *viz.*: Rain and Wombs. In fact it governs all the five things mentioned in this verse: *viz.* (1) the Hour; (2) Rain; (3) the Birth of a new Life (Wombs); (4) our Physical Life from day to day; (5) our Death. See n. 3627 below. As regards Rain we are asked to contemplate how and when it is sent down. The moisture may be sucked up by the sun’s heat in the Arabian Sea or the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean near East Africa, or in the Lake Region in Central Africa. The winds drive it hither and thither across thousands of miles, or it may be, only short distances. “The wind bloweth where it listeth.” No doubt it obeys certain physical Laws established by Allah, but how these Laws are interlocked, one with another! Meteorology, gravity, hydrostatics and dynamics, climatology, hygrometry, and a dozen other sciences are involved, and no man can completely master all of them, and yet this relates to only one of the millions of facts in physical nature, which are governed by Allah’s Knowledge and Law. The whole vegetable kingdom is primarily affected by Rain. The mention of Wombs brings in the mystery of animal Life, Embryology, Sex, and a thousand other things. Who can tell—how long it will remain in the womb, whether it will be born alive, what sort of a new individual it will be,—a blessing or a curse to its parents, or to Society?

3626. “Earn” here, as elsewhere, means not only “earn one’s livelihood” in a physical sense, but also to reap the consequences (good or ill) of one’s conduct generally. The whole sentence practically means; “no man knows what the morrow may bring forth.”
Nor does any one know
In what land he is
To die. Verily with Allah
Is full knowledge and He
Is acquainted (with all things).\textsuperscript{3627}

\textsuperscript{3627}. See the five Mysteries summed up in n. 3625 above. The argument is about the mystery of Time and Knowledge. We are supposed to know things in ordinary life. But what does that knowledge amount to in reality? Only a superficial acquaintance with things. And Time is even more uncertain. In the case of rain, which causes vegetable life to spring up, or in the case of new animal life, can we answer with precision questions as to When or How or Wherefore? So about questions of our life from day to day or of our death. These are great mysteries, and full knowledge is with Allah only. How much more so in the case of the \textit{Ma'\textsuperscript{a}d}, the Final House, when all true values will be restored and the balance redressed? It is certain, but the When and the How are known to Allah alone.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT As-Sajda, 32.

This short Sūra closes the series of the four A.L.M. Sūras, which began with the 29th. Its theme is the issues of Creation, Time and Ma'ād (the Final End) as viewed through the light of Allah's revelation. The contemplation of these issues should lead to Faith and the adoration of Allah. In chronology it belongs to the middle Makkan period and is therefore a little earlier than the last, but its chronology has no bearing.

Summary.—The issues of Creation, the Time, and the End of Things are but known by external symbols to man; Revelation brings faith and humble adoration, and is a blessing like Rain, which brings life to dead soil (xxxii. 1-30).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M.  

2. (This is) the revelation Of the Book in which There is no doubt,— From the Lord of the Worlds.

3. O, do they say, "He has forged it"? Nay, it is the Truth From thy Lord that thou Mayest admonish a people To whom no warner Has come before thee: In order that they May be rightly guided.

4. It is Allah Who has Created the heavens And the earth, and all

3628. See n. 25 to ii. 1, and Introduction to S. xxx.

3629. By the time of the holy Prophet the earlier Books of Revelation had been corrupted, by human ignorance or selfishness or fraud, or misinterpreted, or lost altogether. There were sects violently disputing with each other as to their true meaning. Such doubts had to be set at rest, and they were set at rest by the revelation of the Qur-an. The Quranic inspiration came direct from Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and did not consist merely of human conjectures or a reconstructed philosophy, in which there is always room for doubt or dispute. Cf. also ii. 2.

3630. The force of “or” (am in Arabic) is that the only alternative to the acceptance of the Book as a divine revelation is the supposition that it was a forgery by the holy Prophet. But the supposition is absurd on the face of it: because (1) the Quraish, his critics, knew him to be an honest and truthful man; (2) he was unlettered, and such a Book would have been beyond his powers as a simple unlettered Arab, unless Allah inspired it; and (3) there was a definite reason for its coming as it did, because the Arabs had received no Messenger before him and Allah has sent Messengers to every nation.

3631. The Arabs very much needed guidance for themselves, and the advent of a World Prophet through them was what might have been expected in view of the past course of Allah’s Revelations.
Between them, in six Days,\textsuperscript{3632} Then He established Himself  
On the Throne:\textsuperscript{3633}  
Ye have none, besides Him,  
To protect or intercede (for you):  
Will ye not then  
Receive admonition?  

5. He directs the affairs  
From the heavens  
To the earth: then  
It ascends\textsuperscript{3634}  
Unto Him, on a Day  
The measure of which is  
A thousand years  
Of your reckoning.  

6. Such is He, the Knower  
Of all things, hidden  
And open, the Exalted  
(In power), the Merciful;\textsuperscript{3635}

\textsuperscript{3632} Six Days: See n. 1031 to vii. 54. The “Day” does not mean a day as we reckon it. \textit{viz.}, one apparent course of the sun round the earth, for it refers to conditions which began before the earth and the sun were created. In verse 5 below, a Day is compared to a thousand years of our reckoning, and in \textsuperscript{xii} 4 to 50,000 years. These figures “as we reckon” have no relation to “timeless Time”, and must be taken to mean very long Periods, or Ages, or \AEons. See further \textsuperscript{xii} 9-12, and notes.  

\textsuperscript{3633} Cf. x. 3. n. 1386. Allah created the World as we see it in six great Stages. But after the initial creation, He is still in authority and directs and controls all affairs. He has not delegated His powers to others, and Himself retired. Also see vii. 54.  

\textsuperscript{3634} How could the immense mystery of Time behind our ideas of it be enforced on our minds better? Our Day may be a thousand or fifty thousand years, and our years in proportion. In the immense Past was Allah’s act of creation: it still continues, for He guides, rules, and controls all affairs: and in the immense Future all affairs will go up to Him, for He will be the Judge, and His restoration of all values will be as in a Day or an Hour or the Twinkling of an eye; and yet to our ideas it will be as a thousand years!  

\textsuperscript{3635} Allah’s attributes, then, may be summed up with reference to Knowledge, Power, and Mercy. Where our knowledge is partial and uncertain, His is complete and certain. Where our power often falls short of the carrying out of our will, or needs the help of Time, His is complete and conterminous with His Will. Where our mercy seems to be bounded by or opposed to justice, His is absolute and unconditioned.
7. **He Who created**
   All things in the
   Best way and He began
   The creation of man
   From clay.

8. And made his progeny
   From a quintessence
   Of despised fluid.

9. But He fashioned him
   In due proportion, and breathed
   Into him
   His spirit. And He gave
   You (the faculties of) hearing
   And sight
   And understanding
   Little thanks do ye give!

---

3636. **Allah's creation in itself is good:** it is beautiful, in proper proportions, and adapted for the functions it has to perform. There is no evil or disorder in it. Such evil or disorder as creeps in is due to man's will (as far as the world of man is concerned), and spiritual Teaching is directed to train and cure that will and bring it into conformity with the Universal Order and Plan.

3637. **Man is asked to contemplate his own humble beginning.** His material body (apart from life) is a piece of earth or clay, which is another term for primeval matter. Matter is therefore the first stage, but even matter was not self-created. It was created by Allah.

3638. Then comes life and the reproduction of life. We are still looking at the purely physical aspect, but it is now a stage higher; it is an animal. Its reproduction is through the sperm or semen, which is a quintessence of every part of the body of man. Yet it issues from the same part of his body as the urine, and is therefore despicable in man's sight. It is a living cell or cells, summing up so much ancestral life-history. Cf. xxiii. 12, and n. 2872.

3639. The third stage is indicated by "fashioned him in due proportion". Cf. xv. 29. After fertilisation of ovum by the sperm, an individual life comes into existence, and it is gradually fashioned into shape, its limbs are formed; its animal life begins to function; all the beautiful adaptations come into play. The fourth stage here mentioned is that of distinctive Man, into whom Allah's spirit is breathed. Then he rises higher than animals.

3640. As a complete man he gets the higher faculties. The five animal senses I understand to be included in the third stage. But in the fourth stage he rises higher, and is addressed in the second person, "you," instead of the third person "him". He has now =
10. And they say: “What!
When we lie, hidden
And lost, in the earth,
Shall we indeed be
In a Creation renewed? 3641
Nay, they deny the Meeting
With their Lord!”

11. Say: “The Angel of Death,
Put in charge of you,
Will (duly) take your souls: 3642
Then shall ye be brought
Back to your Lord.”

SECTION 2.

12. If only thou couldst see
When the guilty ones
Will bend low their heads
Before their Lord, (saying:)
“Our Lord! We have seen
And we have heard.” 3643

3641. Cf. xiii. 5. It has been the cry of Materialists and Sceptics through the ages not only to bound their horizon with this brief life, but to deny dogmatically that there can be a future life. Though this is against the professed principles of Sceptics, in practice they take up that attitude. Here “they” refers to those “who give little thanks” to Allah, mentioned in the last verse. The argument used against them is: if Allah can produce such a wonderful creation the first time, why can He not make it again? That points to the possibility: our own general inner hope and expectation of a future life, coupled with Faith in Allah’s work, is the ground of our certainty.

3642. If death is certain, as it is, and this life by itself in no way satisfies our instincts and expectations, we may be sure that the agency which separates our soul from our body will bring us into the new world. If we believe in a soul at all—the very foundation of Religion—we must believe in a Future, without which the soul has no meaning.

3643. In life on the new plane, there will be no room for deception or self-deception. The most hardened sinner will see the truth and the justice of the Day of Account. He will wish he could be sent back, but it will be too late. The world as we know it will have already passed away.
Now then send us back
(To the world): we will
Work righteousness: for we
Do indeed (now) believe.”

13. If We had so willed,3644
We could certainly have brought
Every soul its true guidance:
But the Word from Me3645
Will come true, “I will
Fill Hell with Jinn
And men all together.”

14. “Taste ye then—for ye
Forgot the Meeting3646
Of this Day of yours,
And We too will
Forget you—taste ye
The chastisement of Eternity
For your (evil) deeds!”

3644. Could evil have been avoided? Certainly everything is in Allah's power. If it
had been His Will and Plan, He could have created a world in which there would have
been no choice or will in any of His creatures. But that was not His Will and Plan. In
the world as we see it, man has a certain amount of choice and free-will. That being
so, He has provided Signs and means of instruction for man, in order that man's will
may be straight and pure. A necessary corollary will be Punishment for the infraction of
His Law. That Punishment must come to pass, for Allah's Word is true and must be
fulfilled.

3645. Cf. xi. 119. n. 1623, and vii. 18, and see last note. Jinn are the evil spirits
that tempt men, and the men who will suffer punishment will be those who have
succumbed to their temptations.

3646. “Forgot”: Cf. n. 1029 to vii. 51. “Forget” is here in the sense of “to ignore
deliberately, to reject with scorn”. In the sense of mistake or defect of knowledge it is
inapplicable to the All-Perfect Being, for we are expressly told: “My Lord never err,
nor forgets”: xx. 52.
15. Only those believe
   In Our Signs, who, when
   They are recited to them
   Fall down in adoration,\(^{3647}\)
   And celebrate the praises
   Of their Lord, nor are they
   (Ever) puffed up with pride.

16. They forsake\(^{3648}\)
   Their beds of sleep, the while
   They call on their Lord,
   In Fear and Hope:\(^{3649}\)
   And they spend (in charity)
   Out of the sustenance which
   We have bestowed on them.

17. Now no person knows
   What delights of the eye\(^{3650}\)
   Are kept hidden (in reserve)
   For them—as a reward
   For their (good) Deeds.

18. Is then the man
   Who believes no better

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3647. “In adoration”: Sujjadan, or in a posture of prostration, expressive of deep humility and faith. This is the keyword of the Sūra, which bears the title of Sajda. All the Signs of Allah lead our thoughts upwards towards Him, and when they are expounded, our attitude should be one of humble gratitude to Allah. At this passage it is usual to make a prostration.

3648. Men and women “breathless with adoration” shun soft, comfortable beds, and luxurious sleep. Their limbs are better exercised in offices of devotion and prayer, especially by night. Commentators specially refer this to Prayers called Tahajjud, which are offered after midnight in the small hours of the morning.

3649. In Fear and Hope: in spiritual fear lest their dedication to Allah should not be sufficiently worthy to be accepted, and a spiritual longing or hope that their shortcomings will be overlooked by the Mercy of Allah. And their adoration is not shown only in Prayer, but also in practical Service and Charity, out of whatever gifts they may have received from Allah.

3650. Delights of the eye: an idiom for that which pleases most and gives most satisfaction. In our present state we can scarcely imagine the real Bliss that will come to us in the Future.
Than the man who is
Rebellious and wicked?\textsuperscript{3651}
Not equal are they.

19. For those who believe
And do righteous deeds,
Are Gardens as hospitable\textsuperscript{3652}
Homes, for their (good) deeds.

20. As to those who are
Rebellious and wicked, their abode
Will be the Fire: every time\textsuperscript{3653}
They wish to get away
Therefrom, they will be forced
Thereinto, and it will be said
To them: "Taste ye
The Chastisement of the Fire,
The which ye were wont
To reject as false."

21. And indeed We will make
Them taste of the lighter
Chastisement\textsuperscript{3654} in order
That they may (repent and) return.

\textsuperscript{3651} The Future of the two classes—the Blessed and the Wicked—is described in verses 19-22.

\textsuperscript{3652} A home brings before our minds a picture of peace and happiness. When to it are added honour and hospitality, it adds further to the idea of happiness.

\textsuperscript{3653} Cf. xxii. 22. Just as the gardens is the type of Bliss, so is the Fire the type of Penalty and suffering. There will be no getting away from it. What will be the thoughts of those who had earned it? "We used to reject the idea of the Consequences as a mere chimera: and now we find it to be true!" What will be their feelings then? How will they like it!

\textsuperscript{3654} The final Penalty is to come in the Hereafter. There is no doubt about it. But before it comes, a minor Penalty comes in this very life. It may be in some kind of misfortune, or it may be in the pangs of a tortured conscience or secret sorrow. But this minor Penalty may be really a mercy, as it gives them a chance of repentance and amendment.
22. And who does more wrong
Than one to whom are recited
The Signs of his Lord,
And who then turns away\textsuperscript{3655}
Therefrom? Verily from those
Who transgress We shall exact
(Due) Retribution.

SECTION 3.

23. We did indeed aforetime
Give the Book to Moses:\textsuperscript{3656}
Be not then in doubt
Of its reaching (thee):\textsuperscript{3657}
And We made it
A guide to the Children
Of Israel.

\textsuperscript{3655} The worst and most hardened sinner is the man to whom Allah's Signs are actually brought home and who yet prefers Evil and turns away from the Light of Allah. The Signs may be in the words and guidance of a great Teacher or in some minor sorrow or warning, which he disregards with contumely. Or it may be in a catastrophic blow to his conscience, which should open his eyes, but from which he deliberately refuses to profit. The penalty—the Nemesis—must necessarily come eventually.

\textsuperscript{3656} "The Book" is not here co-extensive with Revelation. Moses had, revealed to him, a Law, a shari'at, which was to guide his people in all the practical affairs of their life. Jesus, after him, was also inspired by Allah: but his Injil or Gospel contained only general principles and not a Code or shari'at. The holy Prophet was the next one to have a shari'at or "Book" in that sense: for the Qur-\textasciitilde{n} contains both a Code and general principles. This Sura is a Makkah Sura. The Code came later in Madinah. But he is given the assurance that he will also have a Code, to supersede the earlier Law, and complete the Revelation of Allah.

\textsuperscript{3657} "Its reaching (thee)" : liqâ-i-hi. Commentators differ as to the construction of the pronoun hi, which may be translated either "its" or "his". I construe it to refer to "the Book", as that gives the most natural meaning, as explained in the last note.
24. And We appointed, from among Them, Leaders, giving guidance
Under Our command, so long As they persevered with patience And continued to have faith In Our Signs.

25. Verily thy Lord will judge Between them on the Day Of Judgment, in the matters Wherein they differ (among themselves)

26. Does it not teach them A lesson, how many generations We destroyed before them, In whose dwellings they (Now) go to and fro?
Verily in that are Signs: Do they not then listen?

3658. The series of Judges, Prophets, and Kings in Israel continued to give good guidance, in accordance with Allah's Law, as long as the people continued in Faith and Constancy (persevering patience). When that condition ceased, Allah's grace was withdrawn, and the people broke up into wrangling sects and practically suffered national annihilation.

3659. These wrangles and disputes among them will continue until the Day of Judgment, but meantime a new Ummat (that of Islam) will arise and take its place, with a universal and unified Message for mankind.

3660. If a nation gone astray could only learn from the history of earlier nations that were destroyed for their evil! Their could see vestiges of them in their daily goings to and fro: the Jews could see vestiges of the Philistines, Amalekites, etc. in Palestine, and the pagan Arabs, of the ‘Ad and Thamūd in Arabia.

3661. "Listen": i.e., listen to the warnings conveyed in Allah's Signs. Notice how naturally the transition is effected from the physical to the spiritual—from the ruined physical vestiges of ungodly nations on this earth to the more intangible Signs conveyed by History and Revelation. Here the sense of Hearing is mentioned, both in its physical and its metaphysical or spiritual aspect. In the next verse the sense of Sight is mentioned in both aspects.
27. And do they not see
That We do drive Rain\textsuperscript{3662}
To parched soil (bare
Of herbage), and produce therewith
Crops, providing food
For their cattle and themselves? Have they not the vision?\textsuperscript{3663}

28. They say: “When will
This Decision be, if ye\textsuperscript{3664}
Are telling the truth?”

Of Decision, no profit
Will it be to Unbelievers
If they (then) believe!
Nor will they be granted
A respite.”

30. So turn away from them,
And wait: they too\textsuperscript{3665}
Are waiting.

\textsuperscript{3662}. Again, as in the last verse, there is an easy transition from the physical to the spiritual. In physical nature there may be parched soil, which is to all intents and purposes dead. Allah sends rain, and the dead soil is converted into living land producing rich crops of fodder and corn, nuts and fruits, to satisfy the hunger of man and beast. So in the spiritual world. The dead man is revivified by Allah’s grace and mercy, through His Revelation. He becomes not only an asset to himself but to his dependents and those around him.

\textsuperscript{3663}. The verse begins with “do they not see?” (\textit{a wa lam yarau}), a physical act. It ends with “have they not the vision?” (\textit{afa lâ yabiṣrûn}), a matter of spiritual insight. This is parallel to the two kinds of “hearing” or “listening”, explained in n. 3661 above.

\textsuperscript{3664}. The Unbelievers may say: “If all this which you say is true, tell us when this final decision between right and wrong will come about.” The answer is: “If you mean that you will postpone your repentance and reform till then, it will be no use: it will be too late for repentance, and no respite will be granted then: this is the Respite, and this is your chance.”

\textsuperscript{3665}. Read vi. 158 and n. 984 as a commentary on this. There it is said to the Unbelievers: “Wait ye: we too are waiting.” Here the Righteous one is told: “Wait (thou): they too are waiting.” The reversal of the order is appropriate: in each case the person (or persons) addressed is mentioned first. Cf. also vii. 71.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Ĥṣāb, 33.

The series of Sūras beginning with S. xxvi, having been closed with the last Sūra, we now come back to the hard facts of this life. Two questions are mainly considered here, viz., (1) the attempt by violence and brute force to crush the truth, and (2) the attempt, by slander or unseemly conduct, to poison the relations of women with men.

As regards the first, the story of the Ħṣāb or Confederates, who tried to surround and annihilate the Muslim community in Madinah is full of underhand intrigues on the part of such diverse enemies as the Pagan Quraish, the Jews (Banū Nagḥir) who had been already expelled from Madinah for their treachery, the Gaṭafān tribe of Bedouin Arabs from the interior, and the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraiza in Madinah. This was the unholy Confederacy against Islam. But though they caused a great deal of anxiety and suffering to the beleaguered Muslims, Islam came triumphantly out of the trial and got more firmly established than ever.

The Quraish in Makkah had tried all sorts of persecution, boycott, insult, and bodily injuries to the Muslims, leading to their partial hijrat to Abyssinia and their Hijrat as a body to Madinah. The first armed conflict between them and the Muslims took place at Badr in Ramadān A.H. 2, when the Quraish were signally defeated. (See n. 352 to iii. 13). Next year (Shauwal A.H. 3) they came to take revenge on Madinah. The battle was fought at Uhud, and though the Muslims suffered severely, Madinah was saved and the Makkans had to return to Makkah with their object frustrated. Then they began to make a network of intrigues and alliances, and besieged Madinah with a force of 10,000 men in Shauwāl and Żul-qa‘da A.H. 5. This is the siege of the Confederates referred to in xxxiii. 9-27, which lasted over two weeks; some accounts give 27 days. It caused much suffering, from hunger, cold, and unceasing shower of arrows, and constant general or concentrated assaults. But it ended in the discomfiture of the Confederates, and established Islam firmer than ever. It was a well-organised and formidable attack, but the Muslims had made preparations to meet it. One of the preparations, which took the enemy by surprise, was the Trench (Khandaq) dug round Madinah by the Prophet’s order and under the supervision of Salmān the Persian. The siege and battle are therefore known as the Battle of the Trench or the Battle of the Confederates.

As regards the position and dignity of the ladies of the Prophet’s Household and the Muslim women generally, salutary principles are laid down to safeguard their honour and protect them from slander and insult. The ladies of the Household interested themselves in social work and work of instruction for the
Muslim women, and Muslim women were being trained more and more in community service. Two of them (the two Zainabs) devoted themselves to the poor. The nursing of the wounded on or by the battlefield was specially necessary in those days of warfare. The Prophet's daughter Fātima, then aged about 19 to 20, lovingly nursed her father's wounds at Uḥud (A.H. 3); Rufaida nursed S'ad ibn Mu'āz's wounds at the Siege of Madinah by the Confederates (A.H. 5); and in the Khaibar expedition (A.H. 7) Muslim women went out from Madinah for nursing service.

A portion of this Sūra sums up the lessons of the Battle of the Trench and must have been revealed some time after that Battle (Shauwāl A.H. 5). The marriage with Zainab referred to in verse 37 also took place in the same year.

Summary.—The pagan customs in human relationships should be abandoned, and men and women should be held in honour according to natural relationships. (xxxiii. 1-8).

The Battle of the Trench and its lessons: hypocrites and their fears: Truth and noble examples to be followed (xxxiii. 9-27).

High position and seemly conduct for the Prophet's wives: unhappy marriages (like Zainab's) not to be perpetuated on false scruples: Prophet's wives to be treated kindly and gently (xxxiii. 28-52).

Respect due to Prophet and his family: slander to be avoided and punished; guard your words and your responsibilities (xxxiii. 53-73).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O Prophet! Fear Allah, and hearken not to the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites: verily Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

2. But follow that which comes to thee by inspiration from thy Lord: for Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do.

3. And put thy trust in Allah, and enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.

3666. The fifth year A.H. was a critical year in the external history of early Islam, and this Sūra must be read in the light of the events that then took place. As explained in the Introduction, the Grand Confederacy against Islam came and invested Madinah and failed utterly. It consisted of the Makkan Unbelievers, the desert Arabs of Central Arabia, the Jews previously expelled for treachery from Madinah, the Jews remaining in Madinah and the Hypocrites led by 'Abdullah ibn Ubi, who have already been described in ix. 43-110. Their bond of union was the common hatred of Islam, and it snapped under the reverses they met with. It is important to note three points. (1) The Jews as a body now lost their last chance of bearing the standard of Islam: the best of them had already accepted the renewal of Allah's Message. (2) A definite status was given to Prophet's household, after the slanders on Hadhrat 'Aisha had been stilled (xxiv. 11-26), and the true position of the Mothers of the Believers had been cleared. (3) A further exposition of the purity of sex relation was given, based on the story of Hadhrat Zainab, the "Mother of the Poor". These points will be referred to in later notes.

3667. In the most adverse circumstances, in the midst of the assaults of Evil, the plots of treason and hypocrisy, the darts of slanders and false charges, and stupid superstitions and taboos, the Prophet of Allah should steer his course steadily according to Allah's Law and not fear human evil, in whatever form it appears. Men may misjudge, but Allah knows all. Men may try to overthrow Good, but Wisdom is with Allah.

3668. We must wholly trust Allah; He is the true and efficient Guardian of all interests. C.f. iv. 81, and n. 600.
4. Allah has not made
For any man two hearts. In his breast: nor has He made your wives whom Ye divorce by Zihar. Your mothers: nor has He Made your adopted sons Your sons. Such is (only)
Your (manner of) speech By your mouths. But Allah Tells (you) the Truth, and He Shows the (right) Way.

5. Call them by after
Their fathers: that is Juster in the sight of Allah.
But if ye know not Their father's names, (then they are) Your Brothers in faith,

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3669. "Two hearts in his (one) breast": two inconsistent attitudes: such as serving Allah and Mammon; or subscribing to both Truth and Superstition; or hypocritically pretending one thing and intending another. Such a thing is against Allah’s Law and Will. Apart from the condemnation of general hypocrisy, two pagan customs of the Times of Ignorance are mentioned, and their iniquity pointed out. See the notes 3670 and 3671.

3670. This was an evil Arab custom. He pronounced words importing that she was like his mother. See also lviii. 1-5. where this is condemned in the strongest terms and punishment is provided for it. A man sometimes said such words in a fit of anger; they did not affect him, but they degraded her position.

3671. If a man called another’s son “his son”, it might create complications with natural and normal relationships if taken too literally. It is pointed out that it is only a façon de parler in men’s mouths, and should not be taken literally. The truth is the truth and cannot be altered by men's adopting “sons”. “Adoption” in the technical sense is not allowed in Muslim Law. Those who have been “wives of your sons proceeding from your loins” are within the Prohibited Degrees of marriage; iv. 23: but this does not apply to “adopted” sons.

3672. Freedmen were often called after their master's name as the “son of so and so”. When they were slaves, perhaps their father's names were lost altogether. It is more correct to speak of them as the Maulâ of so and so. But Maulâ in Arabic might also imply a close relationship of friendship: in that case, too, it is better to use the right term instead of the term “son”. “Brother” is not objectionable because “Brotherhood” is used in a wider sense than “fatherhood” and is not likely to be misunderstood.
Or your friends
But there is no blame
On you if ye make\textsuperscript{3673}
A mistake therein:
(What counts is)
The intention of your hearts:
And Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

6. The Prophet is closer
To the Believers than
Their own selves,\textsuperscript{3674}
And his wives are\textsuperscript{3675}
Their mothers. Blood-relations
Among each other have
Closer personal ties,
In the Book of Allah,
Than (the Brotherhood of)
Believers and Muhājirs:\textsuperscript{3676}

\textsuperscript{3673.} What is aimed at is to destroy the superstition of erecting false relationships to the detriment or loss of true blood relations. It is not intended to penalise an unintentional slip in the matter, and indeed, even if a man deliberately calls another his son or father, who is not his son or father, out of politeness or affection, "Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". It is the action of mischievous parties which is chiefly reprehended, if they intend false insinuations. A mere mistake on their part does not matter.

\textsuperscript{3674.} In human relationship the Prophet is entitled to more respect and consideration than blood-relations. The Believers should follow him rather than their fathers or mothers or brothers, where there is conflict of duties. He is even nearer–closer to our real interests–than our own selves.

\textsuperscript{3675.} See last note. This Sūra establishes the dignity and position of the Holy Prophet's wives, who had a special mission and responsibility as Mothers of the Believers. They were not to be like ordinary women: they had to instruct women in religious matters visit and minister to those who were ill or in distress, and do other kindly offices in aid of the Prophet's mission.

\textsuperscript{3676.} In the early Madinah period, there was a bond of brotherhood between its inhabitants and the Muslims who migrated. This bond was the reason for mutual inheritance between them. Once the stability of Muslim Ummah was established, the law of inheritance according to blood relationship was revealed superseding the previous brotherhood relationship. This verse and verse No. 75 of Sūra 8 abrogate the earlier arrangement.
Nevertheless do ye
What is just to your
Closest friends: such is
The writing in the Book
(Of Allah).

7. And remember We took
From the Prophets their Covenant: \(^3677\)
And from thee:
From Noah, Abraham, Moses,
And Jesus the son of Mary:
We took from them
A solemn Covenant:

8. That (Allah) may question
The Truthful
About their truthfulness \(^3678\)
And He has prepared
For the Unbelievers
A grievous Chastisement.

SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!
Remember the Grace of Allah,
(Bestowed) on you, when

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3677. Cf. iii. 81. There is an implied covenant on all created things to follow Allah's Law, which is the law of their being; see v. 1. But there is a special implied covenant with all Prophets, strict and solemn, that they shall carry out their mission, proclaim Allah's Truth without fear or favour, and be ever ready in His service in all circumstances. That gives them their position and dignity as explained in the last verse, and their tremendous responsibility in respect of the people whom they come to instruct and lead to the right Path.

3678. The men to whom Allah's Truth has been committed for promulgation will be asked in the Hereafter as to how the Truth fared in the world—how it was received, who opposed it, and who assisted it. Like all trustees, they will have to give a full account of their trust. Allah knows all, and it will not add to His information. But it will be evidence for and against those to whom it was preached, so that the responsibility of those who dishonoured it may be duly enforced. The primary custodians of spiritual Truth are the Prophets, but in descending degrees all men to whom Allah's Message comes are included.
There came down on you
Hosts (to overwhelm you): 3679
But We sent against them 3680
A hurricane and forces
That ye saw not:
But Allah sees (clearly) 3681
All that ye do.

10. Behold! they came on you
From above you and from
Below you, and behold,
The eyes swerved
And the hearts gaped 3682
Up to the throats,
And ye imagined various
(Vain) thoughts about Allah!

3679. In this verse is summed up the beginning and the end of the fateful struggle of the Siege of Madinah in A.H. 5. The composition of the unhallowed Confederacy that came to destroy Islam is referred to in the Introduction. They came with a force of ten to twelve thousand fighting men, an unprecedented army for that time and country. The battle is known as the Battle of the Trench.

3680. After a close investment of two to four weeks, during which the enemy were disheartened by their ill success, there was a piercing blast of the cold east wind. It was a severe winter, and February can be a very cold month in Madinah, which is about 3,000 ft. above the sea-level. The enemy’s tents were torn up, their fires were extinguished, the sand and rain beat in their faces, and they were terrified by the portents against them. They had already well nigh fallen out amongst themselves, and beating a hasty retreat, they melted away. The Madinah fighting strength was no more than 3,000, and the Jewish tribe of the Banū Quraīẓa who were in their midst was a source of weakness as they were treacherously intriguing with the enemy. And further there were the Hypocrites: see n. 3666 above. But there were hidden forces that helped the Muslims. Besides the forces of nature there were angels, though invisible to them, who assisted the Muslims.

3681. Allah sees everything. Therefore we may conclude that the discipline and moral fervour of the Muslims, as well as the enemy’s insincerities, intrigues, and reliance on brute force, were all contributory causes to his repulse, under Allah’s dispensation. There were many hidden causes which neither party saw clearly.

3682. The psychology of the combatants is described with matchless vigour in the holy Text. The onrush of the enemy was really tremendous. The Trench round Madinah was between the defenders and the huge attacking force, which had some high ground behind them “above you”: when any of them came through the valley or over the Trench, they seemed to come from below. The showers of arrows and stones on both sides must also have seemed to come from the air.
11. In that situation
Were the Believers tried:
They were shaken as by
A tremendous shaking.

12. And behold! The Hypocrites
And those in whose hearts
Is a disease say: “Allah
And His Messenger promised us
Nothing but delusions!”

13. Behold! A party among them
Said: “Ye men of Yathrib!
Ye cannot stand (the attack)!
Therefore go back!”
And a band of them
Ask for leave of the Prophet,
Saying, “Truly our houses
Are bare and exposed,” though
They were not exposed:
They intended nothing but
To run away.

14. And if an entry had
Been effected to them
From the sides of the (City),

3683. Before this year’s mass attack on Madinah the Muslims had successfully reached the Syrian border on the north, and there were hopes of reaching Yemen in the south. The holy Prophet had seen signs of expansion and victory for the Muslims. Now that they were shut in within the Trench on the defensive, the Hypocrites taunted them with having indulged in delusive hopes. But the event showed that the hopes were not delusive. They were realised beyond expectations in a few years.

3684. All the fighting men of Madinah had come out of the City and camped in the open space between the City and the Trench that had been dug all round. The disaffected Hypocrites sowed defeatist rumours and pretended to withdraw for the defence of their homes, though their homes were not exposed, and were fully covered by the vigilant defensive force inside the Trench.

3685. The brunt of the fighting was on the north side, but the whole Trench was guarded. At one or two points enemy warriors did break in within the circuit of the Trench, but they were soon disposed off. Ḥadīrrat ‘Alī particularly distinguished himself in many fights, wearing the Prophet’s own sword and armour. If any of the enemy had
And they had been
Incited to sedition.
They would certainly have
Brought it to pass, with
None but a brief delay!

15. And yet they had already
Covenanted with Allah not to turn
Their backs, and a covenant
With Allah must (surely)
Be answered for.

16. Say: “Running away will not
Profit you if ye are
Running away from death
Or slaughter; and even if
(Ye do escape), no more
Than a brief (respite)
Will ye be allowed to enjoy!”

17. Say: “Who is it that can
Screen you from Allah
If it be His wish
To give you Punishment
Or to give you Mercy?”

= been able to penetrate into the City, the disaffected element, which was only sitting on
the fence, would have risen against the Muslims at once—with no delay except what might
have been necessary to put on their armour and arms.

3686. Apparently, after the battle of Uhud, certain men who had then shown
cowardice were forgiven on undertaking that they would behave better next time. A
solemn promise made to the Messenger of Allah is a promise to Allah, and it cannot
be broken with impunity.

3687. The coward in a fight does not usually save himself from death. He is subject,
after desertion, to the fury both of the enemy and of his own side for cowardice and
desertion. Assuming that he did escape with his life, where could he go to? The brand
of cowardice will be on him, and he will be Subject to the vengeance of his own people.
In any case, his life would be in ignominy and would be brief, and he would have lost
irretrievably the meed of valour.

3688. It is still worse if the cowardice or desertion is shown in a Cause, which,
because of the high issues of truth and justice, may be called the Cause of Allah. How
can any one escape Allah’s Punishment? And in the same way, how can any one prevent —
Nor will they find for themselves, Besides Allah, any protector Or helper.

18. Verily Allah knows those Among you who keep back (Men) and those who say To their brethren, “Come along To us”, but come not To the fight except For just a little while,

19. Covetous over you. Then when fear comes, Thou wilt see them looking To thee, their eyes revolving, Like one who Faints from death: but when The fear is past, They will smite you With sharp tongues, covetous Of goods. Such men have No faith, and so Allah Has made their deeds

= another from obtaining Allah's Mercy by repentance and amendment? The better path, therefore, is to stand firm in Allah's Way, and if you fail through human weakness, to repent and seek Allah's Mercy. Cf. xxxiii. 24, and n. 3698 below.

3689. Ashi·hatan: covetous, grasping, niggardly. Here the meaning is twofold: (1) they spare themselves in the fight as compared with you; they are niggardly with themselves as against you: they contribute little either in personal effort or with their money and resources; and (2) they covet any gains made or booty won, on the part of the real fighters.

3690. In times of danger, they would look to the holy Prophet for protection, and keep themselves snugly from the fight. When the danger is past, they will come and brag and wrangle and show their covetousness or greed for gain though they gave of themselves but sparingly.

3691. Even any good they may have done becomes vain because of their motives of envy, greed, and covetousness, and their cowardice.
Of none effect: and that
Is easy for Allah.\textsuperscript{3692}

20. They think that the Confederates
Have not withdrawn; and if
The Confederates should come
(again),
They would wish they were
In the deserts (wandering)
Among the Bedouins, and\textsuperscript{3693}
Seeking news about you
(From a safe distance);
And if they were
In your midst, they
Would fight but little.

SECTION 3.

21. Ye have indeed
In the Messenger of Allah
An excellent exempler

\textsuperscript{3692} It is not surprising that men's deeds fall as it were dead because there is no pure motive behind them. For men it may be difficult to probe motives, but it is easy for Allah, Whom hypocrisy or false show can never deceive.

\textsuperscript{3693} This completes the picture of the psychology of the Hypocrites, begun at verse 12. Let us analyse it. (1) When they first saw the enemy they were already in a defeatist mood, and thought all was over (verse 12). (2) Not content with disloyalty themselves, they tried to infect others, who made paltry excuses to withdraw from the fight (verse 13). (3) They were ready to betray the City to the enemy if once the enemy had gained entrance (verse 14). (4) They forgot all the promises of fidelity which they had previously sworn (verse 15). (5) In their paltry calculations they forgot that cowardice in war does not pay (verses 16-17). (6) Without taking much part in the actual defence, they were ready to talk glibly and claim a lion's share in the fruits of the victory (verses 18-19). (7) Even when the enemy had withdrawn, their cowardly minds were still afraid that the enemy would return, and were already meditating what they would do in that case: perhaps they would dwell in the deserts and spy on Madinah from a safe distance; and if caught in Madinah they would fight little and intrigue much.

It was a miracle that with such men in their midst, the holy Prophet and his band won through.
For him who hopes
In Allah and the Final Day,
And who remember
Allah much.

22. When the Believers saw
The Confederate forces,
They said: "This is
What Allah and His Messenger
Had promised us, and Allah
And His Messenger told us
What was true." And it
Only added to their faith
And their zeal in obedience.

23. Among the Believers are men
Who have been true to
Their covenant with Allah:
Of them some have died
And some (still) wait:
But they have never changed
(Their determination) in the least:

24. That Allah may reward
The men of Truth for
Their Truth, and punish

3694. We now have the psychology of the Believers,—God-fearing men, led by that pattern of men and of leaders, Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā.

3695. Cf. xxvi. 227: see especially the last clause of that verse in a Makkan Sūra, which was amply fulfilled in Madinah.

3696. This is in contrast to what the Hypocrites said in verse 12 above. The divine promise of help and success is contingent upon our striving and faith. Nothing comes to the poltroon and the sceptical idler. Dangers and difficulties, and conflict with Evil, are foretold us, and we must meet them with fortitude and courage.

3697. In the fight for truth were (and are) many who sacrificed their all—resources, knowledge, influence, life itself—in the Cause, and never wavered. If they won the crown of martyrdom, they were blessed. Such a one was Sa'd ibn Muʿāz, the chief of the Aus tribe, the intrepid standard-bearer of Islam, who died of a wound he had received in the Battle of the Trench. Other heroes fought valiantly and lived, always ready to lay down their lives. Both classes were staunch: they never changed or wavered.
The Hypocrites if that be His Will, or turn to them In Mercy: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

25. And Allah turned back The Unbelievers for (all) Their fury: no advantage Did they gain; and enough Is Allah for the Believers In their fight. And Allah Is full of Strength, Exalted in might.

26. And those of the people Of the Book who aided Them—Allah did take them Down from their strongholds And cast terror into

3698. Before Allah's Mercy there is always room for repentance and forgiveness, even after treason and crime; but the forgiveness will be according to Allah's Will and Plan, which will judge the penitent's sincerity and capacity for good to the nicest degree in his favour. Cf. also xxxiii. 17 above.

3699. In spite of the mighty preparations and the great forces which the Makkans in concert with the Central Arabian Bedouins, the discontented Jews, and the treacherous Hypocrites, brought to the siege of Madinah, all their plans were frustrated. Their fury availed them nothing. They departed in hot haste. This was their last and dying effort. The initiative thereafter lay with the forces of Islam.

3700. For the meaning of 'Azîz, see n. 2818 to xxii. 40

3701. The reference is to the Jewish tribe of the Banû Quraîza. They counted among the citizens of Madinah and were bound by solemn engagements to help in the defence of the City. But on the occasion of the Confederate siege by the Quraish and their allies they intrigued with the enemies and treacherously aided them. Immediately after the siege was raised and the Confederates had fled in hot haste, the Prophet turned his attention to these treacherous “friends” who had betrayed his City in the hour of danger.

3702. The Banû Quraîza (see last note) were filled with terror and dismay when Madinah was free from the Quraish danger. They shut themselves up in their castles about three or four miles to the east (or north east) of Madinah, and sustained a siege of 25 days, after which they surrendered, stipulating that they would abide by the decision of their fate at the hands of Sa'd ibn Mu'âz, chief of the Aus tribe, with which they had been in alliance.

- 1247 -
Their hearts, (so that)\textsuperscript{3703} Some ye slew, and some\textsuperscript{3704} Ye made captives.

27. And He made you heirs Of their lands, their houses, And their goods, And of a land which\textsuperscript{3705} Ye had not frequented (Before). And Allah has Power over all things.

\textsuperscript{3703} Sa'd applied to them the Jewish Law of the Old Testament, not as strictly as the case warranted. In Deut. xx. 10-18, the treatment of a city “which is very far off from thee” is prescribed to be comparatively more lenient than the treatment of a city “of those people, which the Lord thy God does give thee for an inheritance,” \textit{i.e.}, which is near enough to corrupt the religion of the Jewish people. The punishment for these is total annihilation: “thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth” (Deut. xx. 16). The more lenient treatment for far-off cities is described in the next note. According to the Jewish standard, then, the Banû Quraiza deserved total extermination—of men, women, and children. They were in the territory of Madinah itself, and further they had broken their engagements and helped the enemy.

\textsuperscript{3704} Sa’d adjudged them the milder treatment of the “far-off” cities which is thus described in the Jewish Law: “Thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee” (Deut. xx. 13-14). The men of the Quraïṣa were slain: the women were sold as captives of war; and their lands and properties were divided among the Muhājirs.

\textsuperscript{3705} This part of the Sūra is considered a prophecy. It may refer to the conquest of Ḳhaibar. Ḳhaibar is a Harrat or volcanic tract, well-watered with many springs issuing from its basaltic rocks. It has a good irrigation system and produces good harvests of grain and dates in its wet valleys, while the outcrop of rocks in the high ground affords sites for numerous fortresses. In the holy Prophet’s time there were Jewish colonies settled here, but they were a source of constant trouble especially after Siege of Madinah. It became a nest of all the hostile Jewish elements expelled for their treachery from elsewhere. Its capital, Ḳhaibar, is about 90 miles due north of Madinah. Its inhabitants offered some resistance, and Ḥadhrat ‘Alī, though he had just risen from a bed of illness, performed prodigies of valour. After its surrender, a land settlement was made, which retained the cultivators of the soil on the land, but brought them under control, so that no further focus of active hostility should remain near Madinah. The terms of the settlement will be found in Wāqīḍī.
SECTION 4.

28. O Prophet! say
   To thy Consorts:
   "If it be that ye desire
   The life of this world,
   And its glitter,—then come."
   I will provide for your
   Enjoyment and set you free
   In a handsome manner.

29. But if ye seek Allah
   And His Messenger, and
   The Home of the Hereafter,

3706. We now come to the subject of the position of the Consorts of Purity (azwāj muṭḥharāt), the wives of the holy Prophet. Their position was not like that of ordinary women or ordinary wives. They had special duties and responsibilities. The only youthful marriage of the holy Prophet was his first marriage—that with Ḥadhrat Khadija, the best of women and the best of wives. He married her fifteen years before he received his call to Prophethood; their married life lasted for twenty-five years, and their mutual devotion was of the noblest, judged by spiritual as well as social standards. During her life he had no other wife, which was unusual for a man of his standing among his people. When she died, his age was 50, and but for two considerations, he would probably never have married again, as he was most abstemious in his physical life. The two considerations which governed his later marriages were: (1) compassion and clemency, as when he wanted to provide for suffering widows, who could not be provided for in any other way in that stage of society; some of them, like Sauda, had issue by their former marriage, requiring protection; (2) help in his duties of leadership, with women, who had to be instructed and kept together in the large Muslim family, where women and men had similar social rights. Ḥadhrat ‘Āisha, daughter of Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr, was clever and learned, and in Ḥadīth she is an important authority on the life of the Prophet. Ḥadhrat Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima, was specially devoted to the poor; she was called the “Mother of the Poor”. The other Zainab, daughter of Jaḥsh, also worked for the poor, for whom she provided from the proceeds of her manual work, as she was skilful in leather work. But all the Consorts in their high position had to work and assist as Mothers of the Ummat. Theirs were not idle lives, like those of Odalisques, either for their own pleasure or the pleasure of their husband. They are told here that they had no place in the sacred Household if they merely wished for ease or worldly glitter. If such were the case, they could be divorced and amply provided for.
Verily Allah has prepared
For the well-doers amongst you
A great reward.

30. O Consorts of the Prophet
If any of you were guilty
Of evident unseemly conduct,
The Punishment would be
Doubled to her, and that
Is easy for Allah.

31. But any of you that is
Devout in the service of
Allah and His Messenger,
And works righteousness,
To her shall We grant
Her reward twice: and We
Have prepared for her
A generous Sustenance.

3707. They were all well-doers. But being in their exalted position, they had extra responsibility, and they had to be specially careful to discharge it. In the same way their reward would be “great”, for higher services bring higher spiritual satisfaction, though they were asked to deny themselves some of the ordinary indulgences of this life.

3708. “Evident unseemly conduct” i.e., proved misconduct, as opposed to false slanders from enemies. Such slanders were of no account, but if any of them had behaved in an unseemly manner, it would have been a worse offence than in the case of ordinary women, on account of their special position. Of course none of them were in the least guilty.

3709. Cf. xxxiii. 19 and n. 3692. The punishment in this life for a married woman’s unchastity is very severe: for fornication, public flogging with a hundred stripes, under xxiv. 2; or for lewdness (see iv. 15) imprisonment; or stoning to death for adultery, according to certain precedents established in Canon Law. But here the question is not about this kind of punishment or this kind of offence. Even minor indiscretions, in the case of women who were patterns of decorum, would have been reprehensible; and the punishment in the Hereafter is on a higher plane, which we can scarcely understand.

3710. Twice, i.e., once as a righteous woman, and again as a Mother of the Believers, serving the believing women and thus showing her devotion to Allah and His Apostle.

3711. Sustenance: all that is necessary to sustain her in happiness in her future life.
32. O Consorts of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women: If ye do fear (Allah), Be not too complaisant Of speech, lest one In whose heart is A disease should be moved With desire: but speak ye A speech (that is) just.

33. And stay quietly in Your houses, and make not A dazzling display, like That of the former Times Of Ignorance; and establish Regular Prayer, and give Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes To remove all abomination From you, ye Members Of the Family, and to make You pure and spotless.

3712. This is the core of the whole passage. The Prophet’s Consorts were not like ordinary women, nor was their marriage an ordinary marriage, in which only personal or social considerations enter. They had a special position and special responsibilities, in the matter of guiding and instructing women who came into the fold of Islam. Islam is a Way of Life, and the Muslims are a family: women have as much place in Islam as men, and their intimate instruction must obviously be through women.

3713. While they were to be kind and gentle to all, they were to be guarded on account of their special position lest people might misunderstand or take advantage of their kindness. They were to make no vulgar worldly displays as in the times of Paganism.

3714. Obedience to Allah’s Law sums up all duties. Regular Prayer (seeking nearness to Allah) and Regular Charity (doing good to fellow-creatures) are mentioned as special features of our Religion.

3715. Ahl al-Bait: i.e. the household of the Prophet (S.A.S) which includes his wives as well as his daughter Fatima, his son-in-law Ali and his grandsons, Hasan and Husain generally in accordance with the narrative of Umm Salama.
34. And recite\textsuperscript{3716} what is
Rehearsed to you in your
Homes, of the Signs of Allah
And His Wisdom:
For Allah is All-Subtle,
All-Aware.\textsuperscript{3717}

SECTION 5.

35. For Muslim men and women,\textsuperscript{3718}
For believing men and women,
For devout men and women,
For true men and women,
For men and women who are
Patient and constant, for men
And women who humble themselves.
For men and women who give\textsuperscript{3719}
In charity, for men and women
Who fast
For men and women who
Guard their chastity, and
For men and women who

\textsuperscript{3716} The verb is \textit{uzkurna}, feminine gender, as referring to the \textit{Azwāj} again. It means not only “remember”, but “recite”, “teach”, “make known”, “publish”, the Message which ye learn at home from the holy Prophet, the fountain of spiritual knowledge. The “Signs of Allah” refer specially to the verses of the Qur-ān, and Wisdom to the resulting Instruction derived therefrom.

\textsuperscript{3717} Cf. xxii. 63 and n. 2844. Allah’s understanding is perfect in every detail, however minute. Therefore use His Revelation for every phase of life.

\textsuperscript{3718} Islam, or submitting our will to Allah’s Will, includes all the virtues, as particularly specified in this verse. See n. 3720.

\textsuperscript{3719} A number of Muslim virtues are specified here, but the chief stress is laid on the fact that these virtues are as necessary to women as to men. Both sexes have spiritual as well as human rights and duties in an equal degree, and the future “reward” of the Hereafter.
Engage much in Allah’s remembrance. For them has Allah prepared Forgiveness and great reward.

36. It is not fitting For a Believer, man or woman, When a matter has been decided By Allah and His Messenger, To have any option About their decision: If any one disobeys Allah And His Messenger, he is indeed On a clearly wrong Path.

37. Behold! thou didst say To one who had received The grace of Allah And thy favour: “Retain thou (In wedlock) thy wife, And fear Allah.” But thou

3720. The virtues referred to are: (1) Faith, hope, and trust in Allah, and in His benevolent government of the world; (2) devotion and service in practical life; (3) love and practice of truth, in thought and intention, word and deed; (4) patience and constancy, in suffering and in right endeavour; (5) humility, the avoidance of an attitude of arrogance and superiority; (6) charity, i.e., help to the poor and unfortunate ones in life, a special virtue arising out of the general duty of service (No. 2); (7) self-control, typically in food, but generally in all appetites; (8) chastity, purity in sex life, purity in motive, thought, word, and deed; and (9) constant attention to Allah’s Message, and cultivation of the desire to get nearer to Allah.

3721. We must not put our own wisdom in competition with Allah’s wisdom. Allah’s decree is often known to us by the logic of facts. We must accept it loyally, and do the best we can to help in our own way to carry it out. We must make our will consonant to the Allah’s Will.

3722. This was Zaid son of Haritha, one of the first to accept the faith of Islam. He was a freedman of the holy Prophet, who loved him as a son and gave him in marriage his own cousin Zainab. The marriage however turned out to be unhappy. See next note.
Didst hide in thy heart\textsuperscript{3723}
That which Allah was about
To make manifest: thou didst
Fear the people, but it is
More fitting that thou shouldst.\textsuperscript{3724}
Fear Allah. Then when Zaid
Had dissolved (his marriage)
With her\textsuperscript{3725}
We joined her
In marriage to thee:
In order that (in future)
There may be no difficulty
To the Believers in (the matter
Of) marriage with the wives\textsuperscript{3726}
Of their adopted sons, when
The latter have dissolved
(Their marriage) with them.
And Allah's command must
Be fulfilled.

\textsuperscript{3723.} Zaid's marriage with the Prophet's cousin Zainab daughter of Jahsh did not turn out happy. Zainab the high-born looked down upon Zaid the freedman who had been a slave. And he was not comely to look at. Both were good people in their own way, and both loved the Prophet, but there was mutual incompatibility and this is fatal to married life. Zaid wished to divorce her, but the Prophet asked him to hold his hand, and he obeyed. She was closely related to the Prophet; he had given a handsome marriage gift on her marriage to Zaid; and people would certainly talk if such a marriage was broken off. But marriages are made on earth, not in heaven, and it is no part of Allah's Plan to torture people in a bond which should be a source of happiness but actually is a source of misery. Zaid's wish—indeed the mutual wish of the couple—was for the time being put away, but it became eventually an established fact, and everybody came to know of it.

\textsuperscript{3724.} All actual facts are referred to Allah. When the marriage is unhappy, Islam permits the bond to be dissolved, provided that all interests concerned are safeguarded. Apparently there was no issue here to be considered. Zainab had to be considered, and she obtained the dearest wish of her heart in being raised to be a Mother of the Believers, with all the dignity and responsibility of that position. See n. 3706 to xxxiii. 28 above.

\textsuperscript{3725.} The 'Iddat or period of waiting after divorce (ii. 228, and n. 254) was duly completed.

\textsuperscript{3726.} The Pagan superstition and taboo about adopted sons had to be destroyed. See xxxiii. 4-5 and notes 3671-3672 above.
38. There can be no difficulty
To the Prophet in what
Allah has indicated to him
as a duty: It was
The practice (approved) of Allah
Amongst those of old
That have passed away.
And the command of Allah
Is a decree determined.

39. (It is the practice of those)
Who preach the Messages
Of Allah, and fear Him,
And fear none but Allah.
And enough is Allah
To call (men) to account.

40. Muhammad is not
The father of any
Of your men, but (he is)
The Messenger of Allah,
And the Seal of the Prophets.
And Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

3727. See n. 3724 above.

3728. The next clause is parenthetical. These words then connect on with verse 39.
Among the people of the Book there was no taboo about adopted sons, as there was in Pagan Arabia.

3729. Allah’s ordering of the world is always full of wisdom. Even our unhappiness
and misery may actually have a great meaning for ourselves or others or both. If our
first Plan seems to fail, we must not murmur and repine, but retrieve the position by
adopting a course which appears to be the best possible in the light of our duties as
indicated by Allah. For Allah’s Plan is framed on universal principles that cannot be
altered by human action.

3730. Our responsibility is to Allah, not to men. Men’s opinions may have a bearing
on our own interpretation of duty, but when that duty is clear, our only course is to obey
Allah rather than men.

3731. When a document is sealed, it is complete, and there can be no further
addition. The holy Prophet Muhammad closed the long line of Messengers. Allah’s
teaching is and will always be continuous, but there has been and will be no Prophet...
41. O ye who believe!
   Remember Allah,
   With much remembrance;

42. And glorify Him
   Morning and evening.

43. He it is Who sends\textsuperscript{3732}
   Blessings on you, as do
   His angels, that He may
   Bring you out from the depths
   Of Darkness into Light:
   And He is Full of Mercy
   To the Believers.\textsuperscript{3733}

44. Their salutation on the Day
   They meet Him will be
   “Peace!”; and He has
   Prepared for them
   A generous Reward.

45. O Prophet! Truly We
   Have sent thee as
   A Witness, a Bearer\textsuperscript{3734}
   Of Glad Tidings,
   And a Warner.—

= after Muḥammad. The later ages will want thinkers and reformers, not Prophets. This
is not an arbitrary matter. It is a decree full of knowledge and wisdom: “for Allah has
full knowledge of all things.”

\textsuperscript{3732} Blessings: good wishes and mercies. Allah wishes well to all His creatures, and
His angels carry out His work, for their will is in all things His Will. His chief and
everlasting blessing is that He gives us a knowledge of the spiritual world, and helps us
towards its attainment.

\textsuperscript{3733} His Mercies are for all His creatures, but for those who believe and trust in
Him, there are special mercies, “a generous Reward” as in the next verse.

\textsuperscript{3734} The Prophet was sent by Allah in five capacities. Three are mentioned in this
verse, and the other two in the verse following. (1) He comes as a Witness to all men
about the spiritual truths which had been obscured by ignorance or superstition, or by
the dust of sectarian controversy. He did not come to establish a new religion or sect. =
46. And as one who invites
To Allah's (Grace) by His leave, And as a Lamp Spreading Light.

47. Then give the glad tidings
To the Believers, that They shall have from Allah A very great Bounty.

48. And obey not (the behests) Of the Unbelievers And the Hypocrites, And disregard their insolence But put thy trust in Allah. For enough is Allah As a Disposer of affairs.

49. O ye who believe! When ye marry believing women, And then divorce them

= He came to teach Religion. He is also a witness to Allah about men's doings and how they receive Allah's Message: see iv. 41 and n. 560. (2) He comes as a bearer of the Glad Tidings of the Mercy of Allah. No matter how far men may have transgressed, they have hope if they believe, repent, and live a good life. (3) He also comes as a Warner to those who are heedless. This life will not last. There is a Future Life, and that is all-important. See next note.

3735. See last note. The two other capacities in which the Prophet was sent are here specified. (4) He comes as one who has a right to invite all men to repentance and the forgiveness of sins: but he does this, not of his own authority, but by the permission and authority given to him by Allah. This is said lest people may deify the Prophet as they did with other Prophets before him. The personal responsibility of each individual remains, but the Prophet can lead him on the Right and help him. (5) The Prophet also comes as a Light or a Lamp (Sirāj) to illuminate the whole world. In lxvi. 16 and elsewhere the same word (Sirāj) is used for the sun. The comparison is apt. When the sun appears, all the lesser lights pale before its light. And the Message of Islam, i.e., of the Universal Religion, is to diffuse Light everywhere.

3736. The light of Islam is the Biggest Bounty possible and if they truly understand it, they should glory in it.

3737. Men of little or no Faith will often lay down the law and tell better men than themselves what to do. In case of refusal they shower insults and injuries. No attention is to be paid to them. It is their way. All will be right under the government of Allah.
Before ye have touched them,
No period of 'Iddat'\textsuperscript{3738}
Have ye to count
In respect of them:
So give them a present,\textsuperscript{3739}
And release them
In a handsome manner.\textsuperscript{3740}

50. O Prophet! We have
Made lawful to thee\textsuperscript{3741}
Thy wives to whom thou
Hast paid their dowers;\textsuperscript{3742}
And those whom thy
Right hand possesses out of
The captives of war whom\textsuperscript{3743}
Allah has assigned to thee;
And daughters of thy paternal
Uncles and aunts, and daughters

\textsuperscript{3738}. See n. 254 to ii. 228. The 'Iddat counts for three monthly courses, or if there are no courses, for three months: see lxxv. 4.

\textsuperscript{3739}. This present is held, by some, to be in addition to the half dower due to them under ii. 237. If the dower had not yet been fixed, the gift would presumably be larger, and it would absorb the gift prescribed in ii. 236.

\textsuperscript{3740}. The gifts should be given with good grace, and the freedom of the woman should not be interfered with in any way. If she chooses to marry again immediately, no obstacle should be placed in her path. On no pretext should she be allowed to remain doubtful about her freedom.

\textsuperscript{3741}. This introduces no new exemption or privilege. Verses 50-52 merely declare the points in which, on account of the special circumstances (see n. 3706 above), the Prophet's marriages differed from those of ordinary Muslims. This is considered under four heads, which we shall examine in the four notes following.

\textsuperscript{3742}. Head 1. Marriage with dower (iv. 4): this is the universal Muslim marriage. The difference in the Prophet's case was that there was no limitation to the number of four (iv. 3), and women of the People of the Book (v. 6) were not among his wives, but only Believers. These points are not expressly mentioned here, but are inferred by his actual practice. Obviously women who are expected to instruct other women in Islam must be Muslims.

\textsuperscript{3743}. Head 2. Women Prisoners of War: the same remark as in the last note.
Of thy maternal uncles
And aunts, who migrated\textsuperscript{3744}
With thee;
And any believing woman
Who gives herself
To the Prophet if the Prophet\textsuperscript{3745}
Wishes to wed her;—this
Only for thee, and not
For the Believers (at large);
We know what We have
Appointed for them as to\textsuperscript{3746}
Their wives and the captives
Whom their right hands
Possess;—in order that\textsuperscript{3747}
There should be no difficulty
For thee. And Allah is
Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.\textsuperscript{3748}

\textsuperscript{3744} Head 3. These are first cousins, and not within the Prohibited Degrees of Marriage (see iv. 23-24). These are specially mentioned here by way of limitation. None of them could marry the Prophet unless she had performed the Hijrat with him.

\textsuperscript{3745} Head 4. A believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet: obviously this case, like the last, is only applicable to the Prophet, and it is hedged round with the limitation that the Prophet considers it suitable.

\textsuperscript{3746} The ordinary law of Muslim marriage will be found chiefly in ii. 221-235, iv. 19-25, iv. 34-35, and v. 6.

\textsuperscript{3747} The words “this only for thee ... right hands possess” are parenthetical, and the words “in order that...” connect on with the previous clauses beginning with “O Prophet, We have made lawful.....wishes to wed her”.

\textsuperscript{3748} Marriage is an important relationship not only in our physical life, but in our moral and spiritual life, and its effects extend not only to the parties themselves but to children and future generations. A number of special problems arise according to special circumstances. Every man and woman must seriously consider all sides of the question and must do the best in his or her power to temper instincts and inclinations with wisdom and guidance from Allah. Allah wishes to make every one's path easy, for He is indeed “Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”.
51. Thou mayest defer (the turn)\textsuperscript{3749} of any of them that thou pleasest, and thou mayest receive any thou pleasest: and there is no blame on thee if thou invite one whose (turn)\textsuperscript{3750} thou hadst set aside. This were nigher to the cooling of their eyes,\textsuperscript{3751} the prevention of their grief, and their satisfaction--that of all of them--with that which thou hast to give them:\textsuperscript{3752}

\textsuperscript{3749}. In iv. 3 it is laid down that more than one wife is not permissible "if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them". In a Muslim household there is no room for a "favourite wife" in the sense that such a wife is recipient of favours denied to other wives. In the special circumstances of the Prophet there were more than one, and he usually observed the rule of equality with them, in other things as well as in the rotation of conjugal rights. But considering that his marriages after he was invested with the Prophetic office were mainly dictated by other than conjugal or personal considerations (see n. 3706. xxxiii. 28), the rotation could not always be observed, though he observed it as much as possible. This verse absolves him from absolute adherence to a fixed rotation. There are other interpretations, but I agree with most of the Commentators in the view I have explained.

\textsuperscript{3750}. Where the rotation was for some reason interfered with, it was permissible, by another interference with the usual rotation, to bring satisfaction to one who had been previously set aside. This was not only permitted, but commended, as tending to remove dissatisfaction and cheer and comfort the eyes and hearts of those who were disappointed in their turn.

\textsuperscript{3751}. Cooling the eyes: an Arabic idiom for cheering and comforting eyes which yearn to see those they love. A verse of Zeb-un-nisâa, daughter of the Mugal Emperor Aurangzeb, may be rendered thus:

"My heart is glad whenever lover-wise
I dwell upon thy beauties and thy grace!
But how can I content my hungry eyes,
That ask continually to see thy face?"

\textsuperscript{3752}. There was not much in the way of worldly goods or satisfaction that the Prophet could give them: see xxxiii. 28 above. But he was kind, just, and true--the best of men to his family, and they all clung to him.

- 1260 -
And Allah knows (all) That is in your hearts.\textsuperscript{3753} 
And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

52. It is not lawful for thee (To marry more) women\textsuperscript{3754} After this, nor to change Them for (other) wives, Even though their beauty Attract thee, except any Thy right hand should Possess (as handmaidens): And Allah doth watch Over all things.

SECTION 7.

53. O ye who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses,\textsuperscript{3755} Until leave is given you,

3753. Our human hearts, however good on the whole, may yet, in their motives, have possibly some baser admixture. The feminine hearts are not more immune in this respect than the masculine. But everything is known and understood by Allah. Who will in His mercy make all allowance for our human weaknesses. His title of "Most Forbearing" (\textit{Halîm}) also gives His devoted worshippers the cue: why should we not also forbear with the faults and weaknesses of our neighbours and fellow-creatures?

3754. This was revealed in A.H. 7. After that the Prophet did not marry again, except the handmaiden Mary the Copt, who was sent as a present by the Christian Muqauqas of Egypt. She became the mother of Ibrâhîm, who died in his infancy.

3755. The rules of refined social ethics is as necessary to teach to-day as it was with the rude Arabs whom the holy Prophet had to teach in his day. Those mentioned in this verse may be briefly recapitulated thus: (1) Enter not a friend's house without permission; (2) if invited to dine, don't go too early; you are asked to dine, not to wait for the preparation of the food; (3) be there at the time appointed, so that you enter when you are expected and invited; (4) after the meal, don't get familiar with your host, especially if there is a great distance between him and you; (5) don't waste time in tittle-tattle, causing inconvenience and perhaps annoyance to your host; (6) understand what is proper behaviour for you: he may be too polite to ask to depart. All this has a social bearing: respect and delicate consideration for others are among the highest virtues.
For a meal, (and then)
Not (so early as) to wait
For its preparation: but when
Ye are invited, enter;
And when ye have taken
Your meal, disperse,
Without seeking familiar talk.
Such (behaviour) annoys
The Prophet he is shy
To dismiss you, but
Allah is not shy
(To tell you) the truth.
And when ye
Ask (his ladies)3756
For anything ye want,
Ask them from before
A screen: that makes
For greater purity for
Your hearts and for theirs.
Nor is it right for you3757
That ye should annoy3758
Allah’s Messenger, or that
Ye should marry his widows

3756. The actual manner of showing respect to ladies may be different in different circumstances. But it is an essential principle of good society to show the greatest deference to them. To the “Mothers of the Believers” this respect was due in an exceptional degree.

3757. Considering his position, the holy Prophet deserved to be respected before all other men and nothing should be done to cause him the least harm and annoyance. This applied not only during his life-time, but it applies now, because his teaching and personality are alive to us. It was not fitting that his widows, both for their own position and for the position of the Prophet, should be married by other men after him. And this mark of respect was duly observed in history.

3758. “Annoy”: Azā (IV) may equally mean: to vex, to cause hurt or injury, to insult, to ill-treat by slander or unseemly conduct, or hurt the feelings of (some one). The Prophet came with a divine mission to teach and reclaim the world, and he is entitled to the respect of all, even of those who do not consciously acknowledge his mission, for his mission works constantly like the forces of nature. In a minor degree the “Mothers of the Believers” are also entitled to respect.
After him at any time.  
Truth such a thing is  
In Allah's sight an enormity.

54. Whether ye reveal anything\textsuperscript{3759}  
Or conceal it, verily  
Allah has full knowledge  
Of all things.

55. There is no blame  
(On those ladies if they  
Appear) before their fathers\textsuperscript{3760}  
Or their sons, their brothers,  
Or their brothers' sons,  
Or their sisters' sons,  
Or their women,  
Or the (slaves) whom  
Their right hands possess.  
And, (ladies), fear Allah;  
For Allah is Witness  
To all things.

3759. Respect or opposition may be shown overtly or in devious hidden ways. All good and evil are open before Allah, and He will take due account of everything.

3760. This refers back to the Hijāb (screen) portion of verse 53 above. The list of those before whom the Prophet's wives could appear informally without a screen is their fathers, sons, brothers, brothers' or sisters' sons, serving women, and household slaves or servants. Commentators include uncles (paternal and maternal) under the heading "fathers". "Their women" is held to mean all women who belonged to the Muslim community: other women were in the position of strangers, whom they received not so intimately, but with the formality of a screen as in the case of men. Compare with this list and the wording here the list and the wording in xxiv. 31, which applies to all Muslim women. In the list here, husbands and husbands' relatives are not necessary to be mentioned, as we are speaking of a single household, that of the central figure in Islam: nor men-servants nor children, as there were none. In the wording, note that for Muslim women generally, no screen or Hijāb (Parda) is mentioned, but only a veil to cover the bosom, and modesty in dress. The screen was a special feature of honour for the Prophet's household, introduced about five or six years before his death.
56. Allah and His Angels,  
Send blessings on the Prophet:  
O ye that believe!  
Send ye blessings on him,  
And salute him  
With all respect.  

57. Those who annoy  
Allah and His Messenger—  
Allah has cursed them  
In this world and  
In the Hereafter,  
And has prepared for them  
A humiliating Punishment.  

58. And those who annoy  
Believing men and women  
Undeservedly, bear (on  
themselves)  
A calumny and a glaring sin.  

SECTION 8.  

59. O Prophet! Tell  
Thy wives and daughters,  

3761. Allah and His angels honour and bless the holy Prophet as the greatest of men. We are asked to honour and bless him all the more because he took upon himself to suffer the sorrows and afflictions of this life in order to guide us to Allah's Mercy and the highest inner Life.  

3762. Cf. n. 3758 above.  

3763. Cf. iv. 112. In that passage we were told that any one who was himself guilty but accused an innocent man of his guilt, was obviously placing himself in double jeopardy; first, for his own original guilt, and secondly for the guilt of a false accusation. Here we take two classes of men instead of two individuals. The men and women of faith (if they deserve the name) and doing all they can to serve Allah and humanity. If they are insulted, hurt, or annoyed by those whose sins they denounce, the latter suffer the penalties of a double guilt, viz., their sins to start with, and the insults or injuries they offer to those who correct them. Instead of resenting the preaching of Truth, they should welcome it and profit by it.
And the believing women, 3764
That they should cast
Their outer garments over 3765
Their persons (when out of doors):
That is most convenient,
That they should be known 3766
(As such) and not molested.
And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, 3767
Most Merciful.

60. Truly, if the Hypocrites,
And those in whose hearts
Is a disease, and those who
Stir up sedition in the City, 3768
Desist not, We shall certainly
Stir thee up against them:
Then will they not be
Able to stay in it
As thy neighbours
For any length of time:

3764. This is for all Muslim women, those of the Prophet’s household, as well as the others. They were asked to cover themselves with outer garments when walking out of doors.

3765. Jilbāb, plural Jalābīb: an outer garment; a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom.

3766. The object was not to restrict the liberty of women, but to protect them from harm and molestation. In the East and in the West a distinctive public dress of some sort or another has always been a badge of honour or distinction, both among men and women. This can be traced back on the earliest civilisations. Assyrian Law in its palmiest days (say, 7th century B.C.), enjoined the veiling of married women and forbade the veiling of slaves and women of ill fame: see Cambridge Ancient History, III. 107.

3767. That is, if a Muslim woman sincerely tries to observe this rule, but owing to human weakness falls short of the ideal, then “Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”.

3768. It was necessary to put down all kinds of unseemly conduct in the Prophet’s City. And here is the warning in the plainest terms. And the warning had its effect. The “Hypocrites” were men who pretended to be in Islam but whose manners and morals were anti-Islamic. Those “with diseased hearts” may have been the ones that molested innocent women. “Those who stirred up sedition” put false rumours in circulation to excite the crowd. Alas! we must ask ourselves the question: “Are these conditions present among us to-day?”
61. They shall have a curse\textsuperscript{3769} 
On them: wherever they 
Are found, they shall be 
Seized and slain.

62. (Such was) the practice 
(Approved) of Allah among those\textsuperscript{3770} 
Who lived aforetime: 
No change wilt thou find 
In the practice (approved) 
Of Allah.

63. Men ask thee concerning 
The Hour: say, “The knowledge\textsuperscript{3771} 
Thereof is with Allah (alone)”: 
And what will make thee 
Understand?—perchance 
The Hour is nigh!

64. Verily Allah has cursed 
The Unbelievers and prepared 
For them a Blazing Fire,—

65. To dwell therein for ever: 
No protector will they find, 
Nor helper.

\textsuperscript{3769} They will be deprived of the blessing and guidance of Allah. They sought to 
cause disorder in Allah’s world—moral as well as material; but they will themselves be 
destroyed. Those who become outlaws, rebels against the Law, will themselves be 
destroyed by the Law.

\textsuperscript{3770} The Jewish law was much more severe: see notes 3703 and 3704 to xxxiii. 26. 
That severity is mitigated in Islam. But it is a universal principle that any element which 
deliberately refuses to obey law and aggressively tries to subvert all order in society, 
secretly and openly, must be effectively suppressed, for the preservation of the life and 
health of the general community.

\textsuperscript{3771} Cf. vii. 187 and n. 1159, where the idea is further explained. The knowledge 
of the Final Hour is with Allah alone. The fact of its coming is certain; the exact time 
when it will come has not been revealed. If it were, it would disturb our thoughts and 
life. “Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth.” But at any given 
moment it cannot be far distant. In theological language, each individual’s death is a Final 
Hour, a \textit{Qiy\textsubscript{m}at \textit{Sugra}} (Lesser Day of Judgment). In that sense it is not the same for 
all individuals, and is certainly always near.
66. The Day that their faces
Will be turned over\(^{3772}\)
In the Fire, they will say:
"Woe to us! would that
We had obeyed Allah
And obeyed the Messenger!"

67. And they would say:
“Our Lord! We obeyed
Our chiefs and our great ones,
And they misled us
As to the (right) path.

68. “Our Lord! Give them
Double Chastisement\(^{3773}\)
And curse them
With a very great Curse!”

SECTION 9.

69. O ye who believe!
Be ye not like those
Who hurt Moses,\(^{3774}\)
But Allah cleared him
Of the (calumnies) they

--- 1267 ---

\(^{3772}\) The face is the expression of their Personality, their Self; and turning upside
down is a sign of degradation and ignominy. When the Retribution comes, the evil ones
will be humiliated, and they will wish that they had followed right guidance when they
had the chance. They will then fall to accusing their leaders who misled them. But they
forget their own personal responsibility.

\(^{3773}\) Cf. xxv. 69 and n. 3129, and xi. 20 and n. 1515. The double Penalty invoked
will be because (1) they went wrong themselves and (2) they misled others.

\(^{3774}\) The people of Moses often vexed him and rebelled against him and against
God’s Law. Here the reference seems to be to Num. xii. 1-13. It is there said that Moses’s
own sister Miriam and his brother Aaron spoke against Moses because Moses had married
an Ethiopian woman. God cleared Moses of the charge of having done anything wrong:
“My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.” Miriam was afflicted
with leprosy for seven days as a punishment, after which she was forgiven, as also was
Aaron. This is the Old Testament story. The holy Prophet was also attacked because of
his marriage with Zainab bint Jahsh, but not by his own circle, his motives were of the
highest and were completely vindicated as we have seen above.
Had uttered: and he
Was honourable in Allah's sight.

70. O ye who believe!
Fear Allah, and
Make your utterance
Straight forward:

71. That He may make
Your conduct whole and sound
And forgive you your sins:
He that obeys Allah
And His Messenger, has already
Attained the great victory.

72. We did indeed offer
The Trust to the Heavens
And the Earth
And the Mountians;
But they refused

3775. We must not only speak the truth as far as we know it, but we must always try to hit the right point; i.e., we must not speak unseasonably, and when we do speak, we must not beat about the bush, but go straight to that which is right, in deed as well as in word. Then Allah will make our conduct right and cure any defects that there may be in our knowledge and character. With our endeavour directed straight to the goal, we shall be forgiven our errors, shortcomings, faults, and sins of the past.

3776. This is salvation, the attainment of our real spiritual desire or ambition, as we are on the highway to nearness to Allah.

3777. The Trust is something given to a person, over which he has a power of disposition; he is expected to use it as directed or expected, but he has the power to use it otherwise. There is no trust if the trustee has no power, and the trust implies that the giver of the trust believes and expects that the trustee would use it according to the wish of the creator of the trust, and not otherwise.

3778. Cf. lix. 21, where the hypothetical sending down of the Qur-an to the Mountains is mentioned, and it is mentioned that such Parables are put forth in order to aid men to reflection.

3779. The Heavens, the Earth, and the Mountains, i.e., other creatures of Allah, besides man, refused to undertake a Trust or a responsibility, and may be imagined as happy without a choice of good or evil being given through their will. In saying that they refused, we imply a will, but we limit it by the statement that they did not undertake to be given a choice between good and evil. They preferred to submit their will entirely to Allah's Will, which is All-Wise and Perfect, and which would give them far more =
To undertake it,\textsuperscript{3780}
Being afraid thereof:
But man undertook it:--\textsuperscript{3781}
He was indeed unjust\textsuperscript{3782}
And foolish;--

happiness than a faculty of choice, with their imperfect knowledge. Man was too audacious and ignorant to realise this, and the result has been that man as a race has been disrupted: the evil ones have betrayed the Trust and brought Punishment on themselves, though the good have been able to rise far above other Creation, to be the \textit{muqarrabin}, the nearest ones to Allah: lvi. 11 and lvi. 88. What can be higher than this for any creature?

It follows incidentally from this that the Heavens and the Earth were created before man was created and this is in accordance with what we know of the physical world in science: man came on the scene at a comparatively late stage.

3780. \textit{Hamala}: to undertake, bear, carry (the Trust or responsibility), to be equal to it. This is the ordinary meaning, and the majority of Commentators construe so. But some understand it to mean "to carry away, run away with, to embezzle (the thing entrusted); hence to be false to the Trust, to betray the Trust." In that case the sense of verses 72-73 would be: "Allah offered the Trust to other creatures, but they refused, lest they should betray it, being afraid from that point of view: but man was less fair to himself: in his ignorance he accepted and betrayed the Trust, with the result that some of his race became Hypocrites and Unbelievers and were punished, though others were faithful to the Trust and received Allah's Mercy". The resulting conclusion is the same under both interpretations.

3781. See ii. 30-34 and notes. Allah intended a very high destiny for man, and placed him in his uncorrupted state even above the angels, but in his corruption he made himself even lower than the beasts. What was it that made man so high and noble? The differentiating quality which Allah gave man was that Allah breathed something of His own spirit into man (xxxii. 9; xv. 29 and n. 1968; and other passages). This meant that man was given a limited choice of good and evil, and that he was made capable of Forbearance, Love, and Mercy. And in himself man summed up Allah's great world: man is in himself a microcosm.

3782. \textit{Zalām} (translated "unjust") and \textit{Jahāl} (ignorant) are both in the Arabic intensive form; as much as to say, 'man signally failed to measure his own powers or his own knowledge.' But Allah's Grace came to his assistance. Where man did his best, he won through by Allah's Grace, even though man's Best was but a poor Good.

How did man generically undertake this great Responsibility, which made him Vicegerent on earth (ii. 30)? Here comes in the doctrine of a Covenant, express or implied, between Allah and Humanity. See vii. 172-73 and notes 1146-48 also v. 1 and n. 682. A Covenant (\textit{Mithāq}) necessarily implies Trust, and its breach necessarily implies Punishment.
73. (With the result) that
Allah has to punish\textsuperscript{3783}
The Hypocrites, men and women,
And the Unbelievers, men
And women, and Allah turns
In Mercy to the Believers,\textsuperscript{3784}
Men and women: for Allah
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{3783} Man's generic Covenant, which flowed from his exercising the option given him, choosing Will, Forbearance, Love, and Mercy, made it necessary that breach of it should carry its own punishment. Breach of it is here classed under two heads: those who betray their Trust act either as Hypocrites or as Unbelievers. Hypocrites are those who profess Faith but bring not forth the fruits of Faith. Unbelievers are those who openly defy Faith, and from whom therefore no fruits of Faith are to be expected.

\textsuperscript{3784} Those who remain firm to their Faith and their Covenant (see notes 3781-82) will receive the aid of Allah's Grace; their faults and weaknesses will be cured; and they will be made worthy of their exalted Destiny. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful.

So ends a Sūra which deals with the greatest complications and misunderstandings in our throbbing life here below, and points upwards to the Great Achievement, the highest Salvation.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Sabā, 34.

Now we begin a series of six Sūras, S. xxxiv. to S. xxxix, which recapitulate some of the features of the spiritual world. This Sūra leads off with emphasis on Allah's Mercy and Power and Truth. Then (in S. xxxv.) we are told how angels manifest the Power of Allah, and how different is Good from Evil and Truth from Falsehood. S. xxxvi. is devoted to the holy Prophet and the Qurān that came through him. In S. xxxvii, the emphasis is on the snares of Satan; in S. xxxviii., on the conquest of evil by wisdom and power as in the case of David and Solomon, and by Patience and Constancy as in the case of Job; and in S. xxxix. on the Final Judgment, which will sort out Faith from Unfaith and give to each its due.

The chronology has here no significance. This Sūra belongs to the early Makkān period.

Summary.—No Good or Truth is ever lost: Human Power and Prosperity are fleeting; but Allah's Power and Justice endure, and will enforce personal responsibility on man on the Last Day (xxxiv. 1-30).

Faith and Unfaith will eventually find their true places and true values; Falsehood has no power: Truth is with Allah (xxxiv. 31-54).
Sura of Saba 34: 1-2

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Praise be to Allah, To Whom belong all things In the heavens and on earth: To Him be Praise In the Hereafter: And He is All-Wise, All-Aware.

2. He knows all that goes Into the earth, and all that Comes out thereof; all that Comes down from the sky And all that ascends thereto And He is the Most Merciful, The Oft-Forgiving.

3. All Creation declares His Praises, i.e., manifests His Mercy and Power, Goodness and Truth—all the sublime attributes summed up in His Most Beautiful Names (vii. 180 and xvii. 110 and notes). For man, to contemplate these is in itself a Revelation. This sentiment opens five Suras of the Qur'an evenly distributed, viz., i., vi., xviii., xxxiv., and xxxv. Here the point most emphasised is that His wisdom and mercy comprehend all things, extended in space or in time—here and everywhere, now and evermore.

4. An ignorant man may think that water absorbed in the soil or seed sown beneath the sod is lost, but it replenishes numerous rills and streams, and feeds and sustains numerous roots and forms of life, and throws up all kinds of vegetable life. So with things that come out of the earth: who can count the myriad forms of herbs and trees that grow and perish, and yet sustain a continuous life for ages and ages? Yet these are symbolical of other things or entities beyond time or space, and beyond physical form. We see the birth and death of the animal part of man: when he is buried beneath the soil, the ignorant man thinks there is an end of him.

5. The vapours that rise from the earth and ascend to the sky descend again as rain and snow and as symbols of Allah's Mercy. So are the prayers of the devout and the call of those in agony for help and light, answered by the descent of mercy and guidance, help and light from Allah. Do not forget that, just as there is the element of Mercy, so there is an element of Justice and Punishment.
3. The Unbelievers say,3788
"Never to us will come
The Hour": say, "Nay!
But most surely,
By my Lord,3789 it will come
Upon you;—by Him
Who knows the unseen,—
From Whom is not hidden
The least little atom
In the Heavens or on earth:
Nor is there anything less
Than that, or greater, but
Is in the Record Perspicuous:3790

4. That He may reward
Those who believe and work
Deeds of righteousness: for such
Is Forgiveness and a Sustenance3791
Most Generous."

3788. The last two verses prepared us to realise the position of Unbelievers in Allah's great Universe. They are the discord in the universal harmony of Prayer and Praise. Their existence is due to the grant of a limited free-will, the Trust which the Unbelievers have betrayed (see xxxiii. 72 and notes). But they must and will be eliminated: see verse 5 below. For there is nothing more certain in the world, physical, moral, and spiritual, than that every cause, great or small, must have its corresponding consequences.

3789. The strongest emphasis and the most perfect assurance of certainty are indicated by reference to the authority of Allah Himself, the Ruler of the Day of Judgment.

3790. In the symbolical language of our own human experience, a record is more enduring than memory: in fact (if properly preserved) it is perpetual. If, further, it is expressed in clear language, without any obscurity, it can always be read with perfect precision and without any doubt whatever. Apply these qualities, free from human defect to Allah's laws and decrees. They are unerring and enduring. Everything, greater or small, will receive due recognition—a Reward for Good and a Punishment for Evil.

3791. "Sustenance": Spiritual in things spiritual, and physical in things physical. It implies not only the satisfaction of desire, but the provision of means for sustaining the ground won and for winning more ground in the march of progress.
5. But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them, for such will be a Chastisement of Painful wrath.

6. And those to whom Knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to thee from thy Lord—that is the Truth, and that it guides to the Path of the Exalted (In Might), Worthy of all praise.

7. The Unbelievers say (In ridicule): "Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you, when ye are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that ye shall (then be raised) in a New Creation?"

8. "Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, or is he demented?"

3792. Cf. xxii. 51. Allah’s Plan cannot be frustrated. It is those who work against it, who will be eliminated and destroyed.

3793. Against the doubts and vain imaginings of the Ignorant is the certainty of knowledge of the Enlightened: that Allah reveals Himself, and that His Revelation is true, and leads to the Path of true Guidance. That Path is the Path of Allah, Who, in His infinite Love and Mercy, is Worthy of all Praise.

It is possible to connect this with the “Record Perspicuous” in verse 3 above: ‘it is perspicuous..., for the Enlightened do see...’

3794. This is a taunt against the holy Prophet, and it is applicable to all who preach the doctrine of a Future Life. How is it possible, say the Unbelievers, that when a man’s body is reduced to dust and scattered about, the man should rise again and become a new Creation? They add that such a preacher is inventing a deliberate falsehood or is demented.
Afflicted with madness”.\footnote{3795}
Nay, it is those who
Believe not in the Hereafter,
That are in (real) Chastisement,
And in farthest Error.

9. See they not what is
Before them and behind them,
Of the sky and the earth?\footnote{3796}
If We wished, We could
Cause the earth to swallow\footnote{3797}
Them up, or cause a piece
Of the sky to fall upon them.\footnote{3798}
Verily in this is a Sign
For every devotee that
Turns to Allah (in repentance).

10. We bestowed Grace aforetime
On David from Us\footnote{3799}
“O ye Mountains! echo ye
Back the Praises of Allah
With him! and ye birds

\footnote{3795. The answer is: the Future Life is the truest of all Truths; so far is the man who teaches it from being demented, that it is those who deny it, that lack knowledge and are in real jeopardy for their souls; for they persecute Truth and must not only suffer defeat, but go farther and farther from Realities and thus suffer the worst hallucination about the next world.}

\footnote{3796. The men who walk in spiritual darkness and laugh at a Hereafter have but to observe the Power of Allah in the nature around them. He Who created the heavens and the earth and sustains them can surely make a new Creation! And the cosmic Laws which are so just and inevitable should surely give them an idea of the inexorable Justice that must redress all balance.}

\footnote{3797. Cf. xvi. 45, and n. 2071. Who are these puny creatures—sceptics that question the might and majesty of Allah?}

\footnote{3798. Cf. xxvi. 187. This was actually a challenge hurled at Shu'ayb and a shower of ashes and cinders came from above and overwhelmed the challengers!}

\footnote{3799. Cf. xxi. 79-80, and notes 2733-34. David had the gift of song and sacred music, and this is shown in his Psalms. All nature—hills and birds—sing and echo back the Praises of Allah.}
11. (Commanding), “Make thou Coats of mail, balancing well The rings of chain armour, And work ye righteousness; For be sure I see (Clearly) all that ye do.”

12. And to Solomon (We Made) the Wind (obedient). Its early morning (stride) Was a month’s (journey), And its evening (stride) Was a month’s (journey); And We made a Font Of molten brass to flow

3800. Iron or steel is hard stuff: but in the hands of a craftsman it becomes soft and pliable, and with it can be made instruments for the defence of righteousness. These, in the literal sense, are coats of mail, and defensive armour, and the manufacture of them is traditionally attributed to David.

3801. Coats of chain armour have to be made with cunning art, if the chains are to fit into each other and the whole garment is to be worn in comfort in fierce warfare.

3802. Note the transition from the singular, “make them coats of mail”, to the plural “and work ye righteousness”. The first is addressed to David, who was the artificer of defensive armour; and the second is addressed to him and his whole people. He made the armour, but it was to be worn not only by him but all the warriors. But he and all his people were to be careful to see that they did not deviate from the paths of righteousness. Fighting is a dangerous weapon and may well degenerate (as it so often does) into mere violence. They were to see that this should not happen, and they were told that Allah was watching over them all with the personal solicitude implied in the singular pronoun “I”.

3803. Cf. xxi. 81-82, n. 2736, and xxxviii. 36-38. See also xxvii. 38-39. The winds are swift and can cover in a short morning’s or evening’s flight the distance which it takes a whole month to cover on foot or by bullock cart. In our own day, with air speeds of 400 miles and more per hour, this seems a moderate statement.

3804. In the Old Testament, II. Chronicles, Chapters iii., and iv., are described the various costly materials with which Solomon’s Temple was built, and it was furnished with vessels, candle-sticks, lamps, censers, etc. “Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out” (II. Chronicles, iv. 18).
For him; and there were Jinns that worked in front\textsuperscript{3805} of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from Our command, We made him taste of the Chastisement of the Blazing Fire.

13. They worked for him as he desired, (making) Arches,\textsuperscript{3806} Images, Basons as large as wells, and (cooking) Cauldrons fixed (in their places): “Exercise thanks!\textsuperscript{3807} Sons of David, but few of My servants are grateful!”

14. Then, when We decreed (Solomon’s) death, nothing showed them.

\textsuperscript{3805} See xxvii. 17, and n. 3257.

\textsuperscript{3806} Miḥrāb (‘Plural Maḥāriḥ), translated “arch”, may be applied to any fine, elevated, spacious architectural structure. As the reference here is to the Temple of Solomon, the word “arches” is I think most appropriate. “Arch” would be structural ornaments in the Temple. Images would be like the images of oxen and Cherubim mentioned in II. Chronicles, iv. 3 and iii. 14; the Basons (II. Chronicles iv. 22) were perhaps huge dishes round which many men could sit together and eat, according to ancient Eastern custom, while the cooking Cauldrons or Pots (II. Chronicles, iv. 16), were fixed in one place, being so large in capacity that they could not be moved about. Indian readers will get some idea of them from the huge cooking Deks, which they use in the festivals.

\textsuperscript{3807} The building of the Temple was a great event in Israelite history. They are asked to be thankful without which all that glory and power would be out of place, and it fell away in a few generations, with the decline of the moral spirit which was at its back.
His death except a little\textsuperscript{3808}
\textit{Worm of the earth, which
Kept (slowly) gnawing away
At his staff: so when he
Fell down, the Jinns saw\textsuperscript{3809}
Plainly that if they had
Known the unseen, they
Would not have tarried
In the humiliating Chastisement
(Of their Task).}

15. There was, for Saba,\textsuperscript{3810}
Aforetime, a Sign in their
Home-land—two Gardens
To the right and to the left.

3808. This statement illustrates three points: (1) however great and glorious human
power and grandeur may be, it is only for a time, and it may fade away even before
people know of its decline; (2) the most remarkable events may be brought to light, not
by a flourish of trumpets, but by a humble individual, unknown and unseen, who works
imperceptibly and undermines even so strong a thing as staff, on which a great man may
lean; (3) work done by men merely on the basis of brute strength or fear, as in the case
of the Jinns, will not endure. This is brought up in strong contrast against the Power
and Majesty of Allah, which will endure, which cannot be sapped, and which can only
be fully appreciated by a training of the will and heart. In the same way, in David’s story
above, his mighty strength as a warrior (see ii. 251) and his skill in making armour are
only to be valued when used, as it was used, in the service of Allah, in righteous works
(xxxiv. 11).

3809. The Jinns looked upon their work as a Penalty, and so it became to them.
The people who worked at the Temple of Solomon as the People of David worked and
gloried in their work as a thanksgiving to Allah, and their work became sanctified. The
Jinns knew nothing of hidden secrets; they only saw the obvious, and had not even the
significance of the little worm that slowly gnawed away Solomon’s staff.

3810. This is the same city and territory in Yemen as is mentioned in xxvii. 22: see
note there as to its location. There the period was the time of Solomon and Queen Bilqis.
Here it is some centuries later. It was still a happy and prosperous country, amply
irrigated from the Ma’rib dam. Its roads or perhaps its canals, were skirted by gardens
on both sides, right and left: at any given point, you always saw two gardens. It produced
fruit, spices, and frankincense, and got the name of Araby the Blest for that part of the
country.
"Eat of the Sustenance (provided)
By your Lord, and be grateful
To Him: a territory fair and happy,
And a Lord Oft-Forgiving!\(^\text{3811}\)

16. But they turned away
(From Allah), and We sent
Against them the flood\(^\text{3812}\)
(Released) from the Dams,\(^\text{3813}\)
And We converted their two
Garden (rows) into "gardens"
Producing bitter fruit,
And tamarisks, and some few
(Stunted) Lote-trees.\(^\text{3814}\)

3811. The land was fair to look upon; the people happy and prosperous: and they enjoyed the blessings of Allah, Who is Gracious and does not punish small human faults or weaknesses.

2812. Into that happy Garden of Eden in Arabia Felix (Araby the Blest) came the insidious snake of Unfaith and Wrongdoing. Perhaps the people became arrogant of their prosperity, or of their science, or of their skill in irrigation engineering, in respect of the wonderful works of the Dam which their ancestors had constructed. Perhaps they got broken up into rich and poor, privileged and unprivileged, high-caste and low-caste, disregarding the gifts and closing the opportunities given by Allah to all His creatures. Perhaps they broke the laws of the very Nature which fed and sustained them. The Nemesis came. It may have come suddenly, or it may have come slowly. The pent-up waters of the eastern side of the Yemen highlands were collected in a high lake confined by the Dam of Ma‘ārib. A mighty flood came; the dam burst; and it has never been repaired since. This was a spectacular crisis: it may have been preceded and followed by slow desiccation of the country.

3813. "Arīm" ( = Dams or Embankments) may have been a proper noun, or may simply mean the great earth-works lined with stone, which formed the Ma‘ārib dam, of which traces still exist. The French traveller T.J. Arnaud saw the town and ruins of the Dam of Ma‘ārib in 1843, and described its gigantic works and its inscriptions: See Journal Asiatique for January 1874: the account is in French. For a secondary account in English, see W.B. Harris. Journey Through Yemen, Edinburgh, 1893. The dam as measured by Arnaud was two miles long and 120 ft. high. The date of its destruction was somewhere about 120 A.D., though some authorities put it much later.

3814. The flourishing "Garden of Arabia" was converted into a waste. The luscious fruit trees became wild, or gave place to wild plants with bitter fruit. The feathery leaved tamarisk, which is only good for twigs and wattle-work, replaced the fragrant plants and flowers. Wild and stunted kinds of thorny bushes, like the wild Lote-tree, which were
17. That was the Requital
We gave them because
They ungratefully rejected Faith. 3815
And never do We give
(Such) requital except to such
As are ungrateful rejecters.

18. Between them and the Cities 3816
On which We had poured
Our blessings, We had placed
Cities in prominent positions,
And between them We had
Appointed stages of journey
In due proportion: “Travel therein,
Secure, by night and by day.”


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3815. Kafur: intensive form: “those who deliberately and continuously reject Allah
and are ungrateful for His Mercies, as shown by their constant wrong-doing.

3816. An instance is now given of the sort of covetousness on the part of the people
of Sabä, which ruined their prosperity and trade and cut their own throats. The old
Frankincense route was the great Highway (imam mubin xv. 79; sabil muqim, xv. 76)
between Arabia and Syria. Through Syria it connected with the great and flourishing
Kingdoms of the Euphrates and Tigris valleys on the one hand and Egypt on the other,
and with the great Roman Empire round the Mediterranean. At the other end, through
the Yemen Coast, the road connected, by sea transport, with India, Malaya, and China.
The Yemen-Syria road was much frequented, and Madain Sâlih was one of the stations
on that route, and afterwards on the Pilgrim route: see Appendix No: 4 to S.
Syria was the land on which Allah “had poured His blessings”, being a rich fertile country,
where Abraham had lived: it includes the Holy Land of Palestine. The route was studded
in the days of its prosperity with many stations (cities) close to each other, on which
merchants could travel with ease and safety, “by night and by day”. The close proximity
of stations prevented the inroads of highwaymen.

3817. Said: in this and other places in the Qurân, “language” is used for thought
or deed. The Commentators call it the “language of actual facts” (zabân hâl) as opposed
to the “language of words” (zabân qâl).
Place longer distances
Between our journey-stages.\(^{3818}\)
But they wronged themselves

(therein).

At length We made them
As a tale (that is told),\(^{3819}\)
And We dispersed them
All in scattered fragments.

Verily in this are Signs
For every (soul that is)
Patiently constant and grateful.

20. And on them did Satan
Prove true his idea,\(^{3820}\)
And they followed him, all
But a Party that believed.

3818. The covetous Sabā people, in order to get more profit from travellers’ supplies by concentrating them on a few stations which they could monopolise, tended to choke off traffic and ruin the big trade. Selfishness often runs counter to true self-interest. It is a historical fact that the great Yemen-Syria route in Arabia declined with the decline of Yemen. There were no doubt physical causes, but supreme above all were the moral causes, the grasping nature of the people, and their departure from the highest standards of righteousness.

3819. The people of Sabā were given every chance. They had prosperity, skill, trade and commerce, and a healthy and beautiful country. They also had, apparently, great virtues, and as long as they remained true to their virtues, \(i.e.,\) to the Law of Allah, they remained happy and contented. But when they became covetous and selfish, and became jealous of other people’s prosperity instead of rejoicing in it, they fell from grace and declined. It may be that the climate changed, the rainfall became scantier, perhaps on account of the cutting down of hill forests; trade routes changed, on account of the people falling off in the virtues that make men popular: behind all the physical causes was the root-cause, that they began to worship mammon, self, greed, or materialism. They fell into the snare of Satan. They gradually passed out of history, and became only a name in a story. Moral: it is only Allah’s Mercy that can give true happiness or prosperity, and happiness or prosperity is only a snare unless used for the highest service of Allah and man.

3820. \(Cf.\) xvii. 62. Satan out of arrogance had said, when he asked for respite from the Most High: “I will bring (Adam’s) descendants under my sway, all but a few.” This was now proved true on the Sabā people. He had no power to force them. It was their own will that went wrong and put them into his power.
21. But he had no authority
Over them,—except that We
Might test the man who3821
Believes in the Hereafter
From him who is in doubt
Concerning it: and thy Lord
Doth watch over all things.

SECTION 3.

22. Say: “Call upon other (gods)3822
Whom ye fancy, besides Allah:
They have no power,—
Not the weight of an atom,—
In the heavens or on earth.3823
No (sort of) share have they
Therein, nor is any of them
A helper to Allah.

23. “No intercession can avail3824
With Him, except for those3824
For whom He has granted
Permission. So far (is this

3821. Might test: the word in the original is might know. It is not that Allah does
not know all. Why does He want to test? It is in order to help us subjectively, to train
our will, to put us definitely the question, “Will you obey Allah or other than Allah?”
Cf. n. 467 to iii. 154.

3822. Other objects of worship, such as Self, or Money, or Power, or things we
imagine will bring us luck or prosperity, though they can do nothing of the kind.

3823. The false gods have no power whatever either in heaven or on earth, either
in influencing our spiritual life or our ordinary worldly life. To suppose that they have
some share, or that they can give some help to Allah, even though Allah is Supreme,
is both false and blasphemous. Allah is One and Supreme, without sharer, helper, or
equal.

3824. Cf. xx. 109, n. 2634, where I have explained the two possible modes of
interpretation. Each soul is individually and personally responsible. And if there is any
intercession, it can only be by Allah’s gracious permission. For the Day of judgment will
be a terrible Day, or Day of Wrath (Dies Irae) according to the Latin hymn, when the
purest souls will be stupefied at the manifestation of Allah’s Power. See next note.
The case) that, when terror is removed from their hearts\textsuperscript{3825} (At the Day of Judgment, then) Will they say, ‘What is it That your Lord commanded?’\textsuperscript{3826} They will say, ‘That which is True and just; and He is The Most High, Most Great’.

24. Say: “Who gives you\textsuperscript{3827} sustenance, from the heavens And the earth?” Say: “It is Allah; and certain it is That either we or ye\textsuperscript{3828} are on right guidance Or in manifest error!”

25. Say: “Ye shall not be Questioned as to our sins.\textsuperscript{3829}

\textsuperscript{3825} “Their hearts”: the pronoun “their” is referred to the angels nearest to Allah. On the Day of Judgment there will be such an irresistible manifestation of Power that even they will be silent for a while, and will scarcely realise what is happening. They will question each other, and only thus will they regain their bearings. Or “their” may refer to those who seek intercession.

\textsuperscript{3826} In their mutual questionings they will realise that Allah’s Judgment, as always, is right and just.

\textsuperscript{3827} There are six propositions introduced here with the word “Say”, at verses 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 30. They clearly explain the doctrine of Unity (verse 22), the Mercy of Allah (verse 24), man’s Personal Responsibility (verse 25), the Final Justice of Allah (verse 26), Allah’s Power and Wisdom (verse 27), and the Inevitability of the Judgment, by which true values will be restored (verse 30).

\textsuperscript{3828} Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, are incompatible, one with another. In this matter we can make no compromise. It is true that in men there may be various degrees of good or evil mixed together, and we have to tolerate men as our fellow-creatures, with all their faults and shortcomings. But this does not mean that we can worship Allah and Mammon together. Wrong is the negation of Right as light is of darkness. Though there may be apparently varying depths of darkness, this is only due to the imperfection of our vision: it is varying strengths of light as perceived by our relative powers of sight. So we may perceive the Light of Allah in varying degrees according to our spiritual vision. But in simple questions of Right or Wrong, we are faced by the Categorical Imperative.

\textsuperscript{3829} Therefore do not persecute us, or bring personal animus to bear on us. We must do our duty in declaring the universal Message, which is for you as much as for us.
Nor shall we be questioned As to what ye do.”

26. Say: “Our Lord will gather us Together and will in the end Decide the matter between us (And you) in truth and justice. And He is the One to decide, The One Who knows all.”

27. Say: “Show me those whom Ye have joined with Him As partners: by no means (Can ye). Nay, He is Allah, The Exalted in Power, The Wise.”

28. We have not sent thee But as a (Messenger) To all mankind, giving them Glad tidings, and warning them (Against sin), but most men Know not.

29. They say: “When will this Promise (come to pass) If ye are telling the truth?”

3830. Human controversies are vain and inconclusive. If you put your trust in Allah and we put our trust in Allah, we belong to one Brotherhood, and we shall see the perfect Truth finally when the Time comes.

3831. Wisdom and Power only belong to Allah. If you put your trust in other things, they will fail you, because they do not exist—as objects of worship. All else that you set your hearts upon will and must fail you, because they cannot in any wise be brought into rivalry with Allah.

3832. Allah’s Revelation, through the holy Prophet, was not meant for one family or tribe, one race or set of people. It was meant for all mankind, to whom, if they turn to Allah, it is a Message of the glad tidings of His Mercy, and if they do not turn to Him, it is a warning against sin and the inevitable Punishment. That the Punishment does not come immediately (as far as they perceive) is no reason for doubting it. It has been declared in clear and unequivocal terms, and nothing can be more certain. Why delay? Why ask carping questions? Why not profit by the Message, turn to Allah in repentance, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness?
30. Say: “The appointment to you Is for a Day, which ye Cannot put back for an hour Nor put forward.”

SECTION 4.

31. The Unbelievers say: “We shall neither believe In this scripture nor in (any) That (came) before it.” Couldst thou but see when The wrong-doers will be made To stand before their Lord, Throwing back the word (of blame) On one another! Those who Were deemed weak will say To the arrogant ones: “Had it not been for you, We should certainly Have been believers!”

3833. When that Day actually arrives, your period of probation will have passed. It will be too late. Now is the time for action.

3834. To the Pagans all scriptures are taboo, whether it be the Qur-ān or any Revelation that came before it. The people of the Book despised the Pagans, but in their arrogant assumption of superiority, prevented them, by their example, from accepting the latest and most universal Scripture when it came in the form of the Qur-ān. This relative position, of men who fancy themselves on their knowledge, and men whom they depise but exploit and mislead, always exists on this earth. I have mentioned the people of the Book and the Pagan Arabs merely by way of illustration.

3835. One disbelief is as bad as another. There is little to choose between them. But when the final account will be taken, there will be mutual recriminations between the one and the other.

3836. The Pagans will naturally say to the people of the Book: “You misled us; you had previous Revelations, and you should have known how Allah sent His Messengers; had it not been for your bad example, we should have received Allah’s Revelation and become Believers.” Or the humble followers will say this to their leaders, or those less gifted will say to those by whom they were misled and exploited. The dichotomy is between such as pretentiously held their heads high in the world and such as they profited by but held in contempt.
32. The arrogant ones will say
   To those who had been deemed weak:

   "Was it we who kept you
   Back from Guidance after
   It reached you? Nay, rather,
   It was ye who transgressed." \[3837\]

33. Those who had been deemed weak
   Will say to the arrogant ones:
   "Nay! it was a plot
   (Of yours) by day and by night;
   Behold! ye (constantly) ordered us
   To be ungrateful to Allah
   And to attribute equals to Him!" \[3838\]
   They are filled with remorse. \[3839\]

34. Never did We send
   A Warner to a population,
But the wealthy ones among them said: “We believe not in the (Message) with which Ye have been sent.”

35. They said: “We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be chastised.”

36. Say: “Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the Provision to whom He pleases, but Most men know not.”

SECTION 5.

37. It is not your wealth nor your sons, that will bring you nearer to Us in degree: but only those who believe and work Righteousness—these are the ones for whom there is

3841. Whenever the Message of Allah comes, the vested interests range themselves against it. Worldly power has made them arrogant; worldly pleasures have deadened their sensibility to Truth. They reject the Message because it attacks their false position.

3842. Their arrogance is openly based on their worldly power and position, their family influence, and the strength of their man-power. Turn back again to the contrast drawn between the arrogant ones and those whom they despised, in verses 31-33.

3843. Provision (or Sustenance): good things of all kinds in this life, material goods as well as power, opportunities, influence, mental gifts, etc. These do not necessarily all go to the good, nor is their denial to be interpreted to mean that it is a withdrawal of Allah’s favour. Very often the contrary is the case. Their distribution is in accordance with the Universal Plan and Purpose, which is all-wise and all-good. But ignorant people cannot understand this.

3844. The true test of progress in spiritual life is to be measured by other things than material wealth and influence. What we have to ask ourselves is: are we the least bit nearer to Allah?
A multiplied Reward
For their deeds, while
Secure they (reside)
In the dwellings on high

38. Those who strive against
Our Signs, to frustrate them,
Will be given over
Into Chastisement.

39. Say: "Verily my Lord enlarges
And restricts the Sustenance
To such of His servants
As He pleases: and nothing
Do ye spend in the least
(In His Cause) but He
Replaces it: for He is
The Best of those who
Grant Sustenance.

40. On the Day He will
Gather them all together,

3845. Cf. xxx. 39. All worldly good is but a shadow that will pass away. Its intrinsic and eternal value is small. But those who work righteousness in Faith are on the true path of self-development. The reward they will get will be infinitely more than their merits entitle them to. For they will partake of the boundless Bounties of Allah.

3846. Their happiness will not only be great in quantity ("multiplied"), but it will be of a specially sublime quality ("dwellings on high"), and it will endure without any chance of its loss or diminution ("secure they reside").

3847. Cf. xxxiv. 5, where the argument was urged that human efforts to defeat Allah's Plan will only bring humiliation to those who indulge in them. Here the argument is rounded off by the statement that such efforts, besides their failure, will land them in an abyss of punishment contrasted with the "dwellings on high" of the blessed ones.

3848. Cf. xxxiv. 36 above, and n. 3843.

3849. Even in the seeming inequality of distribution of the good things of life, Allah has a wise and merciful purpose; for nothing arises by chance. He is the best to give us, now and evermore, just those things which subserve our real needs and advance our inner development.
And say to the angels, "Was it you that these Men used to worship?"

41. They will say, "Glory to Thee! Thou art our Protector—not them. Nay, but they worshipped The Jinns: most of them Believed in them."

42. So on that Day No power shall they have Over each other, for profit Or harm: and We shall Say to the wrong-doers, "Taste ye the Chastisement Of the Fire,—the which Ye were wont to deny!"

43. When Our Clear Signs Are rehearsed to them, They say, "This is only

3850. Here we have the case of the worship of angels or supposed Powers of Allah, or supposed beneficent spirits that men turn to instead of worshipping the true God. In fact these are mere names to the false worshippers. It is not the Good that they worship but the Evil, which leads them astray.

3851. Wali in Arabic may mean Friend either in the sense of Protector and Benefactor or in the sense of the Beloved. The tie of benevolence, confidence, and friendship is implied, either active or passive. The angels first proclaim their dependence on Allah and their need of His protection, and then disclaim any idea of their having protected or encouraged the false worshippers to worship beings other than Allah. They go further, and suggest that when men pretended to worship angels, they worshipped, not angels, but Jinns. See next note.

3852. Jinns: see vi. 100 and n. 929. The false worshippers pretended to worship the bright and radiant angels of good, but in reality worshipped the dark and hidden forces of evil,—in the life around them. They trusted and believed in such forces of evil, although such forces of evil had really no power.

3853. The supposed "rivals" of Allah—the false things whereon men set their hopes and fears—will have no power whatever when true values are restored; and the Fire—the Penalty—which they doubted or derided, will become the dominating real thing in their experience.
A man who wishes
To hinder you from the (worship) Which your fathers practised.”
And they say, “This is Only a falsehood invented!”
And the Unbelievers say Of the Truth when it comes To them, “This is nothing But evident magic!”

44. But We had not given Them Books which they could Study, nor sent messengers To them before thee As Warners.

45. And their predecessors rejected (The Truth); these have Not received a tenth Of what We had granted

3854. Apart from the worship of Evil in the guise of the Powers of Light, there is another form of false worship, which depends on ancestral tradition. “Why” it is said “should we not do as our fathers did?” They reject a new prophet of Truth simply because his teaching does not agree with the ways of their ancestors. The answer to this is given in verse 44 below. But meanwhile the rejectors’ objection to new ‘Truth’ is stated in three forms: (1) our ancestors knew nothing of this; (2) the story of inspiration is false; it is merely an invention; we do not believe in inspiration; (3) when in some particular points, the new Truth does work wonders in men’s hearts, they account for it by saying it is magic. The third objection is merely traditional. What is magic? If it was merely deception, surely the Truth has proved itself to be above deception. The second objection is answered by the fact that the Messenger who comes with new spiritual Truth is acknowledged to be truthful in other relations of life: why should he be false where his preaching brings him no gain but much sorrow and persecution? For the ancestral objection see next note.

3855. The ancestors (as in the case of the Arabs of the Times of Ignorance) had received no revelation of the clear kind which a messenger and a Book bring them. This is a reason for welcoming, not for rejecting new Truth.

3856. Passing to Peoples before the immediate ancestors, the People of the Book, or the People of Sabi‘ and ‘Ad and Thamúd, had received favours and gifts, power and wealth, ten times more than were enjoyed by the Pagan Quraish. Yet when they turned away from Allah’s Truth, Allah turned away from them, and what terrible consequences descended on them when they lost Allah’s Grace! This should make everyone humble, =
SECTION 6.

46. Say: "I do admonish you
   On one point: that ye
   Do stand up before Allah,—
   (It may be) in pairs, 3857
   Or (it may be) singly,—
   And reflect (within yourselves):
   Your Companion is not
   Possessed: he is no less
   Than a Warner to you,
   In face of a terrible
   Chastisement".

47. Say: "whatever reward do I
   Ask of you: it is
   Yours: my reward
   Is only due from Allah:
   And He is Witness
   To all things.”

3857. A crowd mentality is not the best for the perception of the final spiritual truths. For these, it is necessary that each soul should commune within itself with earnest sincerity as before Allah: if it requires a Teacher, let it seek out one, or it may be that it wants the strengthening of the inner convictions that dawn on it, by the support of a sympathiser or friend. But careful and heart-felt reflection is necessary to appraise the higher Truths.

3858. Note that in verses 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50, arguments are suggested to the Prophet, by which he can convince any right-thinking man of his sincerity and truth. Here the argument is that he is not possessed or out of his mind. If he is different from ordinary men, it is because he has to give a warning of a terrible spiritual danger to the men whom he loves but who will not understand his Message.

3859. Cf. x. 72. The second argument is that he has nothing to gain from them. His message is for their own good. He is willing to suffer persecution and insult, because he has to fulfil his mission from Allah.
48. Say: "Verily my Lord
Doth cast the Truth."
He that has full knowledge
Of (all) that is hidden."

49. Say: "The Truth has arrived,
And Falsen心得 not its face
And will not return

50. Say: "If I am astray,
I only stray to the loss
Of my own soul: but if
I receive guidance, it is
Because of the inspiration
Of my Lord to me:
It is He Who hears
All things, and is (ever) near."

51. If thou couldst but see
When they will quake
With terror; but then

3860. Allah's Truth is so vast that no man in this life can compass the whole of it. But Allah in His mercy selects His servants on whom it is cast like a mantle. They see enough to be able to teach their fellow men. It is through that mantle—that mission received from Allah—that a messenger can speak with authority to men, and this is his third argument.

3861. The fourth argument is that the Truth is final: it does not come and go: it creates new situations and new developments, and if by chance it seems to be defeated for a time, it comes back and restores the true balance;—unlike Falsehood, which by its very nature is doomed to perish: xvi. 81. The Prophet’s credentials are known by the test of Time. This was already becoming apparent to discerning eyes when this Sūra was revealed in Makkah, but it became clear to the whole world with the story of Islām’s progress in Madinah.

3862. If it could possibly be supposed that the Prophet was a self-deceived visionary, it would affect him only, and could not fail to appear in his personality. But in fact he was steady in his constancy and Faith, and he not only went from strength to strength, but won the enduring and whole-hearted love and devotion of his nearest and dearest and of those who most came into contact with him. How was this possible, unless he had the Truth and the inspiration of Allah behind him? This is the fifth and last argument in this passage.
There will be no escape (For them), and they will be Seized from a position (Quite) near.

52. And they will say,
   “We do believe (now)
   In the (Truth)”; but how
   Could they receive (Faith)
   From a position (so) far off,–

53. Seeing that they did reject
   Faith (entirely) before, and
   That they cast
   (Conjectures) with regard
   To the unseen
   From a position far off?

54. And between them
   And their desires,
   Is placed a barrier,

3863. After the arguments for the reality and triumph of Truth, we are asked to contemplate the position of the opposers of Truth when Truth is established. They will be struck with terror: for Truth is all-compelling. They will wish they could get away from that position, but that would be impossible. They will not be able to move far; they will be held fast to the consequences of their own earlier conduct. They will be caught quite close to the point of their departure from Truth.

3864. They will now profess their faith in Truth, but of what value will such profession be? Faith is a belief in things unseen: now everything is plain and open before them. The position in which they could have received Faith is left far off behind them, when Truth was struggling and asked for help or asylum, and they cruelly, arrogantly, insultingly repudiated Truth.

3865. Not only did they reject the Truth of the Unseen (the true Reality), but they spread all sorts of false and malicious insinuations at the preachers of Truth, calling them dishonest men, liars, hypocrites, and so on. They did it like a coward taking up a sneaking position far from the fight and speeding arrows at a distant target.

3866. What they desire is to suppress Truth and to indulge in the satisfaction of their own evil, selfish motives. They will be baulked in both, and that itself will be their anguish and punishment. That has always been the law in the eternal struggle between Right and Wrong. All partisans of such narrow cliques have always suffered the same fate.
As was done in the past
With their partisans.\(^{3867}\)
For they were indeed
In suspicious (disquieting) doubt.\(^{3868}\)

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3867. Note that verses 51-54 are a powerful description of the conflict between right and wrong, and may be understood in many meanings. (1) The description applies to the position in the final Hereafter, as compared with the position in this life. (2) It applies to the position of triumphant Islām in Madinah and later as compared with the position of persecuted Islām in its early days in Makkah. (3) It applies to the reversal of the position of right and wrong at various phases of the world's history, or of (4) individual history.

3868. Cf. xiv. 9, and see n. 1884.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Fāṭir, 35.

See Introduction to the last Sūra.

This Sūra deals with the mystery of Creation and its maintenance, with various forces typified by the wings of Angels. Whether we look to outer nature or to man, Allah's Grace proclaims His Glory, and protects His votaries from Satan.

It is early Makkan Sūra.

Summary,—The forces which maintain Creation, were themselves created by Allah, to Whom alone all praise is due: all else is naught (xxxv. 1-26).

All good is from Allah: who then will choose Evil, and reach the doom that goes with Satan? (xxxv. 27-45).
1. Praise be to Allah, The Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels Messengers with wings,- Two, or three, or four (Pairs): He adds to Creation As He pleases: for Allah Has power over all things.

2. What Allah out of His Mercy Doth bestow on mankind None can withhold: What He doth withhold,

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3869. See n. 3785 to xxxiv. 1. When we praise Allah, it means that we understand and bring to mind that His glory and power are exercised for the good of His Creation, and this is the subject-matter of the Sûra.

3870. As man’s knowledge of the processes of nature advances, he sees how complex is the evolution of matter itself, leaving out the question of the origin of Life and the spiritual forces, which are beyond the ken of experimental science. But this knowledge itself becomes a sort of “veil of Light”: man becomes so conscious of the proximate causes, that he is apt, in his pride, to forget the primal Cause, the ultimate hand of Allah in Creation. And then, creation is such a complex process: see some of the ideas involved explained by different words in n. 120 to ii. 117. The word fatara here used means the creation of primeval matter, to which further creative processes have to be added by the hand of Allah, or Allah “adds to His Creation as He pleases”, not only in quantity, but in qualities, functions, relations and variations in infinite ways.

3871. They are Messengers or Instruments of Allah’s Will, and may have a few or numerous Errands entrusted to them. Cf. the description of the Spirit of Inspiration in xxvi. 193, and of the spirits or angels for executing the Commands of Allah in lxxix. 1-5.

3872. See n. 3870 above, where the complexities of the creative processes is referred to Allah’s creation did not stop at some past time: it continues, for He has all power, and His mercies are ever poured forth without stint.
None can grant,\(^3\) 
Apart from Him:
And He is the Exalted
In Power, Full of Wisdom.

3. O men! Remember 
The grace of Allah unto you! 
Is there a Creator, other\(^4\) 
Than Allah, to give you 
Sustenance from heaven 
Or earth? There is 
No god but He: how 
Then are ye perverted?

4. And if they reject thee, 
So were messengers rejected\(^5\) 
Before thee: to Allah 
All affairs are returned

5. O men! certainly 
The promise of Allah\(^6\)

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3873. As Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of all beings and things, so does His kindness extend to all Creatures. No one can intercept Allah's mercies and gifts. Whatever is His Will and Plan and Purpose He can and does carry out. And if from any creature He withholds any particular gifts, there is no other person or power that can give those gifts. But such withholding is not arbitrary. He is full of wisdom and goodness, and every act of His, whether He withholds or gives, is full of kindness and mercy to His creatures.

3874. As the primal Cause of all things is Allah, an appeal is made to man to turn to Allah instead of running after false fancies. Allah is not only the source, but the centre of all life and activity, and all affairs return to Him. The world is sustained, and human life is sustained, by Allah's grace and providence. "Sustenance" is to be taken, in Quranic language, for all that helps to maintain and develop every aspect of life, physical and spiritual. It would be the height of folly, then, for man to ignore Allah's gracious Message, as explained in His Revelation.

3875. And yet there will be human perversity which will reject the True and accept the False. The prophet of Allah is not discouraged by this, as everything ultimately returns to Allah, and we must trust to His Wisdom in His Universal Plan.

3876. In verse 3 above the appeal was on the basis of the Past and the Present: now the appeal is on the basis of the Future. Allah's grace has promised us the Garden of Bliss; His justice has promised us the Fire of Suffering. Both promises are certain to be fulfilled. On which side shall we range ourselves?
Is true, let not then
This present life deceive you,
Nor let the Chief Deceiver
Deceive you about Allah.

6. Verily Satan is an enemy
To you: so treat him
As an enemy. He only
Invites his adherents,
That they may become
Companions of the Blazing Fire.

7. For those who reject Allah,
Is a terrible Chastisement but
For those who believe
And work righteous deeds,
Is Forgiveness, and
A magnificent Reward.

SECTION 2.

8. Is he, then, to whom
The evil of his conduct
Is made alluring, so
That he looks upon it

3877. Cf. xxxi. 33 and n. 3624. The deception of Evil takes two forms. (1) The seductive temptations of this world may deceive us into forgetting the Hereafter. (2) The Arch-Enemy himself may so blind our vision that we may say with him, “Evil! be thou my good!” We may be misled by easy stages. Are we on our guard?

3878. Evil is our enemy and should be treated as such. It is really foreign to our nature, however much it may disguise itself to deceive us as our friend, or a part of our own nature. Personifying the Spirit of Evil, we may say that he wants us to share in his own damnation. Shall we allow ourselves to fall into his snare?

3879. To reject Allah is to reject all the good which He has implanted in our nature. Are we going to be false to the true Pattern according to which He created us, and suffer the consequences? Or are we going to be true to that Pattern and achieve the high and noble Destiny intended for us?

3880. Cf. n. 3877 above. When a stage is reached at which a man accepts Evil as his Good, his case is hopeless. Can such a man profit by preaching or guidance? He has himself deliberately rejected all guidance. Such a man is best left to stray. Perhaps, even in the paths in which he is straying, some sudden flash of light may come to him! That =
As good, (equal to one
Who is rightly guided)?
For Allah leaves to stray
Whom He wills, and guides
Whom He wills. So
Let not thy soul be vested
In regret for them
For Allah knows well
All that they do!

9. It is Allah Who sends
Forth the Winds, so that
They raise up the Clouds, \(^{3881}\)
And We drive them
To a land that is dead,
And revive the earth therewith
After its death: even so
(Will be) the Resurrection!

10. If any do seek
For glory and power, \(^{3882}\)

3881. The allegory here is double. (1) Dry, unpromising soil may seem to all intents and purposes dead; there is no source of water near; moisture is sucked up by the sun’s heat in a far-off ocean, and clouds are formed; winds arise; it seems as if the wind “bloweth as it listeth”, but it is really Allah’s Providence that drives it to the dead land; the rain falls, and behold! there is life and motion and beauty everywhere! So in the spiritual world, Allah’s Revelation is His Mercy and His Rain; there may be the individual resurrection (Nushûr) or unfolding of a soul. (2) So again, may be the general Resurrection (Nushûr), the unfolding of a new World in the Hereafter, out of an old World that is folded up and dead (Takwîr, S. Ixxxi).

3882. Good and Evil are to be distinguished sharply. No good is ever lost: it goes up to Allah. The humblest Good, in word or deed, is exalted to high rank. If man seeks for mere glory and power, there is no such thing apart from Allah. But seeking Allah, we attain to the highest glory and power.
To Allah belong
All glory and power.
To Him mount up
(All) Words of Purity:
It is He Who exalts
Each Deed of Righteousness.
Those that lay Plots
Of Evil,—for them
Is a Chastisement terrible;
And the plotting of such
Will be void (of result).

11. And Allah did create
You from dust;
Then from a sperm-drop;
Then He made you
In pairs. And no female
Conceives, or lays down
(Her load), but with His
Knowledge. Nor is a man
Long-lived granted length
Of days, nor is a part
Cut off from his life,
But is in a Book

3883. It is the nature of Evil to work underground, to hide from the Light, to plot against Righteousness; but Evil inevitably carries its own punishment. Its plots must fail miserably. And eventually Evil itself is to be blotted out.

3884. Cf. xviii. 37 and n. 2379; xxii. 5 and n. 2773; and xxx. 20, and n. 3524. Here the argument is that man's physical origin is lowly: his physical body is but dust; his life-sperm issues from a part of his body which he hides and considers as a place of shame; and the mystery of sex shows that no one individual among mankind is sufficient in himself. Glory and power and knowledge are not in him, but in Allah, from Whom alone he derives any glory, or power, or knowledge that he possesses.

3885. "Then" in this and the following clause refers, not to stages of time, but to stages in the argument. It is almost equivalent to "further", "also", and "in addition".

3886. Things that appear most secret and mysterious to man are all known and ordained by Allah. They are all subject to Allah’s Laws and Decrees. The mystery of human birth (see n. 3625 to xxxi. 34), the mystery of sex, the mystery of Life and Death and many other things, seem to man inexplicable. But they are all ordained by Allah, and their reasons are fully known to Him.
12. Nor are the two seas alike,\textsuperscript{3888} The one palatable, sweet, And pleasant to drink, And the other, salt And bitter. Yet from each (Kind of water) do ye Eat flesh fresh and tender,\textsuperscript{3889} And ye extract ornaments\textsuperscript{3890} To wear; and thou seest The ships therein that plough The waves, that ye may Seek (thus) of the Bounty Of Allah that ye May be grateful.

13. He merges Night into Day,\textsuperscript{3891} And He merges Day

\textsuperscript{3887}. Man's knowledge may be acquired laboriously and may be a burden to him. Allah's knowledge is different; it is not task or burden to Him. Cf. xxxiii. 19 and 30.

\textsuperscript{3888}. See xxv. 53 and notes 3111 and 3112. The great salt Ocean with its seas and gulfs is all one: and the great masses of sweet water in rivers, lakes, ponds, and underground springs are also one: and each is connected with the other by the constant circulation going on, which sucks up vapours, carries them about in clouds or atmospheric moisture, and again brings them condensed into water or snow or hail to mingle with rivers and streams and get back into the Ocean.

\textsuperscript{3889}. For this whole passage see xvi. 14 and notes 2034 and 2035. Both from the sea and from rivers and lakes we get fish, of which some kinds have a flesh particularly fresh and tender, and of a most delicate flavour.

\textsuperscript{3890}. Such as pearls and coral from the sea, and such delicately tinted stones as the 'Aqiq (carnelian), the agate, the goldstone, or other varieties of quartz pebbles found in river-beds, and considered as gems. Many such are found in the Ken river in Banda District (in India). Some river sands also yield minute quantities of gold. In large navigable rivers and big Lakes like those of North America, as well as in the sea, there are highways for shipping and commerce.

\textsuperscript{3891}. Cf. xxii. 61. The phases of Light in nature may have other uses. But for man they mark periods of rest and activity, and have great influence on his physical, moral, and spiritual life.
Into Night, and He has
SubJECTED the sun and
The moon (to His Law):³⁸⁹²
Each one runs its course
For a term appointed.
Such is Allah your Lord:³⁸⁹³
To Him belongs all Dominion.
And those whom ye invoke
Besides Him own not
A straw.³⁸⁹⁴

14. If ye invoke them,
They will not listen
To your call, and if³⁸⁹⁵
They were to listen,
The cannot answer
Your (prayer). On the Day
Of Judgment they will reject³⁸⁹⁶
Your “Partnership”. And none,

³⁸⁹². Cf. xiii. 2. The sun and the moon mark phases of light, and serve man during
the periods of the day and the night. The sun marks the seasons, and is the source of
heat and energy and physical life for the whole solar system. The sun and the moon run
according to fixed laws, and they will continue to do so, not for ever, but for the period
appointed for their duration by Allah.

³⁸⁹³. Allah’s might and majesty, and Allah’s goodness and wisdom, having been
shown by a few examples, it follows that it is folly to seek or worship any other power
but Allah. It only throws off man into false paths, and takes him farther and farther away
from the Truth.

³⁸⁹⁴. Qitmir: the thin, white skin that covers the date-stone. It has neither strength
nor texture, and has no value whatever. Any one relying on any power other than that
of Allah relies on nothing whatever. The Qitmir is worse than the proverbial “broken
reed”. Cf. iv. 53 and iv. 124, where the word naqir, ‘the groove in a date-stone’, is used
similarly for a thing of no value or significance.

³⁸⁹⁵. False or imaginary objects of worship serve no purpose whatever. They cannot
hear; if they could hear, they could not grant prayers or petitions. In fact, if they are
real creatures, such as angels or deified human beings, they will very rightly repudiate
any such worship as brings them into competition or “partnership” with Allah. See next
note.

³⁸⁹⁶. Cf. x. 28 and n. 1418; also xxxiv. 40-41. No false ideas or false impressions
will remain when true values are restored. Why not then accept the Truth now in this
life, and get on to the true path of Grace?
(O man!) can inform you. Like Him who is All-Aware.

SECTION 3.

15. O ye men! It is Ye that have need Of Allah: but Allah is The One Free of all wants, Worthy of all praise.
16. If He so pleased, He Could blot you out And bring in A New Creation
17. Nor is that (at all) Difficult for Allah.
18. Nor can a bearer of burdens Bear another's burden. If one heavily laden should Call another to (bear) his load, Not the least portion of it Can be carried (by the other)

3897. None can tell you the Truth better than He Who is All-Wise and All-knowing. Why not accept His Message and receive His guidance?
3898. What is man that Allah should care for him, instruct him, and send him special messengers to warn him of danger and harm? It is man that depends on Allah and has need of Him every moment of his life. Allah has no need of him, but He bestows His Grace on him as on all His creatures, out of His unbounded Mercy and loving-kindness. If it were Allah's Will, He could blot out man for his rebellion and create an entirely new world.
3899. There is no limit to Allah's creative power, nor is His creative energy anything rare or unusual. This is the force of the word 'azifz here. Allah's creative energy is exercised every moment, and it is the normal condition in the universe.
3900. Bearer: hamilatun: feminine in Arabic, as referring to the soul (nafs), as in vi. 164.
Even though he be nearly\textsuperscript{3901} Related. Thou canst but Warn such as fear Their Lord unseen\textsuperscript{3902} And establish regular Prayer.\textsuperscript{3903} And whoever purifies himself Does so for the benefit Of his own soul; and The destination (of all) Is to Allah.

19. The blind and the seeing Are not alike;\textsuperscript{3904}

20. Nor are the depths Of Darkness and the Light;

21. Nor are the (chilly) shade And the (genial) heat of the sun:

\textsuperscript{3901} Natural relationship may be considered as a reasonable cause or opportunity for bearing each other’s burdens. For example, a mother or a father might offer to die for her or his child, and vice versa. But this does not apply to spiritual matters. There the responsibility is strictly personal and cannot be transferred to another. In xxix. 13 we are told that the misleaders “will bear other burdens along with their own”; but the context shows that the “other” burdens are the burdens of deluding others with their falsehoods. Both sins are their own, viz., their original sin, and the sin of deluding the others. But the responsibility will be doubled.

\textsuperscript{3902} Bil-gaibi: unseen in the adverbial sense. The man, who, though he does not see Allah, so realises Allah’s Presence in himself as if he saw Him, is the man of genuine Faith, and for him Allah’s Revelation comes through many channels and is always fruitful.

\textsuperscript{3903} Prayer is one of the means of purifying ourselves of lower motives in life, for in prayer we seek the Presence of Allah. But the purity which we seek is for our own souls: we confer no favour on Allah or on any Power in the spiritual world, as some imagine who make “gifts” to Allah. In any case the destination of all is to Allah.

\textsuperscript{3904} Now we are offered some contrasts between those who obey Allah’s Law and are thus citizens of Allah’s Kingdom and those who are rebels against Allah’s Kingdom and are thus outlaws. How can they be considered alike? The godly are like those who see, as contrasted with those who are blind; and their motives and actions are like the purest and highest Light, contrasted with the depths of darkness; or, to take another metaphor, their lives are like the genial and warmth-giving heat of the sun, which benefits all who come within its influence, contrasted with the chilly shadows of gloom in which no vegetation flourishes.
22. Nor are alike those\textsuperscript{3905} That are living and those That are dead. Allah can Make any that He wills To hear; but thou Canst not make those To hear who are (Burried) in graves.

23. Thou art no other Than a warner.\textsuperscript{3906}

24. Verily We have sent thee With truth, as a bearer Of glad tidings,\textsuperscript{3907} And as a warner: And there never was A people, without a warner Having lived among them (In the past).

25. And if they reject thee, So did their predecessors, To whom came their messengers With Clear Signs,

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3905. The final contrast is between the Living and the Dead; those whose future has in it the promise of growth and fulfilment, and those who are inert and on the road to perish. With Allah everything is possible: He can give Life to the Dead. But the human Teacher should not expect that people who are (spiritually) dead and buried will by any chance hear his call.

3906. The function of a Prophet is to preach Allah's Truth, to point out the right Way, to show men the need of repentance, and to warn them against the dangers which they incur by living a life of evil. He cannot compel them to accept the Truth or listen to the Message.

3907. It is Allah Who sends the Revelation. While there is warning in it for the heedless, there is good news for those who listen and repent. The warning always came to all peoples before punishment.
Scriptures\textsuperscript{3908}
And the illuminating Book.

26. In the end did I
Punish those who rejected
Faith: and how (terrible)\textsuperscript{3909}
Was My punishment.

SECTION 4.

27. Seest thou not that
Allah sends down rain
From the sky? With it
We then bring out produce
Of various colours.\textsuperscript{3910}
And in the mountains
Are tracts white and red,\textsuperscript{3911}
Of various shades of colour,
And black intense in hue.

\textsuperscript{3908.} The three things here mentioned are also mentioned in iii. 184, where I have explained the meaning in n. 490. All spiritual teaching centres round the evidences of Allah in our lives, the sublime teaching of Prophets of Allah, and the rules and laws which guide holy living.

\textsuperscript{3909.} Cf. xxii. 44 and xxxiv. 45. The rejecters of Allah hardly realise the terrible consequences to them individually and collectively, if Allah’s grace is withdrawn from them and they are left to perish in their own sins and wrong-doing.

\textsuperscript{3910.} Everyone can see how Allah’s artistry produces from rain the wonderful variety of crops and fruits—golden, green, red, yellow, and showing all the most beautiful tints we can think of. And each undergoes in nature the gradual shading off in its transformation from the raw stage to the stage of maturity.

\textsuperscript{3911.} These wonderful colours and shades of colours are to be found not only in vegetation but in rocks and mineral products. There are the white veins of marble and quartz or of chalk, the red laterite, the blue basaltic rocks, the ink-black flints, and all the variety, shade, and gradation of colours. Speaking of mountains, we think of their “azure hue” from a distance, due to atmospheric effects, and these atmospheric effects lead our thoughts to the glories of clouds, sunsets, the zodiacal light, the \textit{aurora borealis}, and all kinds of Nature’s gorgeous pageantry.
28. And so amongst men
And beasts and cattle,
Are they of various colours.\textsuperscript{3912}
Those truly fear Allah,
Among His Servants
Who have knowledge:\textsuperscript{3913}
For Allah is Exalted in Might,
Oft-Forgiving.

29. Those who rehearse the Book
Of Allah, establish regular Prayer,
And spend (in Charity)\textsuperscript{3914}
Out of what We have provided
For them, secretly and openly,
Hope for a Commerce\textsuperscript{3915}
That will never fail:

\textsuperscript{3912}. In the physical shapes of human and animal life, also, we see variations in shades and gradations of colours of all kinds. But these variations and gradations, marvellous though they be, are as nothing compared with the variations and differences in the inner or spiritual world. See next note.

\textsuperscript{3913}. In outer nature we can, through colours, understand and appreciate the finest shades and gradations. But in the spiritual world that variation or gradation is even more subtle and more comprehensive. Who can truly understand it? Only Allah's servants, who \textit{know}, \textit{i.e.}, who have the inner knowledge which comes through their acquaintance with the spiritual world,—it is such people who truly appreciate the inner world, and it is they who know that the fear of Allah is the beginning of wisdom. For such fear is akin to appreciation and love,—appreciation of all the marvellous beauties of Allah's outer and inner world ("Allah is Exalted in Might") and love because of His Grace and Kindness ("Oft-Forgiving"). But Allah's forgiveness extends to many who do not truly understand Him.

\textsuperscript{3914}. The man of God takes Allah's Revelation ("the Book") to heart, ever seeks to get closer and closer to Allah ("regular Prayer"), and in doing so, is moved more and more to practical Charity for his fellow-creatures. He is not ashamed of his Charity ("openly"), but he does not do it to be seen by men ("secretly"): he just does what is necessary for his fellow-creatures, whether people talk about it or not.

\textsuperscript{3915}. Here is a metaphor from commerce. The good man's Charity comes not merely out of superfluities, but out of "what Allah has provided" for him. He therefore recognises two things: (1) that his wealth (literal and metaphorical) is not his absolutely, but that it is given to him by Allah; and (2) that he must deny himself the use of some of it, as a merchant puts by some of his wealth to invest as capital. Only, the godly man's
30. For He will pay them
    Their meed, nay, He will
    Give them (even) more
    Out of His Bounty:
    For He is Oft-Forgiving, 3916
    Most Ready to appreciate
    (service). 3917

31. That which We have revealed
    To thee of the Book
    Is the Truth, confirming
    What was (revealed) before it:
    For Allah is assuredly—
    With respect to His servants—
    Well acquainted and 3918
    Fully Observant.

32. Then 3919 We have given
    The Book for inheritance
    To such of Our servants
    As We have chosen:

= Commerce will never fail or fluctuate; because Allah guarantees him the return, and even adds something to the return out of His own Bounty. That is, Allah gives more than ever our merits deserve.

3916. No man is perfect. Everyone has his fault. But when a man tries his best in the service of Allah, his faults are blotted out, and he is treated as if he had committed no faults: “for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, and ready to appreciate service”.

3917. Cf. xiv. 5, and n. 2877 for shakūr. Allah is ready to recognise, appreciate, and reward the smallest service, without regard to the defects in that service. His gracious acceptance is compared to “gratitude” among men.

3918. All Revelation is one. The Qur-ān therefore confirms the main and uncorrupted features of previous revelations. It must be so, because Allah is fully cognisant of the needs of every age and people; and therefore His Message, while it meets those needs, must in essence be the same. His Messengers did not meet each other as men; but their contact with Allah through inspiration unified their Message. And He cares for and watches over all men, and He knows fully what their needs are, even better than they know themselves.

3919. The force of “then” is that of finality. The Qur-ān is that last Book revealed. Or it may be here to point the contrast between “to thee” in the last verse, i.e., the holy Prophet, in contradistinction to the People of Islam, who inherited the Book after him.
3920. The custodians of the Qur-an after the holy Prophet were the People of Islam. They were chosen for the Book, not in any narrow sense, but in the sense that the Book was given for their age and they were charged to obey it and preserve and propagate it, so that all mankind should receive the Message. But it does not follow that they are all true and faithful to their charge, as indeed we see too painfully around us to-day. Just as mankind was chosen collectively to be Vicegerents and yet some among mankind fell into evil,—even so, some in the house of Islam fail to follow the Light given to them, and thus “wrong their own souls”: But some follow a middle course: in their case “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”: their intentions are good, but they have much to learn yet of the true Muslim life and Muslim virtues. Then there is a third class: they may not indeed be perfect, but both their intentions and their conduct are sound, and they form an example to other men: they are “foremost” in every good deed. They are so, not by their own merits, but by the Grace of Allah. And they have reached the highest Achievement,—the salvation.

3921. “The Garden” signifies their environment: all they see about them will give them comfort, rest, and satisfaction, and a feeling of beauty and dignity. The jewels and clothes signify their personal external state: here, again, everything will give them a sense of beauty and dignity, comfort, rest, and satisfaction. And finally, most important of all, comes their internal state, where again they will have the same sense of beauty, dignity, comfort, rest, and satisfaction: this is indicated by their words of Praise (verses 34-35).

3922. Cf. xviii. 31 and xxii. 23.
Is indeed Oft-Forgiving
Ready to appreciate (service).\textsuperscript{3923}

35. “Who has, out of His Bounty,
Settled us in a Home
That will last: no toil
Nor sense of weariness\textsuperscript{3924}
Shall touch us therein.”

36. But those who reject (Allah)—
For them will be
The Fire of Hell:\textsuperscript{3925}
No term shall be determined
For them, so they should die,
Nor shall its Chastisement
Be lightened for them.
Thus do We reward
Every ungrateful one!

37. Therein will they cry
Aloud (for assistance):
“Our Lord! Bring us out.”\textsuperscript{3926}

\textsuperscript{3923. Cf. above. xxxv. 30. Note how beautifully the argument is rounded off. In verse 30 they were told that “Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate service”. Now they have reached the Goal, and they have found the Promise profoundly true. All their hopes are fulfilled, and their sorrows ended.}

\textsuperscript{3924. In case it should be thought that perpetual happiness might cloy or be dull, as would be the case in this life, it is added—as the experience of those who attain that state—that it is not so on that plane of existence. Not only is there Joy, but it remains fresh and leads to no weariness.}

\textsuperscript{3925. The “Fire” is the opposite to the “Garden”. Instead of there being comfort, rest, and satisfaction in their environment, there will be pain, suffering and anguish. Instead of there being dignity there will be humiliation. And there will be no hope of its termination or abatement, not even a hope of annihilation.}

\textsuperscript{3926. Cf. xxiii. 107. Not only will their surroundings be the opposite of those in Heaven: their internal state will be one of humiliation, of piteous and fruitless appeals, of vain regrets for a past that cannot be recalled, and vain sights for a future whose gates they have themselves barred. If they were sent back, they would relapse to their sins. Cf. vi. 28.}
We shall work righteousness,\(^{3927}\)
Not the (deeds) we used
To do!—"Did we not
Give you long enough life
So that he that would
Should receive admonition?
And (moreover) the warner
Came to you. So taste ye\(^{3928}\)
(The fruits of your deeds):
For the Wrong-doers
There is no helper."

SECTION 5.

38. Verily Allah knows
(All) the hidden things
Of the heavens and the earth:\(^{3929}\)
Verily He has full knowledge
Of all that is
In (men's) hearts.

39. He it is that has made
You inheritors in the earth:\(^{3930}\)
So, he who disbelieves
His disbelief be on

\(^{3927}\) Cf. vii. 53. Their hankering after another chance, after having deliberately rejected all chances, will have no basis of reason in it.

\(^{3928}\) They had a long enough respite for repentance and amendment. And moreover, besides all the other sources, in nature, history, and their own hearts, by which they could learn of the Right, they had the actual teaching and warning of a messenger whose words spoke direct to them. In the circumstances the Penalty is only the fruit of their own conduct.

\(^{3929}\) Everything that exists is known to Allah: not only concrete things, but feelings, motives, plans, and acts of the will in the human breast.

\(^{3930}\) Inheritors: khalāf. In two senses: (1) as Vicegerents on earth, and (2) as successors to previous people who forfeited their rights by wrong-doing. The honour and dignity of (1) and the examples of the past in (2) should have kept them straight and made them truly grateful. See also vi. 165 and n. 988.
His own self their disbelief: \(^{3931}\)
But adds to the odium
For the Unbelievers
In the sight of their Lord:
Their disbelief but adds
To (their own) loss.

40. Say: "Have ye seen\(^{3932}\)
(These) 'Partners' of yours
Whom ye call upon
Besides Allah? Show me
What it is they have created
In the (wide) earth.
Or have they a share
In the heavens? Or
Have We given them a Book
From which they (can derive)
Clear (evidence)?—Nay,
The wrong-doers promise
Each other nothing but delusions.

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3931. Their rejection and ingratitude only causes injury to themselves. They lose all honour and incur odium in the sight of Allah, and they complete their own undoing.

3932. The people who enthrone in their hearts for worship anything besides Allah may well be asked a few questions. Some of such questions are indicated in the text with terse precision: (1) Have you seen these gods of yours? Do they exist? "Seeing" of course does not necessarily mean physical sight. We do not see the air, but no one doubts that it exists. And the air is a physical substance. There are forces that we know exist, but we do not see them. To us, who have Faith, Allah is a truer Reality than anything else that we know, including ourselves. Can the false worshippers say that of any of their false gods? (2) Have your gods created or originated anything on earth? You may worship power or wealth, but that is a scramble for things as between selfish men. Power or wealth does not create new men or new worlds. (3) Have they a share in the ordering of the heavens? Obviously your false gods fail there. (4) Or have these false gods a book or revelation from the Supreme God, with clear evidence, to give them authority to teach men? The Prophets or Messengers of Allah have such authority, and they bring evidence of the One True God. The fact is that falsehood is falsehood, however much one form of it may support another by delusions.
41. It is Allah Who sustains
The heavens and the earth,\(^{3933}\)
Lest they cease (to function):
And if they should fail.
There is none—not one—
Can sustain them thereafter:
Verily He is Most Forbearing,\(^{3934}\)
Oft-Forgiving.

42. They swore their strongest oaths
By Allah that if a warner
Came to them, they would
Be more rightly guided
Than anyone of the nations:\(^{3935}\)
But when a warner came
To them, it has only
Increased their aversion.

43. On account of their arrogance
In the land and their

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\(^{3933}\) The universe, as we know it, shows not only evidence of initial designs, but also the working of the Creator who constantly sustains it. That is Allah. If you could imagine that removed, what is there to keep it going? There would only be chaos.

\(^{3934}\) Allah's world goes on according to the laws and decrees established by Him. There are occasional lapses and deviations on the part of His creatures. But He does not punish every petty fault. One of His merciful qualities is that of repeated forbearance and forgiveness.

\(^{3935}\) Cf. vi. 157. In the first instance this referred to the Quraish. Their attitude to the People of the Book had been one of lofty superiority or of insincere excuses. They twitted the Jews and Christians with deviating from their own lights and their own revelations; and for themselves, they said they had received no direct revelation from Allah, or they would have shown themselves the most amenable to discipline, the most ready to follow Allah's Law. This was before the holy Prophet received his mission from Allah. When he received it and announced it, they turned away from it. They fled from it and put a greater and greater distance between it and themselves. But this is the way of all sinners. They find much to carp at in others, and much to excuse in themselves. But when all grounds for excuse are removed, they will be found, not nearer, but farther and farther away from truth and righteousness.
Plotting of Evil.\textsuperscript{3936}
But the plotting of Evil
Will hem in only
The authors thereof. Now
Are they but looking for
The way the ancients\textsuperscript{3937}
Were dealt with? But
No change wilt thou find
In Allah's way (of dealing).\textsuperscript{3938}
No turning off wilt thou
Find in Allah's way (of dealing).

44. Do they not travel
Through the earth, and see\textsuperscript{3939}
What was the End
Of those before them—
Though they were superior
To them in strength?
Nor is Allah to be frustrated
By anything whatever
In the heavens
Or on earth: for He
Is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

\textsuperscript{3936} Two causes are mentioned why the Truth is refused acceptance. (1) Unregenerate man is arrogant, and Truth and Righteousness expose all his pretences. (2) He hopes, by underhand plots, to undermine Truth and destroy it; but he is caught in his own snares, while Truth marches forward triumphant.

\textsuperscript{3937} In all history, men who followed evil were dealt with in three stages by Allah: (1) He was forbearing and merciful, and gave them respite; (2) He sent them admonition through His Messengers, or His Signs, or His revelation; (3) He dealt out justice and punishment. At any given moment, those given to iniquity may well be asked: “Are you going to wait through all these stages or are you going at once to repent, obtain forgiveness, and walk in the ways of righteousness?”

\textsuperscript{3938} Allah’s Laws are fixed, and His ways of dealing with those who follow iniquity are the same in all ages. Our human will may falter or turn away from its course, but Allah’s Will ever follows its course and cannot be turned away by any cause whatever.

\textsuperscript{3939} Cf. xxx. 9. If no other argument will convince men who follow evil, let them travel through space or time, and learn from the experience of others. Evil always came to an evil end. Let not any one individual or generation think that it could escape by some special trick or power. Far wiser and more powerful men were personally brought to account for their iniquities.
45. If Allah were to punish
Men according to what
They deserve, He would not
Leave on the back
Of the (earth) a single
Living creature: but He
Gives them respite
For a stated Term:
When their Term expires,
Verily Allah has in His sight
All His servants.

3940. Cf. xvi. 61. There would be no salvation for any of us if we went merely on our deserts. It is Allah’s mercy that saves us and helps us to a better and better life until we attain the goal of our existence.

3941. A single living creature. This may refer to man, the living crawling creature, with so many possibilities and yet so many weaknesses. But it may mean all creatures literally, as the life of this planet more or less centres round the life of man. He has been given dominion on this earth, and in his state of purity he is Allah’s vicegerent.

3942. Has in His sight all creatures: i.e., to deal with, according to His laws of Forbearance, Mercy and Justice: see n. 3937 above. The respite does not mean that any one escapes His vigilant eye. All will be dealt with according to their deeds, with justice tempered with Mercy.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Yā-Sīn, 36.

See Introduction to S. xxxiv. This particular Sūra is devoted to the holy Prophet and the Revelation which he brought. The Abbreviated Letters Yā-Sīn are usually construed as a title of the holy Prophet. See Appendix I after S. ii. This Sūra is considered to be “the heart of the Qur-ān”, as it concerns the central figure in the teaching of Islam and the central doctrine of Revelation and the Hereafter. As referring to the Hereafter, it is appropriately read at the death-bed.

In chronology it belongs to the middle or early Makkān period.

In S. xxxvii. 130 (a cognate Sūra) occurs the word ḫī-yāsīn: see n. 4115-A.

Summary.—The Qur-ān is full of wisdom, and those are unfortunate who cannot profit by it: Parable of the City that defied—all but one—the Messengers of Grace and Mercy (xxxvi. 1-32).

Various Signs of Allah in nature and Revelation (xxxvi. 33-50).

The Resurrection and the Hereafter (xxxvi. 51-83).
Ya-Sin (being Abbreviated Letters).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Ya - Sin. \[3943\]
2. By the Qur-an,\[3944\] Full of Wisdom,-
3. Thou art indeed One of the messengers,
4. On a Straight Way.

5. (It is a Revelation)\[3945\] Sent down by (Him), The Exalted in Might, Most Merciful,

6. In order that thou mayest Warn a people, Whose fathers were Not warned,\[3946\] and who Therefore remain heedless (Of the Signs of Allah).

3943. Some Commentators take ë to be the vocative particle, and Sîn to be the abbreviation of Insân, Sîn being the only “Firm Letter” in the word. In that case it would be an address to man. “O man!” But “man” in this connection is understood to mean the Leader of man, the noblest of mankind. Muhammad the Prophet of Allah. For this Sûra deals mainly with the holy Prophet and his Message. But no dogmatic assertion can be made about the Abbreviated Letters, for which see Appendix I, following S. ii. Ë-Sîn is usually treated as a title of the holy Prophet.

3944. The best credentials of the holy Prophet are: (1) the revelation which he brought (“the Qur-án”), and the heroic unselfish life which he led (“on a Straight Way”). The appeal is therefore made on the testimony of these two facts.

3945. The Revelation again is characterised by two attributes which we find most helpful in contemplating about Allah. It has force and power: for Allah is Exalted in Might and able to enforce His Will. And it brings a Message of hope and mercy; for Allah is Most Merciful. By its characteristics we know that the Qur-án is from Allah.

3946. The Quraish had received no Prophet before, and therefore one of themselves was made the vehicle for the universal Message to the whole world.
7. The Word is proved true\(^{3947}\)
   Against the greater part of them:
   For they do not believe.

8. We have put yokes\(^{3948}\)
   Round their necks
   Right up to their chins,
   So that they cannot bow
   Their heads.

9. And We have put
   A bar in front of them\(^{3949}\)
   A bar behind them,
   And further, We have
   Covered them up; so that
   They cannot see.

10. The same is to them\(^{3950}\)
    Whether thou admonish them
    Or thou do not admonish
    Them: they will not believe.

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3947. Cf. vii. 30, and n. 1012; also xvii. 16, and n. 2193. If people deliberately and obstinately refuse “to believe”, i.e., to receive guidance and admonition, the result must be that Allah’s grace and mercy are withdrawn from them. Their own perversity inevitably blocks up all channels for their correction.

3948. Man’s misdeeds inevitably call forth the operation of Allah’s Law. The result of man’s wilful disobedience is now described in a series of metaphors. (1) Refusal of Allah’s Light means less and less freedom of action for man: the yoke of sin is fastened round man’s neck, and it gets more and more tightened, right up to the chin. (2) The head is forced up and kept in a stiff position, so that the mind becomes befogged. Moral obliquity taints the intellect. According to the Sanskrit proverb, “When destruction comes near, understanding is turned upside down.” According to the Latin proverb, “Whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes demented.” In other words, iniquity not only is folly, but leads deeper and deeper into folly, narrowness of vision, and blindness to the finer things of life. (3) This state of deprivation of Grace leads to such a decline in spiritual vitality that the victim can neither progress nor turn back, as explained in the next verse.

3949. Their retreat is cut off and their progress is impossible. Further the Light that should come from above is cut off, so that they become totally devoid of any hope, and the last gleam of any spiritual understanding is extinguished in them.

3950. When the stage just described is reached, revelation or spiritual teaching ceases to have any value for them. Why then preach? The answer is given in the verses following.
11. Thou canst but admonish\(^{3951}\) Such a one as follows
The Message and fears
The Most Gracious, unseen:\(^{3952}\)
Give such a one, therefore,\(^{3953}\)
Good tidings, of Forgiveness
And a Reward most generous.

12. Verily We shall give life\(^{3954}\)
To the dead, and We record
That which they send before
And that which they leave\(^{3955}\)
Behind, and of all things
Have We taken account.
In a clear Book\(^{3956}\)
(Of evidence).

\(^{3951}\). Cf. xxxv. 18. As far as those are concerned, who have obstinately delivered themselves to evil, the preaching of Allah's Message has no appeal, because their own will shuts them out. But there are others who are anxious to hear Allah's Message and receive Allah's grace. They love Allah and fear to offend against His holy Law, and their fear is not merely superficial but deep-seated: for while they do not yet see Allah, nor do other people see them, they have the same sense of Allah's presence as if they saw Him, and their religion is not a mere pose, "to be seen of men".

\(^{3952}\). See n. 3902 to xxxv. 18. Unseen is here adverbial: their reverence for Allah is unaffected by the fact that they do not see Him, or that other people do not observe them, because their attitude arises out of a genuine love for Allah.

\(^{3953}\). To such persons the Message of Allah comes as a gospel or good news: because it shows them the way of forgiveness for anything wrong in their past, and it gives them the promise of a full reward in the future,—generous beyond any deserts of their own, but arising out of Allah's unbounded Bounty.

\(^{3954}\). All this is possible, because there is the assurance of a Hereafter, in which Allah will be all-in-all, and evil will no longer bestride the world, as the term of its respite will have expired.

\(^{3955}\). Our deeds, good and bad, go to Allah before us. They will of course be brought to our account; but our account will also be swelled by the example we left behind us and the consequences of our deeds, that will come into play or continue to operate after our earthly life has ceased. Our moral and spiritual responsibility is therefore much wider than as affects our own person.

\(^{3956}\). Cf. ii. 124 and n. 124. All our account will be exactly preserved as in a book of record.
SECTION 2.

13. Set forth to them,
By way of a parable,
The (story of) the Companions\cite{3957}
Of the City. Behold,
There came messengers to it.

14. When We (first) sent
To them two messengers,
They rejected them:
But We strengthened them\cite{3958}
With a third: they said,
"Truly, we have been sent
On a mission to you."

15. The (people) said: "Ye are
Only men like ourselves;\cite{3959}

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\cite{3957}. Many of the classical Commentators have supposed that the City referred to
was Antioch. Now Antioch was one of the most important cities in North Syria in the
first century of the Christian era. It was a Greek city founded by Seleucus Nicator, one
of the successors of Alexander, about 300 B.C. in memory of his father Antiochus. It
was close to the sea, and had its sea-port at Seleucia. Soon after Christ his disciples
successfully preached there, and they "were called Christians first in Antioch": Acts, xi.
26. It afterwards became the seat of a most important Bishopric of the Christian Church.
In the story told here "by way of a parable", the City rejected the Message, and the
City was destroyed: xxxvi. 29. Following Ibn Kathir, I reject the identification with
Antioch decisively. No name, or period, or place is mentioned in the text. The
significance of the story is in the lessons to be derived from it as a parable, for which
see the next note. That is independent of name, time, or place.

\cite{3958}. Allah sends His messengers or teachers of Truth by ones and twos, and where
the opposition is great and He considers it necessary, he supports them with others. Their
mission is divine, but they do not claim to be more than men. This is used by the unjust
and the ungodly as if it were a reproach, whereas it should commend them to men, for
mankind is glorified by such commission and by Allah's Self-revelation. The Message is
clearly expressed in human language, but because it exposes all evil, men think it unlucky,
as it checks their selfishness. It is often the poorest and most despised of mankind, from
the outskirts or "farthest parts of the City", that accept the Message and are willing to
work and die for it. The stiff-necked resist and accomplish their own destruction.

\cite{3959}. Cf. Acts, xiv. 15, where Paul and Barnabas say, in the city of Lystra near the
modern Konia, "We also are men with like passions with you, and preach unto you that
ye should turn from these vanities..."
And The Most Gracious
Sends no sort of revelation. 3960
Ye do nothing but lie.”

16. They said: “Our Lord doth
Know that we have been sent
On a mission to you: 3961

17. “And our duty is only
To deliver the clear Message.” 3962

18. The (people) said: “For us,
We augur an evil omen 3963
From you: if ye desist not,
We will certainly stone you,
And a grievous punishment
Indeed will be inflicted
On you by us.”

3960. They not only reject the mission of the particular messengers, but they deny the possibility of Allah's sending such mission. Note how they convict themselves of inconsistency by using Allah's name “Most Gracious”, even though they may mean it ironically!

3961. Just as a Messenger whose credentials are doubted can refer to the authority granted by his Principal, as the highest proof of his mission, so these messengers of Allah invoke the authority of Allah in proof of their mission. In effect they say: “The knowledge of Allah is perfect, and He knows that our mission is from Him; if you do not, it is your own misfortune.”

3962. Then they proceed to explain what their mission is. It is not to force them but to convince them. It is to proclaim openly and clearly Allah's Law, which they were breaking, to denounce their sins and to show them the better path. If they were obstinate, it was their own loss. If they were rebellious against Allah, the punishment rested with Allah.

3963. Tā'īr means a bird. Like the Roman augurs, the Arabs had a superstition about deriving omens from birds. Cf. the English word “auspicious”, from the Latin avis, a bird, and specio, I see. From Tā'īr (bird) came ta-taiyara, or ittaiyara, to draw evil omens. Because the prophets of Allah denounced evil, the evil-doers thought that they brought ill-luck to them. As a matter of fact any evil that happened to them was the result of their own ill-deeds. Cf. vii. 131, where the Egyptians ascribed their calamities to the ill-luck brought by Moses: and xxvii. 47, where the Thāmūd ascribed ill-luck to the preaching of Ṣāliḥ.
19. They said: “Your evil omens Are with yourselves. (Deem ye this an evil omen). If ye are admonished? Nay, but ye are a people Transgressing all bounds!”

20. Then there came running, From the farthest part Of the City, a man, Saying, “O my People! Obey the messengers:

21. “Obey those who ask No reward of you (For themselves), and who are Themselves guided.

22. “Why should not I Serve Him Who created me, And to Whom ye shall (All) be brought back.

3964. ‘What ye call omens arise from your own ill-deeds. Do you suppose that a man who comes to warn you and teach you the better way brings you ill-luck? Fie upon you!’

3965. To call Good evil and accuse of falsehood men of truth who come unselfishly to bring the message of the beneficent Mercy of Allah, is the very height of extravagance and transgression.

3966. While the wealthy, influential, and fashionable men in the City were doubtful of Allah’s providence and superstitiously believed in Chance and evil omens, the Truth was seen by a man in the outskirts of the City, a man held in low esteem by the arrogant. He had believed, and he wanted his City to believe. So, in Arabia, when the arrogant chiefs of the Quraish exiled the holy Prophet, it was men from Madinah and from the outskirts, who welcomed him, believed in him, and supported his mission in every way.

3967. Prophets do not seek their own advantage. They serve Allah and humanity. Their hope lies in the good pleasure of Allah, to Whose service they are devoted. Cf. x. 72; xii. 104; etc.

3968. The argument throughout is that of intense personal conviction for the individual himself, coupled with an appeal to his people to follow that conviction and get the benefit of the spiritual satisfaction which he has himself achieved. He says in effect: ‘how is it possible for me to do otherwise than to serve and adore my Maker? I shall return to Him, and so will you, and all this applies to you as much as to me.’ Note how effective is the transition from the personal experience to the collective appeal.
23. “Shall I take (other) gods
   Besides Him? If The
Most Gracious should
Intend some adversity for me,\(^{3969}\)
Of no use whatever
Will be their intercession
For me, nor can they
Deliver me.

24. “I would indeed, then
   Be in manifest Error.

25. “For me, I have faith
   In the Lord of you (all):\(^{3970}\)
   Listen, then, to me!”

26. It was said: “Enter thou\(^{3971}\)
The Garden.” He said:
   “Ah me! Would that
My People knew (what I know)!—

27. “From That my Lord\(^{3972}\)
   Has granted me Forgiveness

\(^{3969}\) The next plea is that for exclusive service to Allah. ‘Suppose it were proper
to worship other gods–Mammon, Self, or imaginary deities set up as idols,—yet of what
benefit would that be? All power is in Allah. In His universal Plan, He may think fit
to give me some sorrow or punishment: would these subordinate deities be able to help
me or intercede for me with Him? Not at all. What use would they be? In fact I should
obviously be going astray,—wandering from the true Path.’

\(^{3970}\) Again a transition from the assured personal conviction to the appeal to all
to profit by the speaker’s experience. ‘I have found the fullest satisfaction for my soul
in Allah. He is my God, but He is your God also. My experience can be yours also.
Will you not follow my advice, and prove for yourselves that the Lord is indeed good?’

\(^{3971}\) This godly and righteous man entered into the Garden. Perhaps it is implied
that he suffered martyrdom. But even then his thoughts were always with his People. He
regretted their obstinacy and want of understanding, and wished even then that they might
repent and obtain salvation, but they were obdurate and suffered for their sins as we learn
from verses 28-29 below.

\(^{3972}\) This man was just a simple honest soul, but he heard and obeyed the call of
the prophets and obtained his spiritual desire for himself and did best to obtain salvation
for his people. For he loved his people and respected his ancestral traditions as far as
they were good, but had no hesitation in accepting the new Light when it came to him.
All his past was forgiven him and he was raised to dignity and honour in the Kingdom
of Heaven.
3973. Allah’s Justice or Punishment does not necessarily come with pomp and circumstance, nor have the forces of human evil or wickedness the power to require the exertion of mighty spiritual forces to subdue them. A single mighty Blast—either the rumbling of an earthquake, or a great and violent wind—was sufficient in this case. Cf. xi. 67 and n. 156 (which describes the fate of the Thamūd; also. n. 3463 to xxix. 40).

3974. Cf. xxi. 15. They had made a great deal of noise in their time, but they were reduced to silence, like spent ashes.

3975. Cf. vi. 10 and many other passages of similar import. Ignorant men mock at Allah’s prophets, or any one who takes Religion seriously. But they do not reflect that such levity reacts on themselves. Their own lives are ruined and they cease to count. If they study history, they will see that countless generations were destroyed before them because they did not take Truth seriously and undermined the very basis of their individual and collective existence.

The servants is here equivalent to “men”. Allah regrets the folly of men, especially as He cherishes them as His own servants.

3976. Not to them will they return. What do the two pronouns them and they refer to? Commentators and translators have construed them differently, and some of them evade the question. To my mind the best construction seems to be: the generations which we have destroyed before the people addressed (‘do they not see?’) will not be restored =
32. But each one of them
All—will be brought
Before Us (for judgment).

SECTION 3.

33. A Sign for them
Is the earth that is dead: 
We do give it life,
And produce grain therefrom,
Of which ye do eat.

34. And We produce therein
Orchards with date-palms
And vines, and We cause
Springs to gush forth therein:

35. That they may enjoy
The fruits of this (artistry):
It was not their hands
That made this:
Will they not then give thanks?

= to the people addressed: generations (qurūn) standing for the periods of prosperity and good fortune enjoyed by the ancestors. They have all been wiped out: they will never be restored, but all people will be brought before the Judgment-seat for giving an account of their deeds.

3977. Lest any one should say, 'if they are destroyed, how can they be brought before the Judgment-seat' a symbol is pointed to. The earth is to all intents and purposes dead in the winter, but Allah revives it in the spring. Cf. ii. 164, xxx. 19, and many other passages to that effect.

3978. Date-palms and vines stand as symbols for fruit-trees of all kinds, these being the characteristic fruits of Arabia. Grain was mentioned in the last verse; fruit is mentioned now. All that is necessary for food and the satisfaction of the choicest palate is produced from what looks like inert soil, fertilised by rain and springs. Here is wonderful evidence of the artistry and providence of Allah.

3979. Literally, eat (akala). Cf. vii. 19, n. 1004 and v. 69, n. 776. The same wide meaning of profit, satisfaction, and enjoyment may be attached to the word “eat” in verse 33 above.

3980. Man may till the soil and sow the seed, but the productive forces of nature were not made by man’s hands. They are the handiwork and artistry of Allah, and are evidence of Allah’s providence for His creatures. See n. 3978 above.
36. Glory to Allah, Who created
In pairs all things that
The earth produces, as well as
Their own (human) kind
And (other) things of which
They have no knowledge.

37. And a Sign for them
Is the Night: We withdraw
Therefrom the Day, and behold
They are plunged in darkness;

38. And the Sun
Runs unto a resting place,
For him: that is
The decree of (Him),
The Exalted in Might,
The All-Knowing.

39. And the Moon,—
We have measured for her

3981. The mystery of sex runs through all creation,—in man, in animal life, in vegetable life, and possibly in other things of which we have no knowledge. Then there are pairs of opposite forces in nature, e.g., positive and negative electricity, etc. The atom itself consists of a positively charged nucleus or proton, surrounded by negatively charged electrons. The constitution of matter itself is thus referred to pairs of opposite energies.

3982. “Withdrawing the Day from the Night” is a striking phrase and very apt. The Day or the Light is the positive thing. The Night or Darkness is merely negative. We cannot withdraw the negative. But if we withdraw the real thing, the positive, which filled the void, nothing is left but the void. The whole of this section deals with Signs or Symbols,—things in the physical world around us, from which we can learn the deepest spiritual truths if we earnestly apply ourselves to them.

3983. Mustaqarr may mean: (1) a limit of time, a period determined, as in vi. 67, or (2) a place of rest or quiescence; or (3) a dwelling place, as in ii. 36. I think the first meaning is best applicable here; but some Commentators take the second meaning. In that case the simile would be that of the sun running a race while he is visible to us, and taking a rest during the night to prepare himself to renew his race the following day. His stay with the antipodes appears to us as his period of rest.

3984. The lunar stations are the 28 divisions of the Zodiac, which are supposed to mark the daily course of the moon in the heavens from the time of the new moon to the time when the moon fades away in her “inter-lunar swoon”, an expressive phrase coined by the poet Shelley.
Stations (to traverse)
Till she returns
Like the old (and withered)
Lower part of a date-stalk. 3985

40. It is not permitted
To the Sun to catch up 3986
The Moon, nor can
The Night outstrip the Day:
Each (just) swims along 3987
In (its own) orbit
(According to Law).

41. And a Sign for them
Is that We bore 3988
Their race (through the Flood)
In the loaded Ark;

3985. 'Urjun: a raceme of dates or of a date-palm; or the base or lower part of the raceme. When it becomes old, it becomes yellow, dry, and withered, and curves up like a sickle. Hence the comparison with the sickle-like appearance of the new moon. The moon runs through all her phases, increasing and decreasing, until she disappears, and then reappears as a little thin curve.

3986. Though the sun and the moon both traverse the belt of the Zodiac, and their motions are different, they never catch up each other. When the sun and the moon are on the same side and on a line with the earth there is a solar eclipse, and when on opposite side in a line, there is a lunar eclipse, but there is no clash. Their Laws are fixed by Allah, and form the subject of study in astronomy. Similarly Night and Day follow each other, but being opposites cannot coincide, a fit emblem of the opposition of Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood: see also n. 3982 above.

3987. Cf. xxi. 33, and n. 2695. How beautifully the rounded courses of the planets and heavenly bodies are described, “swimming” through space, with perfectly smooth motion! As Shakespeare expresses it, each “in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims!”

3988. Besides the beauty of the Night, with the stars and the planets “swimming” in their rounded courses according to perfect Law, suggesting both symmetry and harmony, there are other Signs touching closely the life of man himself, projected through Time, in the past history of his race and in his own personal experience. The past history of his race takes us to the story of the Flood, which is symbolical of Allah’s justice and mercy. Noah’s Ark was a “Sign to all People”: xxix. 15. Man’s own personal experience is appealed to in every ship afloat; see next note.
42. And We have created
   For them similar (vessels)^3989
   On which they ride.

43. If it were Our Will,^3990
   We could drown them:
   Then would there be
   No helper (to hear
   Their cry), nor could
   They be delivered,

44. Except by way of Mercy
   From Us, and by way
   Of (worldly) convenience
   (To serve them) for a time.^3991

45. When they are told,
   “Fear ye that which is^3992
   Before you and that which
   Will be after you, in order
   That ye may receive Mercy,”
   (They turn back).

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3989. The stately ships sailing through the seas, heavier than air, yet carrying man and his goods safely and smoothly across the waters, are another Sign for man. Ships are not mentioned, but (vessels) like the Ark: they would cover all kinds of sea-craft, but also the modern aircraft, which "swims" through air instead of through water.

3990. Were it not that Allah gives man the intelligence and ingenuity to construct and manage sea-craft and air-craft, the natural laws of gravity would lead to the destruction of any who attempted to pass through sea or air. It is the gift (mercy) of Allah that saves him.

3991. Cf. xvi. 80. Allah has given man all these wonderful things in nature and utilities produced by the skill and intelligence which Allah has given to man. Had it not been for these gifts, man's life would have been precarious on sea or land or in the air. It is only Allah's Mercy that saves man from destruction for man's own follies, and that saving or the enjoyment of these utilities and conveniences he should not consider as eternal: they are only given for a time, in this life of probation.

3992. Man should consider and beware of the consequences of his past, and guard against the consequences in his future. The present is only a fleeting moment poised between the past and the future, and gone even while it is being mentioned or thought about. Man should review his whole life and prepare for the Hereafter. If he does so, Allah is Merciful: He will forgive, and give strength for a better and higher life in the future. But this kind of teaching does not suit those steeped in this ephemeral life. They are bored, and turn away from it, to their own loss.
46. Not a Sign comes to them From among the Signs Of their Lord, but they Turn away therefrom.

47. And when they are told, “Spend ye (the bounties) With which Allah Has provided you,” the Unbelievers Say to those who believe: “Shall we then feed those Whom, if Allah had so willed, He would have fed, (Himself)?—Ye are in nothing But manifest error.”

48. Further, they say, “When Will this promise (come to pass), If what ye say is true?”

3993. The Signs of Allah are many, in His great world,—in nature, in the heart of man, and in the Revelation sent through His messengers. They turn away from all of them, as a man who has ruined his eyesight turns away from the light.

3994. To selfish men, the good may make an appeal, and say: “Look! Allah has given you wealth, or influence, or knowledge, or talent. Why not spend some of it in charity, i.e., for the good of your fellow-creatures?” But the selfish only think of themselves and laugh such teaching to scorn.

3995. They are too full of themselves to have a corner in their hearts for others. “If” they say, “Allah gave them nothing, why should we?” There is arrogance in this as well as blasphemy: arrogance in thinking that they are favoured because of their merits, and blasphemy in laying the blame of other people’s misfortunes on Allah. They further try to turn the tables on the Believers by pretending that the Believers are entirely on a wrong track. They forget that all men are on probation and trial: they hold their gifts on trust: those apparently less favoured, in that they have fewer of this world’s goods, may be really more fortunate, because they are learning patience, self-reliance, and the true value of things ephemeral which is apt to be very much exaggerated in men’s eyes.

3996. In addition to the arrogance and blasphemy referred to in the last note, they not only refuse Faith, but they taunt the men of Faith as if the men of Faith were dealing in falsehood: “If there is a Hereafter, tell us when it will be!” The answer is: “It will come sooner than you expect: you will yet be disputing about things of Faith and neglecting your opportunities in Life, when the Hour will sound, and you will have no time even to make your dispositions in this life: you will be cut off from everyone whom you thought to be near and dear to you, or able to help you!”
49. They will not (have
To) wait for aught
But a single Blast:
It will seize them while
They are yet disputing
Among themselves!

50. No (chance) will they then
Have, by will, to dispose
(Of their affairs), nor
To return to their own people!

SECTION 4.

51. The trumpet shall be\textsuperscript{3997} Sounded, when behold!
From the sepulchres (men)
Will rush forth
To their Lord!

52. They will say: "Ah!
Woe unto us! Who
Hath raised us up
From our beds of repose?"...\textsuperscript{3998}
(A voice will say:)
"This is what The
Most Gracious had promised.
And true was the word
Of the messengers!"

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\textsuperscript{3997} Traditionally, the angel who will sound the Trumpet is Isrāfīl, but the name does not occur in the Qur-ān. The Trumpet is mentioned in many places: \textit{e.g.}, vi. 73; lxxviii. 18, etc.

\textsuperscript{3998} The dead will rise as in a stupor, and they will be confused in the new conditions! They will gradually regain their memory and their personality. They will be reminded that Allah in His grace and mercy had already announced the Hereafter in their probationary lives, and the word of Allah's messengers, which then seemed so strange and remote, was true and was now being fulfilled!
53. It will be no more
   Than a single Blast,\textsuperscript{3999}
   When lo! they will all
   Be brought up before Us!
54. Then, on that Day,
   Not a soul will be
   Wronged in the least,\textsuperscript{4000}
   And ye shall but
   Be repaid the meeds
   Of your past Deeds.
55. Verily the Companions\textsuperscript{4001}
   Of the Garden shall
   That Day have joy
   In all that they do;
56. They and their associates\textsuperscript{4002}
   Will be in pleasant
   Shade, reclining
   On raised couches;
57. (Every) fruit\textsuperscript{4003}
   Will be there for them;

3999. Time and Space, as we know them here, will be no more. The whole gathering will be as in the twinkling of an eye. Cf. xxxvi. 49 above.

4000. The Judgment will be on the highest standard of Justice and Grace. Not the least merit will go unrewarded, though the reward will be for the righteous far more than their deserts. No penalty will be exacted but that which the doer himself by his past deeds brought on himself. Cf. xxviii. 84.

4001. Notice the subtle gradation in the description. First, in this verse, we have the nature of the \textit{mise en scene} and the nature of the joy therein. It will be a Garden \textit{i.e.}, everything agreeable to see and hear and feel and taste and smell; delightfully green lawns and meadows, trees and shrubs; the murmur of streams and the songs of birds: the delicate texture of flowers and leaves and the shapes of beauty in clouds and mist; the flavours of fruits; and the perfumes of flowers and scents. The joy in the Garden will be an active joy, without fatigue: whatever we do in it, every employment in which we engage there, will be a source of joy without alloy.

4002. Secondly, the joy or happiness is figured to be, not solitary, but shared by associates.

4003. Thirdly, besides any external conditions of Bliss, the Bliss in the Hereafter has an inner quality.
They shall have whatever
They call for;

58. “Peace!”—a Word\textsuperscript{4004}
(Of salutation) from a Lord
Most Merciful!

59. “And O ye in sin\textsuperscript{4005}
Get ye apart this Day!

60. “Did I not enjoin\textsuperscript{4006}
On you, O ye children
Of Adam, that ye
Should not worship Satan;
For that he was to you
An enemy avowed?–.

61. “And that ye should\textsuperscript{4007}
Worship Me, (for that) this
Was the Straight Way?

\textsuperscript{4004} Fourthly, we reach the highest grade of bliss, the salutation “Peace!” from Allah Most Merciful. Cf. x. 10. That Word sums up the attainment of the final Goal. For it explains the nature of the Most High;–He is not only a Lord and Cherisher, but a Lord Whose supreme glory is Mercy, Peace, and Harmony!.

\textsuperscript{4005} Notice how this finely balanced passage, after reaching the summit of sublimity in describing the state of the Blessed, in the word Salam, gradually takes us down to contemplate the state of the Sinners in a graduated descent.

In the first place, it refers to their negative state, their state of isolation. From this Day of Judgment, they will no longer have the chance of being with the Blessed and perhaps of profiting spiritually by that proximity. The first feature of the Day of Judgment is that it is a Day of Separation–of sorting out. Each soul now finds its own true level, as the period of probation is over.

\textsuperscript{4006} Secondly, there is a gentle reproach to the wrong-doers, more in sorrow than in anger. They are addressed as “children of Adam”, to emphasise two facts, (1) that they have disgraced their ancestry, for Adam after his Fall repented and was forgiven, and the high Destiny of mankind has been the prize open to all his descendants, and (2) that Allah Most Merciful has throughout the ages continued to warn mankind against the snares laid by Satan, the avowed enemy of man, and that Allah’s Grace was ever on the watch to help all to freedom from those snares.

\textsuperscript{4007} Thirdly, besides the negative warning, a positive Way was shown to them—the Straight Way, the Way of those who receive Allah’s Grace and attain to Bliss, the Rope which would save them from shipwreck, the Shield which would save them from assault, the key to the door of proximity to Allah.
62. “But he did lead astray
A great multitude of you.
Did ye not, then, understand?\footnote{4008}

63. “This is the Hell\footnote{4009}
Of which ye were promised

64. “Embrace ye the (Fire)\footnote{4010}
This Day, for that ye
(Persistently) rejected (Truth).”

65. That Day shall We set
A seal on their mouths.\footnote{4011}
But their hands will speak
To Us, and their feet
Bear witness, to all
That they did.

66. If it had been Our Will,\footnote{4012}
We could surely have

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\footnote{4008} Fourthly, it is pointed out that they were given Understanding (‘aql), so that by their own faculties they could have judged their own best interests, and yet they betrayed or misused those faculties, and deliberately threw away their chance! And not only a few, but so many! They went gregariously to ruin in spite of the individual care which their Lord and Cherisher bestowed on them!

\footnote{4009} Fifthly, the naked fact is now placed before them,—the Hell,—the state of damnation, which they could so easily have avoided!

\footnote{4010} As they deliberately and persistently rejected all teaching, guidance, and warnings, they are now told to experience the Fire of Punishment, for it is but the consequence of their own acts.

\footnote{4011} The ungodly will now be dumbfounded. They will be unable to speak or offer any defence. (The consequences of all acts, which follow according to Allah’s Law, are, in Quranic language, attributed to Allah). But their silence will not matter. Their own hands and feet will speak against them. “Hands and feet” in this connection are symbolical of all the instruments for action which they were given in this life. The same extended meaning is to be understood for “eyes” in the following verse. Cf. also xli. 20-21, where eyes, ears, and skins are all mentioned as bearing witness against such as misused them.

\footnote{4012} “If it had been Our Will”: i.e., if such had been the Will and Plan of Allah. If Allah had not intended to give man his limited free-will, or power of choice, the case would have been different: there would have been no moral responsibility which could have been enforced. They could have had no sight or intelligence, and they could not have been blamed for not seeing or understanding. But such is not the case.
Blotted out their eyes;  
Then they should have  
Raced to the Path,  
But how could they have seen?  

67. And if it had been  
Our Will, We could  
Have transformed them  
In their places;  
Then should they have been  
Unable to move about,  
Nor could they have returned  
(After error).  

SECTION 5.  

68. If We grant long life  
To any, We cause him  
To be reversed in nature:  
Will they not then understand?  

4013. If Allah's Plan had been to grant no limited freedom of choice or will to men.  
He could have created them quite different, or could have transformed them into  
stationary creatures, either in physical form as in the case of trees, or in moral or spiritual  
qualities, where there was no possibility either of progress or deterioration. Man would  
then have been unable to reach the heights of grandeur which are now open to him, or,  
if he goes wrong, to return through the door of repentance and mercy, and still pursue  
his path of ascent. But it was Allah's Plan to give man all these privileges, and man must  
shoulder all the responsibilities that go with them.  

4014. This connects on with the last verse. Everything is possible with Allah. If you  
doubt how man can be transformed from his present nature, contemplate the  
transformations he already undergoes in his present nature at different ages. As a child  
powers of mind and body are still undeveloped. As he grows, they grow, and certain  
moral qualities, such as courage, daring, the will to conquer, unfold themselves. In  
extreme old age these are again obscured, and a second childhood supervenes. The back  
of the man who walked proudly straight and erect is now bent. If these transformations  
take place even in his present nature and constitution, how much easier was it for Allah  
to cast him in an immobile mould? But Allah granted him instead the high possibilities  
and responsibilities referred to in the last note.
69. We have not instructed
The (Prophet) in Poetry, 4015
Nor is it meet for him:
This is no less than
A Message and a Qur-ân
Making things clear:

70. That it may give admonition
To any (who are) alive, 4016
And that the word 4017
May be proved true against those
Who reject (Truth).

71. See they not that it is
We Who have created
For them—among the things
Which our hands have fashioned—
Cattle, which are under 4018
Their dominion?—

72. And that We have
Subjected them to their (use)?
Of them some do carry them
And some they eat:

4015. Cf. xxvi. 224 and n. 3237. Here “Poetry” is used as connoting fairy tales, imaginary descriptions, things futile, false, or obscure, such as decadent Poetry is, whereas the Qur-ân is a practical guide, true and clear.

4016. “Alive”, both in English and Arabic, means not only “having physical life”, but having all the active qualities which we associate with life. In religious language, those who are not responsive to the realities of the spiritual world are no better than those who are dead. The Message of Allah penetrates the hearts of those who are alive in the spiritual sense.

4017. Cf. xxviii. 63. If people reject Truth and Faith after they have been admonished and warned, the charge against them, of wilful rebellion, is proved. They cannot then plead either ignorance or inadvertence.

4018. If they are blind to other Signs of Allah, they can at least see the simple homely things of life in which they receive so many benefits from Allah’s mercy. How is it that wild animals can be domesticated, and in domestication can be so useful to man? Man can use them for riding or for draught; he can use their flesh for food and drink their milk; he can use their hair or wool. Cf. xvi. 66, 80: and xxiii. 21-22.
73. And they have (other) profits\textsuperscript{4019} From them (besides), and they Get (milk) to drink. Will they not then Be grateful?\textsuperscript{4020}

74. Yet they take (for worship) Gods other than Allah, (Hoping) that they might Be helped!

75. They have not the power To help them: and They are a host Brought up before them.\textsuperscript{4021}

76. Let not their speech, then,\textsuperscript{4022} Grieve thee. Verily We know What they hide as well as What they disclose.

77. Doth not man see That it is We Who

\textsuperscript{4019} Such as skins for leather, furs for warmth, sheep’s wool or camel’s hair for blankets or textiles, musk for perfume, and so on.

\textsuperscript{4020} The whole argument turns on this. ‘Our teaching is for your own benefit. We confer all these blessings on you, and yet ye turn away from the Giver of all, and run after your own vain imaginations!’

\textsuperscript{4021} There is some difference of opinion among Commentators as to the exact meaning to be attached to this clause. As I understand it, the meaning seems to be this. Man is apt to forget or turn away from the true God, the source of all the good which he enjoys, and to go after imaginary powers in the shape of gods, heroes, men, or abstract things like Science or Nature or Philosophy, or superstitious things like Magic, or Good-Fortune or Ill-Fortune, or embodiments of his own selfish desires. He thinks that they might help him in this Life or in the Hereafter (if he believes in a Hereafter). But they cannot help him: on the contrary all things that are false will be brought up and condemned before Allah’s Judgment-seat, and the worshippers of the Falsehoods will also be treated as a troop favouring the Falsehoods and therefore worthy of condemnation. The Falsehoods, therefore, instead of helping them, will contribute to their condemnation.

\textsuperscript{4022} If men are so foolish as to reject Allah, let not the men of Allah grieve over it. They should do their duty, and leave the rest to Allah. Allah knows all the open and secret motives that sway the wicked, and His Plan must ultimately prevail, however much appearances may be against it at any given time.
Created him from sperm? \(^{4023}\)
Yet behold! he (stands forth)
As an open adversary!

78. And he makes comparisons \(^{4024}\)
For Us, and forgets his own
(Origin and) Creation:
He says, "Who can give
Life to (dry) bones
And decomposed ones (at that)?"

79. Say, "He will give them
Life Who created them
For the first time! \(^{4025}\)
For He fully knows
All creation.

80 "The same Who produces
For you fire out of \(^{4026}\)
The green tree, when behold!
Ye kindle therewith
(Your own fires)!

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4023. Man’s disobedience and folly are all the more surprising, seeing that—apart from Allah’s greatness and mercy—man is himself such a puny creature, created out of something that is less than a drop in the vast ocean of Existence. Yet man has the hardihood to stand out and dispute with his Maker, and institute idle comparisons as in the next verse!

4024. That is, man thinks that Allah is like His creatures, who at best have very limited powers, or man draws idle parallels like that mentioned at the end of this verse. ‘Who can give life to dry bones, and decomposed ones at that?’ Man certainly cannot, and no power in nature can do that. But why compare the powers and capacities of Allah’s creatures with the powers and capacities of the Creator? The first creation—out of nothing—is far more difficult for us to imagine than a second or subsequent process for which there is already a basis. And Allah has power over all things.

4025. Allah’s creative artistry is evident in every phase of nature, and it works every minute or second. The more man understands himself and the things within his reach, the more he realises this. How foolish, then, for any one to set imaginary limits to Allah’s powers? There are more ways of creation than are dreamt of in man’s imagination!

4026. Even older and more primitive than the method of striking fire against steel and flint is the method of using twigs of trees for the purpose. In the E.B., 14th edition. ix. 262, will be found a picture of British Guiana boys making a fire by rotating a stick =
81. “Is not He Who created
The heavens and the earth
Able to create the like?—Yea, indeed!
For He is the Creator Supreme,
Of skill and knowledge (infinite)!

82. Verily, when He intends
A thing, His Command is,
“Be”, and it is!

83. So glory to Him
In Whose Hands is
The dominion of all things:
And to Him will ye
Be all brought back.

= in a round hole in a piece of wood lying on the ground. The Arab method was to use a wooden instrument called the Zindd. It consisted of two pieces to be rubbed together. The upper one was called the ‘Afür or Zand, and the lower the Markh. The markh is a twig from a kind of spreading tree, the Cynanchuin viminale, of which the branches are bare, without leaves or thorns. When they are tangled together, and a wind blows, they get ignited and strike fire (Lane’s Arabic Lexicon). In modern Arabic Zand is by analogy applied to the flint piece used for striking fire with steel.

4027. Cf. lxxix. 27. Which is the more difficult to create,—man, or the heavens and the earth, with all creatures? Allah created the heavens and the earth, with all creatures, and He can create worlds and worlds like these in infinity. To Him it is small matter to raise you up for the Hereafter.

4028. And His creation is not dependent on time, or instruments or means, or any conditions whatsoever. Existence waits on His Will, or Plan, or Intention. The moment He wills a thing, it becomes His Word or Command, and the thing forthwith comes into existence. Cf. ii. 117; xvi. 40, n. 2066; etc.

4029. All things were created by Allah; are maintained by Him; and will go back to Him. But the point of special interest to man is that man will also be brought back to Allah and is answerable to Him, and to Him alone. This Message is the core of Revelation; it explains the meaning of the Hereafter; and it fitly closes a Sūra specially connected with the name (Yā-Sīn) of the Holy Prophet.
INTRODUCTION TO SÜRAT AS-ṢAFFAT, 37.

As explained in the Introduction to S. xxxiv, this is the fourth of a series of Sūras in which the defeat of evil is throughout connected with Revelation, and here the ranged fight is illustrated by a reference to the angels in heaven and to the earlier Prophets in our earthly history, from Noah to Jonah. In chronology this Sūra belongs to the early middle Makkān period.

Summary.—Through the heavens and the earth, there is a sorting out of the evil against the good: their final destinations contrasted (xxxvii. 1-74).

Peace and victory came to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Ilyās and Lūṭ, in their conflict with Evil (xxxvii. 75-138).

So was it with Jonah when he glorified Allah. But men will ascribe to Allah what is unworthy of Him: Allah’s Prophets strive for His glory, and shall be victorious (xxxvii. 139-182).
As-Ṣaffāt, or Those Ranged in Ranks.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. By [4030] those who range Themselves in ranks, [4031]
2. Those who so are strong In repelling (evil), [4032]
3. Those who thus proclaim The Message (of Allah)!
4. Verily, verily, your God Is One! [4033]

4030. At a later stage, we shall study the general meaning of the adjurations in the Qur-ān indicated by the particle wa. See app. xi. Here we may note that the last Sūra (Yā-Sīn) practically began with the adjuration “by the Qur-ān, full of wisdom”, emphasising the fact that Revelation was the evidence by which we could learn the highest wisdom of the spiritual world. Here our attention is called in three verses or clauses, to three definite attitudes which illustrate the triumph of Good and the frustration of Evil. See the notes following.

4031. Two questions arise: (1) are the doers of the three things noted in verses 1-3 the same persons, whose actions or qualities are differently described, or are they three distinct sets of persons? (2) in either case, who are they? As to (1) the most authoritative view is that the three clauses describe the same set of persons in different aspects. As to (2) some take them to refer to angels, and others understand by them the good men, the men of God, who strive and range themselves in Allah’s service. The words are perfectly general, and I interpret them to refer to both classes. The feminine form is grammatically used in Arabic idiom for the indefinite plural. In xxxvii. 165 below, the word ṣāffun is used in the definite plural, and seems to be spoken by these beings, angels or men of God or both, according to how we interpret this verse.

4032. The three acts in verses 1-3 are consecutive, as shown by the particle fa. I understand them to mean that angels and good men (1) are ever ready to range themselves in ranks in the service of Allah and work in perfect discipline and accord at all times; (2) that they check and frustrate evil wherever they find it and they are strengthened in doing so by their discipline and their ranging themselves in ranks; and (3) that this service furthers the Kingdom of Allah and proclaims His Message and His glory to all creation.

4033. That divine Message is summed up in the gospel of Divine Unity, on which the greatest emphasis is laid: “verily, verily your God is One”. It is a fact intimately connected with our own life and destiny. ‘Your Lord is one Who cares for you and =
5. Lord of the heavens
   And of the earth,
   And all between them,
   And Lord of every point
   At the rising of the sun!\textsuperscript{4034}

6. We have indeed decked
   The lower heaven\textsuperscript{4035} with beauty
   (In) the stars. -\textsuperscript{4036}

= cherishes you; you are dear to Him. And He is One: it is only He that you have to look to, the source of all goodness, love, and power. You are not the sport of many contending forces or blind chances. There is complete harmony and unity in heaven and you have to put yourselves into unison with it—by discipline in ranks, by unity of plan and purpose in repelling evil, and by concerted action in promoting the Kingdom of Allah. Here is the mystery of the manifold variety of creation pointing to the absolute Unity of the Creator.

\textsuperscript{4034} Allah is the Lord of everything that exists—'the heavens and the earth, and all between them'. He is the Lord of the Mashāriq,—of every point at the rising of the sun. As the Commentators tell us, there are in the solar year only two equinoctial days, when the sun rises due east: on every other the sun rises at a shifting point either north or south of due east. In vii. 137 we have Mashāriq al ardhi wa magāribahā, where the plural of the words for East and West is negligible, as the conjunction of the two embraces all points. The same may be said of lxx. 40, where Allah is called “Lord of all points in the East and the West”. If we are speaking of longitudes, they may embrace all latitudes. In lv. 17 Allah is called “Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests”, referring to the extreme points in either case. A cursory reader may ask, why is only the East referred to here? The reply is that it is not so much the East as the rising of the sun, on which stress is laid. The Arabic mashriq or mashāriq is close enough to the root-word sharaga, to suggest, not so much the East as the rising of the sun, especially when the plural form is used. The glorious sun rises from different points, as seen by us, but it illuminates the whole heaven and earth. It is an emblem of Unity.

\textsuperscript{4035} Cf. lxvii. 5, lxxii. 8-9.

\textsuperscript{4036} ‘Stars’ may be taken here in the popular sense, as referring to fixed stars, planets, comets, shooting stars, etc. On a clear night the beauty of the starry heavens is proverbial. Here they are meant to illustrate two points: (1) their marvellous beauty and their groupings and motions (apparent or real) manifest and typify the Design and Harmony of the One true Creator: and (2) the power and glory behind them typify that there is a guard against the assaults of Evil (see verse 7 below).
7. (For beauty) and for guard\textsuperscript{4037}
Against all obstinate
Rebellious Satans.

8. (So) they should not listen
Their ears in the direction
Of the Exalted Assembly\textsuperscript{4038}
And they are cast away
From every side,

9. Repulsed. And for them
Is a perpetual chastisement,

10. Except such as snatch away
Something by stealth, and they
Are pursued by a flaming\textsuperscript{4039}
Fire, of piercing brightness.

11. Just ask their\textsuperscript{4040} opinion:
Are they the more difficult
To create, or the (other) beings
We have created?
Them have We created
Out of a sticky clay!\textsuperscript{4041}

\textsuperscript{4037}. Verses 7-11 seem to refer to shooting stars. Cf. xv. 17-18, and notes 1951-53.
The heavens typify not only beauty but power. The Good in Allah’s world is guarded
and protected against every assault of Evil. The Evil is not part of the heavenly system:
it is a thing in outlawry, merely a self-willed rebellion,—“cast away on every side, repulsed
under a perpetual penalty” (verses 8-9).

\textsuperscript{4038}. We can form a mental picture of the Court of the Most High, in the highest
heaven, conforming to the highest idea we can form of goodness, beauty, purity, and
grandeur. The Exalted Assembly of angels is given some knowledge of the Plan and Will
of Allah. Evil is altogether foreign to such an atmosphere, but is actuated by feelings
of jealousy and curiosity. It tries to approach by stealth and overhear something from
the august Assembly. It is repulsed and pursued by a flaming fire, of which we can form
some idea in our physical world by the piercing trail of a shooting star.

\textsuperscript{4039}. See last note and Cf. xv. 18 and notes 1953-54.

\textsuperscript{4040}. “Their”: “they” are the doubters, the evil ones, the deniers of Allah’s grace
and mercy, who laugh at Revelation and disbelieve in a Hereafter. Are they more
important or more difficult to create than the wonderful variety of beings in Allah’s
spacious Creation? Do they forget their own lowly state, as having been created from
muddy clay?

\textsuperscript{4041}. Cf. vi. 2; vii. 12; xxxii. 7; etc.
12. Truly dost thou marvel,\textsuperscript{4042} While they ridicule,  
13. And, when they are Admonished, pay no heed,—  
14. And, when they see A Sign, turn it To mockery,  
15. And say, “This is nothing But evident sorcery!  
16. “What! when we die, And become dust and bones, Shall we (then) be Raised up (again)?  
17. “And also our fathers\textsuperscript{4043} Of old?”  
18. Say thou: “Yea, and ye shall Then be humiliated (On account of your evil).”\textsuperscript{4044}

\textsuperscript{4042}. It is indeed strange that unregenerate man should forget, on the one hand, his lowly-origin, and on the other hand, his high Destiny, as conferred upon him by the grace and mercy of Allah. The indictment of him here comprises four counts: (1) they ridicule the teaching of Truth; (2) instead of profiting by admonition, they pay no heed; (3) when Allah's Signs are brought home to them, they ridicule them as much as they ridiculed the teaching of Truth: and (4) when they have to acknowledge incontestable facts, they give them false names like “sorcery”, which imply fraud or something which has no relation to their life, although the facts touch the inner springs of their life intimately.

\textsuperscript{4043}. Although the Hereafter, is the most solid facts in our intelligent existence, materialists deny them. They cannot believe that they could have any existence beyond the grave—still less their ancestors who died ages and ages ago: how could they ever come to life again?

\textsuperscript{4044}. They are assured that the future life is a solid fact, but that it will be in very different conditions from those they know now. All their present arrogance will have been humbled in the dust. There will be another plane, in which souls will have experiences quite different from those in their probationary life here. In that life the virtues they lacked will count, and the arrogance they hugged will be brought low.
19. Then it will be a single (Compelling) cry; And behold, they will Begin to see!

20. They will say, “Ah! Woe to us! this is The Day of Judgment!”

21. (A voice will say,) “This is the Day Of sorting Out, whose Truth ye (once) denied!”

SECTION 2.

22. “Bring ye up”, It shall be said, “The wrong-doers And their wives, And the things they worshipped—

23. “Besides Allah, And lead them to the Way To the (Fierce) Fire!"

24. “But stop them, For they must be asked:

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4045. Cf. xxxvi. 29, 49, and 53.

4046. Their spiritual blindness will then leave them. But they will be surprised at the suddenness of their disillusion.

4047. The Day of Judgment is the day of sorting out. Cf. xxxvi. 59. Good and evil will finally be separated, unlike the apparently inexplicable conditions in the present probationary life, when they seem to be mixed together.

4048. That is, if their wives were also wrong-doers. They are separately mentioned, because the Arabic phrase for “wrong-doers” is of the masculine gender. All the associates in wrong-doing will be marshalled together. There will be personal responsibility: neither husband nor wife can lay the blame on the other.

4049. The scene here is after judgment. As, in an earthly tribunal, the prisoner or his advocate is asked why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, so here those who are proved to have been guilty of wrong are allowed to consider if anything or any one can help them. Then comes the exposure of the misleaders.
25. "What is the matter with you that ye help not each other?" 

26. Nay, but that day they shall submit (to Judgment).

27. And they will turn to one another, and question one another.

28. They will say: "It was ye who used to come to us from the right hand.

29. They will reply: "Nay, ye yourselves had no Faith! Nor had we any authority over you. Nay, it was ye who were a people in obstinate rebellion!

4050. Obviously no one can stand and intercede, for it is a question of personal responsibility for each soul. No one can help another.

4051. All the previous arrogance of this life will be gone, but they will face each other, and those who were given a false lead, as in the story of Pharaoh (Cf. xx. 79), will question their misleaders as in the following verses.

4052. This is the mutual recrimination of the sinners—those who sinned, against those whose instigation or evil example led them into sin. The misleaders in the life here below often used their power and influence to spread evil. The "right hand" is the hand of power and authority. Instead of using it for righteous purposes, they used it for evil—selfishly for their own advantage, and mischievously for the degradation of others.

4053. But the fact that others mislead, or that their evil example is before us, does not justify us in falling from right conduct. Faith should save us from the fall. But if we have ourselves no Faith—in righteousness, or a future life, or the reality of Allah's Law, how can we blame others? The misleaders can well say, "You will be judged according to your misdeeds!" The responsibility is personal, and cannot be shifted on to others. The others may get a double punishment—for their own evil, and for misleading their weaker brethren. But the weaker brethren cannot go free from responsibility for their own deeds; for evil means a personal rebellion against Allah, if we believe in a personal God. Evil has no authority over us, except in so far as we deliberately choose it.
possessed of an evil spirit, or mad. Such was the charge which the Unbelievers sometimes levelled at the holy Prophet in the early stages of his preaching.

31. “So now has been proved true,4054
Against us, the Word
Of our Lord that we
Shall indeed (have to) taste
(The punishment of our sins):

32. “We led you astray: for truly4055
We were ourselves astray.”

33. Truly, that Day, they will
(All) share in the Chastisement.

34. Verily that is how We
Shall deal with Sinners.

35. For they, when they were
Told that there is
No god except Allah, would
Puff themselves up with Pride,4056

36. And say: “What! Shall we
Give up our gods
For the sake of
A Poet possessed?”4057

4054. Allah’s decree of justice requires that every soul should taste the consequences of its own sins, and that decree must be fulfilled. No excuses can serve. It is only Allah’s mercy that can save.

4055. Further, the misleaders can well urge against those who reproach them for misleading them: “How could you expect anything better from us? You were already warned by Allah’s Message that we were astray.”

4056. Selfish arrogance was the seed of sin and rebellion: ii. 34 (of Satan): xxviii. 39 (of Pharaoh); etc. It is that kind of arrogance which prevents man from mending his life and conduct. When he speaks of ancestral ways, or public opinion, or national honour, he is usually thinking of himself or of a small clique which thrives on injustice. The recognition of Allah, the one true God, as the only standard of life and conduct, the Eternal Reality, cuts out Self, and is therefore disagreeable to Sin. If false gods are imagined, who themselves would have weaknesses that fit in with sin, they give countenance to evils, and it becomes difficult to give them up, unless Allah’s grace comes to our assistance.

4057. Possessed of an evil spirit, or mad. Such was the charge which the Unbelievers sometimes levelled at the holy Prophet in the early stages of his preaching.
37. Nay! he has come
With the (very) Truth,
And he confirms (the Message
Of) the messengers (before him). 4058

38. Ye shall indeed taste
Of the Grievous Chastisement;-

39. And you are requited naught
Save what ye did. 4059

40. But the chosen
Servants of Allah,-

41. For them is a Sustenance 4060
Determined, 4061

42. Fruits; 4062 and they
(Shall enjoy) honour and dignity,

43. In Gardens of delight.

44. Facing each other
On raised couches.

4058. The message of Islam, so far from being "mad" or in any way peculiar, is
eminently conformable to reason and the true facts of nature as created by Allah. It is
the Truth in the purest sense of the term, and confirms the Message of all true
Messengers that ever lived.

4059. Justice demands that those who sow evil should reap the fruit, but the
punishment is due to their own conduct and not to anything external to themselves.

4060. "Sustenance": correlated with the Fruits mentioned below: see next verse.

4061. "Determined": Ma'lium: the reward of the Blessed will not be a chance or a
fleeting thing. It will follow a firm Decree of Allah, on principles that can be known and
understood.

4062. "Fruits": Cf. xxxvi. 57, and n. 4003. The Garden's Delights are figured forth
from parallel experiences in our present life, and follow an ascending order: Food and
Fruits; Gardens of Bliss, (with all their charm, design, greenery, birds' songs, fountains,
etc.); the Home of Happiness and Dignity, with congenial company seated on Thrones;
Delicious Drinks from crystal Springs, for social pleasure; and the society of Companions
of the opposite sex, with beauty and charm but none of the grossness too often incidental
to such companionship in this life.
45. Round will be passed
   To them a Cup
   From a clear-flowing fountain,

46. Crystal-white, of a taste
   Delicious to those
   Who drink (thereof).

47. Free from headiness;[4063]
   Nor will they suffer
   Intoxication therefrom.

48. And besides them will be
   Chaste women; restraining
   Their glances, with big eyes[4064]
   (Of wonder and beauty).

49. As if they were[4065]
   (Delicate) eggs closely guarded.

50. Then they will turn to
   One another and question
   One another.[4066]

[4063] The passing round of the social cup, as in the case of other pleasures, is without any of the drawbacks and evil accompaniments of the pleasures of this world, which are taken as types. In drink there is no intoxication: in fruit there is no satiety. Cf. Dante: “the bread of Angels upon which One liveth here and grows not sated by it.” (Paradiso, Canto II., Longfellow’s translation.)

[4064] In the emblem used here, again, the pure type of chaste womanhood is figured. They are chaste, not bold with their glances: but their eyes are big with wonder and beauty, prefiguring grace, innocence, and a refined capacity of appreciation and admiration.

[4065] This is usually understood to refer to the delicate complexion of a beautiful woman, which is compared to the transparent shell of eggs in the nest, closely guarded by the mother-bird; the shell is warm and free from stain. In lv. 58 the phrase used is “like rubies and coral”, referring to the red or pink of a beautiful complexion.

[4066] Cf. above, xxxvii. 27, where the same phrase is used in the reverse conditions. In each case there is a going back to the earlier memories or experiences of this life.
51. One of them will say:
   “I had an intimate
   Companion (on the earth)." 4067

52. “Who used to say,
   Do you really
   Believe?

53. ‘When we die and become
   Dust and bones, shall we
   Indeed receive rewards
   And punishments?’

54. He said: “Would ye
   Like to look down?”

55. He looked down
   And saw him
   In the midst of the Fire. 4068

56. He said: “By Allah!
   Thou wast little short
   Of bringing me to perdition!

57. “Had it not been for
   The Grace of my Lord, 4069
   I should certainly have been
   Among those brought (there)!

58. “Is it (the case) that
   We shall not die,

4067. This companion was a sceptic, who laughed at Religion and a Hereafter. How
the tables are now turned! The devout man backed up his Faith with a good life and
is now in Bliss: the other was a cynic and made a mess of his life, and is now burning
in the Fire.

4068. He is allowed a peep into the state which he so narrowly escaped by the grace
of Allah.

4069. And he gratefully acknowledges his short-comings: “I should have been a sinner
just like this, but for the grace of Allah!” He sees that if he had erred it would have
been no excuse to plead the other man’s example. He had Faith and was saved, to walk
in the path of righteousness.
59. “Except our first death, 
And that we
Shall not be punished?”

60. Verily this is 
The supreme triumph.

61. For the like of this 
Let all strive, 
Who wish to strive.

62. Is that the better entertainment 
Or the Tree of Zaqqum?

63. For We have truly 
Made it (as) a trial 
For the wrong-doers.

64. For it is a tree 
That springs out 
Of the bottom of Hell-fire:

4070. After he realises the great danger from which he narrowly escaped, his joy is so great that he can hardly believe it! Is the danger altogether past now? Are the portals of death closed for ever? Is he safe now from the temptations which will bring him to ruin and punishment?

4071. The answer is: Yes. “Beyond the flight of Time. Beyond the realm of Death. There surely is some blessed clime, Where Life is not a breath!” In the words of Longfellow this was an aspiration on this earth. In the Hereafter it is a realisation!

Some interpret verses 60-62 as a continuation of the speech of the man in heaven. The meaning would in that case be the same.

4072. Cf. xvii. 60, n. 2250. This bitter tree of Hell is in contrast with the beautiful Garden of heaven with its delicious fruits.

4073. This dreadful bitter Tree of Hell is truly a trial to the wrong-doers. (1) It grows at the bottom of Hell; (2) even its fruit-stalks, which should have been tender, are like the heads of devils: (3) its produce is eaten voraciously; (4) on top of it is a boiling mixture to cut up their entrails (see next note); and (5) every time they complete this round of orgies they return to the same game. A truly lurid picture, but more lurid in reality are the stages of Evil. (1) It takes its rise in the lowest depths of corrupted human nature; (2) its tenderest affections are degraded to envy and hate; (3) the appetite for Evil grows with what it feeds on; (4) its “cures” serve but to aggravate the disease; and (5) the chain of evil is unending; one round is followed by another in interminable succession.
65. The shoots of its fruit-stalks
   Are like the heads
   Of devils:
66. Truly they will eat thereof
   And fill their bellies therewith.
67. Then on top of that
   They will be given
   A mixture made of
   Boiling water.
68. Then shall their return
   Be to the (Blazing) Fire.
69. Truly they found their fathers
   On the wrong Path;
70. So they (too) were rushed
   Down on their footsteps!
71. And truly before them,
   Many of the ancients
   Went astray;—
72. But We sent aforetime,
   Among them, warners.

4074. The parable of fruits and drinks in the contrasted fortunes of the Good and the Evil is further elaborated in xlvii. 15, where the boiling water given to the evil ones cuts up their entrails.

4075. When they eat of the zaqqām in the lowest depths of hell, they are apparently brought up to drink of the mixture as a further punishment, after which they go back to repeat the round.

4076. A grim reproach. 'You found your fathers doing wrong; and you must rush headlong in their footsteps to perdition!'

4077. It is human to err. The error is forgiven if there is repentance and amendment. The point is that Allah in His mercy at all times in history sent messengers and teachers to give His Message, and men deliberately rejected that Message.
Then see what was 
The End of those who Were warned
Except the chosen Servants of Allah.

SECTION 3.

(In the days of old), Noah cried to Us, And We are the Best To hear prayer.

And We delivered him And his people from The Great Calamity.

And made his progeny To endure (on this earth);

And We left (this blessing) For him among generations To come in later times:

It is on the reception or rejection of Allah's teachings and guidance that judgment will come. In this world itself, see what is the teaching of history. Unrighteousness and wrong-doing never prosper in the long run.

But there is always a band of sincere and devoted men who serve Allah, and the highest form of life is open to them.

Note that this verse occurs at xxxvii. 40 above, where the argument of the difference between the fates of the righteous and the unrighteous was begun. Here it is rounded off with the same phrase, and now we proceed to take illustrations from the early Prophets.

Cf. xxi. 76-77. The story of Noah occurs in many places: here the point is that when men gird themselves against evil, Allah protects them, and Evil cannot triumph against Allah's Plan.

The Deluge, the Flood of Noah. The main story will be found in xi. 25-48.

Noah's posterity survived the Flood in the Ark, while the rest perished.

His name is remembered for ever, commencing a new era in religious history. Note that the words in verses 78-81, with slight modifications, form a sort of refrain to the following paragraphs about Abraham, Moses, and Elias, but not about Lot and Jonah.
79. “Peace and salutation to Noah Among the nations!”

80. Thus indeed do We reward Those who do right.

81. For he was one Of Our believing Servants.

82. Then the rest We overwhelmed In the Flood.

83. Verily from his party Was Abraham.

84. Behold, he approached his Lord With a sound heart.

85. Behold, he said to his father And to his people, “What Is that which ye worship?

= Lot was a nephew of Abraham, and may be supposed to belong to the story of Abraham. Jonah’s career nearly ended in a tragedy for himself, and his people got a further lease of power “for a time” (xxxvii. 148). And both Lot and Jonah belong to a limited local tradition.

4084. The story of the Flood is found in some form or other among all nations, and not only among those who follow the Mosaic tradition. In Greek tradition, the hero of the Flood is Deukalion, with his wife Pyrrha: in Indian tradition (Shatapatha Brāhmana and Mahābhārata) it is the sage Manu and the Fish. The Chinese tradition of a great Flood is recorded in Shū-King. Among American Indians the tradition was common to many tribes.

4085. The main story will be found in xxi. 51-73; but the episode about his readiness and that of his son to submit to the most extreme form of self-sacrifice under trial (in verses 102-107 below) is told here for the first time, as this Sūra deals with the theme, “Not my will, but Thine be done!” In “followed his way”, the pronoun “his” refers to Noah, “he”, of verse 81 above.

4086. A sound heart: qalb salim: a heart that is pure, and unaffected by the diseases that afflict others. As the heart in Arabic is taken to be not only the seat of feelings and affections, but also of intelligence and resulting action, it implies the whole character. Cf. Abraham’s title of Hanif (the True): ii. 135 and n. 134. Cf. also xxvi. 89: “only he will prosper who brings to Allah a sound heart.”
86. "Is it a Falsehood—
Gods other than Allah
That ye desire?" 4087

87. "Then what is your idea
About the Lord of the Worlds?" 4088

88. Then did he cast
A glance at the Stars,

89. And he said, "I am
Indeed sick (at heart)!" 4089

90. So they turned away
From him, and departed.

91. Then did he turn
To their gods and said,
"Will ye not eat
(Of the offerings before you)?"

92. "What is the matter
With you that ye
Speak not?"

93. Then did he turn
Upon them, striking (them) 4090
With the right hand. 4091

4087. False worship—worship of idols or stars or symbols, or Mammon or Self—is due either to false and degrading conceptions of Allah, or to a sort of make-believe, where practice is inconsistent with knowledge or ignores the inner promptings of Conscience. Abraham’s challenge to his people is: ‘Are you fools or hypocrites?’

4088. ‘Do you not realise that the real Creator is One—above all the forms and superstitions that you associate with Him?’

4089. The grief was really preying on his mind and soul, that he should be associated with such falsehoods. His father himself was among the chief supporters of such falsehoods, and his people were given up wholly to them. He could not possibly share in their mummeries, and they left him in disgust. Then he made his practical protest in the manner narrated in xxi. 56-64.

4090. See the reference in the last note.

4091. With the right hand: as the right hand is the hand of power, the phrase means that he struck them with might and main and broke them.
Then came (the worshippers) With hurried steps, To him.

He said: "Worship ye That which ye have (Yourselves) carved?"

"But Allah has created you And your handiwork!"

They said, "Build him A furnace, and throw him Into the blazing fire!"

(This failing), they then Plotted against him, But We made them the ones Most humiliated!

He said: "I will go To my Lord! He Will surely guide me!"

"O my Lord! grant me A righteous (son)!

4092. His action was a challenge, and he drives home the challenge now with argument. 'Do you worship your own handiwork? Surely worship is due to Him Who made you and made possible your handiwork!'

4093. The argument of Abraham was so sound that it could not be met by argument. In such cases Evil resorts to violence, or secret plotting. Here there was both violence and secret plotting. The violence consisted in throwing him into a blazing Furnace. But by the mercy of Allah the fire did not harm him (xxi. 69), and so they resorted to plotting. But the plotting, as the next verse (xxxvii. 98) shows, was a boomerang that recoiled on their own heads.

4094. Cf. xxi. 71. Their plot against the righteous Abraham failed. Abraham migrated from the country (Chaldea, Babylon, and Assyria) and prospered in Syria and Palestine. It was his persecutors that suffered humiliation.

4095. This was the Hijrat of Abraham. He left his people and his land, because the Truth was dearer to him than the ancestral falsehoods of his people. He trusted himself to Allah, and under Allah's guidance he laid the foundations of great peoples. See n. 2725 to xxi. 69.
101. So We gave him
The good news\textsuperscript{4096}
Of a forbearing son.\textsuperscript{4097}

102. Then, when (the son)
Reached (the age of)
(Serious) work with him,
He said: “O my son!
I have seen in a dream\textsuperscript{4098}
That I offer thee in sacrifice:\textsuperscript{4099}
Now see what is
Thy view!” (The son) said:
“O my father! Do
As thou art commanded:
Thou will find me,
If Allah so wills one
Of the steadfast.”

4096. This was in the fertile land of Syria and Palestine. The boy thus born was, according to Muslim tradition, the first-born son of Abraham,viz., Ismā'īl. The name itself is from the root Sāmī'a, to hear, because Allah had heard Abraham’s prayer (verse 100). Abraham’s age when Ismā'īl was born was 86 (Gen. xvi. 16).

4097. The boy’s character was to be Ḥalim, “forbearing”. This title is also applied to Abraham (in ix. 114 and xi. 75). It refers to the patient way in which both father and son cheerfully offered to suffer any self-sacrifice in order to obey the Command of Allah. See next verse.

4098. Where did this vision occur? The Muslim view is that it was in or near Makkah. Some would identify it with the valley of Minā, six miles north of Makkah, where a commemoration sacrifice is annually celebrated as a rite of the Hajj on the tenth of Zul-Hijjah, the ‘Īd of Sacrifice, in Memory of this Sacrifice of Abraham and Ismā'īl (see n. 217 to ii. 197). Others say that the original place of sacrifice was near the hill of Marwa (the companion hill to Safā, ii. 158), which is associated with the infancy of Ismā'īl.

4099. At what stage in Abraham’s history did this occur? See n. 2725 to xxi. 69. It was obviously after his arrival in the land of Cannan and after Ismā'īl had grown up to years of discretion. Was it before or after the building of the Ka’ba (ii. 127)? There are no data on which this question can be answered. But we may suppose it was before that event, and that event may itself have been commemorative.
103. So when they had both\textsuperscript{4100} Submitted (to Allah),
And he had laid him
Prostrate on his forehead
(For sacrifice),\textsuperscript{4101}

104. We called out to him,\textsuperscript{4102}
"O Abraham!

105. “Thou hast already fulfilled
The dream!”—thus indeed
Do We reward
Those who do right.

4100. Note that the sacrifice was demanded of both Abraham and Ismā‘īl. It was a trial of the will of the father and the son. By way of trial the father had the command conveyed to him in a vision. He consulted the son. The son readily consented, and offered to stand true to his promise if his self-sacrifice was really required. The whole thing is symbolical. Allah does not require the flesh and blood of animals (xxii. 37), much less of human beings. But he does require the giving of our whole being to Allah, the symbol of which is that we should give up something very dear to us, if Duty requires that sacrifice.

4101. Our version may be compared with the Jewish–Christian version of the present Old Testament. The Jewish tradition, in order to glorify the younger branch of the family, descended from Isaac, ancestor of the Jews, as against the elder branch, descended from Ismā‘īl, ancestor of the Arabs, refers this sacrifice to Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1-18). Now Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. xxi. 5), while Ismā‘īl was born to Abraham when Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. xvi. 16). Ismā‘īl was therefore 14 years older than Isaac. During his first 14 years Ismā‘īl was the only son of Abraham; at no time was Isaac the only son of Abraham. Yet, in speaking of the sacrifice, the Old Testament says (Gen. xxii. 2): “And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Issac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt offering...” This slip shows at any rate which was the older version, and how it was overlaid, like the present Jewish records, in the interests of a tribal religion. The “land of Moriah” is not clear: it was three days' journey from Abraham's place (Gen. xxii. 4). There is less warrant for identifying it with the hill of Moriah on which Jerusalem was afterwards built than with the hill of Marwa which is identified with the Arab tradition about Ismā‘īl.

4102. In the Biblical version Isaac’s consent is not taken; in fact Isaac asks, ‘where is the lamb for sacrifice?’ and is told that ‘God would provide it’. It is a complete human sacrifice like those to Moloch. In our version it is as much a sacrifice by the will of Ismā‘īl as by that of Abraham.
106. For this was
A clear trial—

107. And We ransomed him
With a momentous sacrifice:⁴¹⁰３

108. And We left
For him among generations⁴¹⁰⁴
(To come) in later times:

109. “Peace and salutation
To Abraham!”

110. Thus indeed do We reward
Those who do right

111. For he was one
Of Our believing Servants.

112. And We gave him⁴¹⁰⁵
The good news
Of Isaac—a prophet,—
One of the Righteous.

113. We blessed him and Isaac:
But of their progeny
Are (some) that do right,
And (some) that obviously⁴¹⁰⁶
Do wrong, to themselves.

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⁴¹⁰³. The adjective qualifying “sacrifice” here, ʿazīm, (great, momentous) may be understood both in a literal and a figurative sense. In a literal sense it implies that a fine sheep or ram was substituted. The figurative sense is even more important. It was indeed a great and momentous occasion, when two men, with concerted will, “ranged themselves in the ranks” of those to whom self-sacrifice in the service of Allah was the supreme thing in life.

⁴¹⁰⁴. Cf. above, xxxvii. 78-81 and n. 4083.

⁴¹⁰⁵. Isaac was Abraham's second son, born of Sarah, when Abraham was 100 years of age. See n. 4101. He was also blessed and became the ancestor of the Jewish people. See next note.

⁴¹⁰⁶. So long as the Children of Israel upheld the righteous banner of Allah, they enjoyed Allah's blessing, and their history is a portion of sacred history. When they fell from grace, they did not stop Allah's Plan: they injured their own souls.
SECTION 4.

114. Again, (of old.)
   We bestowed Our favour
   On Moses and Aaron, 4107

115. And We delivered them
   And their people from
   (Their) Great distress. 4108

116. And We helped them,
   So they were victorious; 4109

117. And We gave them
   The Book which helps 4110
   To make things clear;

118. And We guided them
   To the Straight Way.

119. And We left
   For them among generations 4111
   (To come) in later times:

120. "Peace and salutation
   To Moses and Aaron!"

4107. The story of Moses is told in numerous passages of the Qur-ān. The passages most illustrative of the present passage will be found in xxviii. 4 (oppression of the Israelites in Egypt) and xx. 77-79 (the Israelites triumphant over their enemies when the latter were drowned in the Red Sea).

4108. What could have been a greater calamity to them than that they should have been held in slavery by the Egyptians, that their male children should have been killed and their female children should have been saved alive for the Egyptians?

4109. The Israelites were delivered by three steps mentioned in verses 114, 115, and 116 respectively; but the consummation of Allah's favour on them was (verses 117-118) the Revelation given to them, which guided them on the Straight Way, so long as they preserved the Revelation intact and followed its precepts. The three steps were: (1) the divine commission to Moses and Aaron; (2) the deliverance from bondage; and (3) the triumphant crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

4110. Mustabin has a slightly different force from Mūbin. I have translated the former by "which helps to make things clear", and the latter by "which makes things clear",-apt descriptions as applied to the Taurāt and the Qur-ān.

4111. See above, xxxvii. 78-81 and n. 4083.
121. Thus indeed do We reward
Those who do right.

122. For they were two
Of Our believing Servants.

123. So also was Elias\(^ {4112} \)
Among those sent (by Us).

124. Behold, he said
To his people,
"Will ye not fear (Allah)?"

125. "Will ye call upon Baal\(^ {4113} \)
And forsake the Best
Of Creators,—

126. "Allah, your Lord and Cherisher
And the Lord and Cherisher
Of your fathers of old?"

127. But they rejected him,\(^ {4114} \)
And they will certainly
Be called up (for punishment),

128. Except the chosen
Servants of Allah (among them).

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4112. See n. 905 to vi. 85. Elias is the same as Elijah, whose story will be found in the Old Testament in I Kings xvi-xix. and 2 Kings i-ii. Elijah lived in the reign of Ahab (B.C. 896-874) and Ahaziah (B.C. 874-872), kings of the (northern) kingdom of Israel or Samaria. He was a prophet of the desert, like John the Baptist,—unlike our holy Prophet, who took part in, controlled, and guided all the affairs of his people. Both Ahab and Azariah were prone to lapse into the worship of Baal, the sun-god worshipped in Syria. That worship also included the worship of nature-powers and procreative powers, as in the Hindu worship of the Lingam, and led to many abuses. King Ahab had married a princess of Sidon, Jezebel, a wicked woman who led her husband to forsake Allah and adopt Baal-worship. Elijah denounced all Ahab’s sins as well as the sins of Ahaziah and had to flee for his life. Eventually, according to the Old Testament (2 Kings, ii-11) he was taken up in a whirlwind to heaven in a chariot of fire after he had left his mantle with Elisha the prophet.

4113. For Baal-worship see last note.

4114. They persecuted him and he had to flee for his life. Eventually he disappeared mysteriously; see n. 4112.
129. And We left
   For him among generations
   (To come) in later times:

130. "Peace and salutation
   To such as Elias!"^4115.A

131. Thus indeed do We reward
   Those who do right.

132. For he was one
   Of Our believing Servants.

133. So also was Lût^4116
   Among those sent (by Us).

134. Behold, We delivered him
   And his adherents, all

135. Except an old woman
   Who was among those
   Who lagged behind:^4117

136. Then We destroyed
   The rest.

137. Verily, ye pass
   By their (sites),
   By day—

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4115. See above, xxxvii. 78-81, and n. 4083.

4115-A. *Ilyâsîn* may be an alternative form of *Ilyâs*: Cf. Sainâa (xxiii. 20) and *Sinîn* (xcv. 2). Or it may be the plural of *Ilyâs*, meaning "such people as Ilyâs'.

4116. The best illustration of this passage about Lût will be found in vii. 80-84. He was a prophet sent to Sodom and Gomorrah, Cities of the Plain, by the Dead Sea. The inhabitants were given over to abominable crimes, against which he preached. They insulted him and threatened to expel him. But Allah in His mercy saved him and his family (with one exception, see the following note), and then destroyed the Cities.

4117. Cf. vii. 83, and n. 1051. Lot's wife had no faith: she lagged behind, and perished in the general ruin.

4118. Cf. xv. 76, and n. 1998. The tract where they lay is situated on the highway to Syria where the Arab caravans travelled regularly, "by day and by night". Could not future generations learn wisdom from the destruction of those who did wrong?
138. And by night:
Will ye not understand?

SECTION 5.

139. So also was Jonah
Among those sent (by Us).

140. When he ran away
(Like a slave from captivity)
To the ship (fully) laden,

141. He (agreed to) cast lots,
And he was of the rebutted:

142. Then the big Fish
Did swallow him,
And he had done

Acts worthy of blame.

4119. For illustrative passages, see xxi. 87-88, n. 2744, and lxviii. 48-50. Jonah’s mission was to the city of Nineveh, then steeped in wickedness. He was rejected and he denounced Allah’s wrath on them, but they repented and obtained Allah’s forgiveness. But Jonah “departed in wrath” (xxi. 87), forgetting that Allah has Mercy as well as forgiveness. See the notes following. Cf. x. 98, n. 1478.

4120. Jonah ran away from Nineveh like a slave from captivity. He should have stuck to his post. He was hasty, and went off to take a ship. As if he could escape from Allah’s Plan!

4121. The ship was fully laden and met foul weather. The sailors, according to their superstition, wanted to find out who was responsible for the ill-luck: a fugitive slave would cause such ill-luck. The lot fell on Jonah, and he was cast off.

4122. The rivers of Mesopotamia have some huge fishes. The word used here is Ḥūt, which may be a fish or perhaps a crocodile. If it were in an open northern sea, it might be a whale. The locality is not mentioned: in the Old Testament he is said to have taken ship in the port of Joppa (now Jaffa) in the Mediterranean (Jonah, i. 3), which would be not less than 600 miles from Nineveh. The Tigris river, mentioned by some of our Commentators, is more likely, and it contains some fishes of extraordinary size.

4123. See n. 4120.
143. Had it not been
That he (repented and)
Glorified Allah,  

144. He would certainly have
Remained inside the Fish  
Till the Day of Resurrection.

145. But We cast him forth
On the naked shore
In a state of sickness,  

146. And We caused to grow,
Over him, a spreading plant
Of the Gourd kind.

147. And We sent him
(On a mission)
To a hundred thousand
(Men) or more.

148. And they believed;
So We permitted them
To enjoy (their life)  
For a while.

4124. “But he cried through the depths of darkness, ‘There is no god but Thee: glory to Thee! I was indeed wrong!’” (xxi. 87).

4125. This is just the idiom. This was to be the burial and the grave of Jonah. If he had not repented, he could not have got out of the body of the creature that had swallowed him, until the Day of Resurrection, when all the dead would be raised up.

4126. Cf. xxxvii. 89 above. His strange situation might well have caused him to be ill. He wanted fresh air and solitude. He got both in the open plain, and the abundantly shady Gourd Plant or some fruitful tree like it gave him both shade and sustenance. The Gourd is a creeper that can spread over any roof or ruined structure.

4127. The city of Nineveh was a very large city. The Old Testament says: “Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey” (Jonah, iii. 3); “wherein are more than six score thousand persons” (Jonah, iv. 11). In other words its circuit was about 45 miles, and its population was over a hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants.

4128. They repented and believed, and Nineveh got a new lease of life. For the dates to which Jonah may be referred, and the vicissitudes of the City’s history as the seat of the Assyrian Empire, see notes 1478-79 to x. 98.
149. Now ask them their opinion:\(^{4129}\)
Is it that thy Lord
Has (only) daughters, and they
Have sons?–

150. Or that We created
The angels female, and they
Are witnesses (thereto)?

151. Behold they
Say, out of their own invention,

152. “Allah has begotten children”?\(^{4130}\)
But they are liars!

153. Did He (then) choose\(^{4131}\)
Daughters rather than sons?

154. What is the matter
With you? How judge ye?

155. Will ye not then
Receive admonition?

156. Or have ye
An authority manifest?

157. Then bring ye your Book
(Of authority) if ye be
Truthful!

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The lessons from Jonah's story are: (1) that no man should take upon himself to judge of Allah's wrath or Allah's mercy; (2) that nevertheless Allah forgives true repentance, whether in a righteous man, or in a wicked city; and (3) that Allah's Plan will always prevail, and can never be defeated.

4129. We begin a new argument here. The Pagan Arabs called angels daughters of Allah. They themselves were ashamed of having daughters, and preferred to have sons, to add to their power and dignity. See xvi. 57-59, and n. 2082. Yet they invented daughters for Allah!

4130. Any attribution to Allah of ideas derogatory to His Oneness and His supreme height above all creatures is likely to degrade our own conception of Allah's Universal plan, and is condemned in the strongest terms.

4131. There is the strongest irony in this passage.
158. And they have invented
A kinship\(^{4132}\)
Between Him and the Jinns:
But the Jinns know
(Quite well) that they
Will be brought
Before Him.

159. Glory to Allah! (He is free)
From the things they ascribe
(To Him)!

160. Not (so do) the Servants
Of Allah, the chosen ones.\(^ {4133}\)

161. For, verily, neither ye
Nor those ye worship

162. Can lead (any)\(^ {4134}\)
Into temptation
Concerning Allah,

163. Except such as are
(Themselves) going to
The blazing Fire!

164. (The angels)\(^ {4135}\)
“Not one of us but has
A place appointed;

\(^{4132}\) The angels are at least pure beings engaged in the service of Allah. But the Pagan superstitions not only connect them with Allah as daughters but even connect Allah by relationship with all kinds of spirits, good or evil! In some mythologies the most evil powers are gods or goddesses as if they belonged to the family of Allah the Creator and had some semblance of equality with Him! This, too, is repudiated in the strongest terms.

For Jinns see n. 929 to vi. 100.

\(^{4133}\) Those sincere in devotion to Allah never ascribe such degrading ideas to Allah.

\(^{4134}\) Evil has no power over faith, truth, and sincerity. Such power as it has is over those who deliberately put themselves in the way of Destruction. If they were fortified against Evil by Faith, Patience, and Constancy, Evil would have no power to hurt them. Allah would protect them.

\(^{4135}\) To round off the argument of the Sûra we go back to the idea with which it began. Those who range themselves in ranks for the united service of Allah (see above, xxxvii. 1 and n. 4031)—whether angels or men of God—are content to keep their ranks =
165. “And we are verily
Ranged in ranks (for service);

166. “And we are verily those
Who declare (Allah’s) glory!”

167. And there were those\textsuperscript{4136}
Who said,

168. “If only we had had
Before us a Message
From those of old,

169. “We should certainly have
Been Servants of Allah,\textsuperscript{4137}
Sincere (and devoted)!”

170. But (now that the Qur-\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}ân
Has come), they reject it:
But soon will they know!\textsuperscript{4138}

171. Already has Our Word
Been passed before (this)
To Our Servants sent (by Us),

172. That they would certainly
Be assisted,

\textsuperscript{4136}. There were the sceptics or Unbelievers,—primarily the Pagan Arabs, but in a more extended sense, all who doubt Allah’s providence or revelation.

\textsuperscript{4137}. Such men take refuge in ancestral tradition. ‘If our forefathers had had an inkling of Revelation or miracles, or had worshipped as we are now taught to worship, we should gladly have accepted. Or if they had had anything of the miracles which other nations of old are said to have received, we could then have accepted.’ But now stronger and more convincing proofs have come to them in the Qur-\textsuperscript{\textasciitilde}ân in their own tongue, and they doubt and reject it.

\textsuperscript{4138}. Allah’s Truth will manifest itself against all odds, and the whole world will see.
173. And that Our forces,—
They surely must conquer.

174. So turn thou away,
From them for a little while,

175. And watch them (how)
They fare, and they soon
Shall see (how thou farest)!

176. Do they wish (indeed)
To hurry on our Punishment?

177. But when it descends
Upon their courtyards
Before them, Evil will be
The morning for those who
Were warned (and heeded not)!

178. So turn thou away,
From them for a little while,

4139. The victory will be the victory of Allah’s Truth by the forces of Allah, but every soldier in the army of Truth, who has done his duty, will be entitled to claim a share in the victory.

4140. Addressed in the first instance to the holy Prophet, but good for all time. He was not to be discouraged by his initial failures. Soon came victory to him from Allah. So is it always in the struggles of truth and righteousness. The righteous can afford to ignore opposition, confident in the strength which comes from the Grace of Allah.

4141. Watch and wait, for the Right must come to its own.

4142. The last verse enjoined Patience under the attacks of Evil, in the knowledge that evil must be conquered at last. Evil may perhaps turn back scoffingly and say, ‘If a punishment is to come, why not bring it on now?’ Why indeed? The answer is: when it comes, it will come like a rush by night when the enemy is overpowered, when he least expects it: when the day dawns, it is a sorry plight in which the enemy finds himself.

4143. See last note. The parable is that of an enemy camp in a plain, which is surprised and destroyed by a night attack from the hills. Evil is the plight of any survivors in the morning. Their regrets will be all the more poignant if they had had some sort of a warning before hand and had paid no heed to it!

4144. This and the following verse repeat verses 174-75 (with a slight verbal alteration). The argument in verses 176-77 brought in a new point. When that is finished, the repetition carries us back to the main argument, and rounds off the whole Sūra.
179. And watch (how they fare)  
    And they soon shall see  
    (How thou farest)!

180. Glory to thy Lord,⁴¹⁴⁵  
    The Lord of Honour  
    And Power! (He is free)  
    From what they ascribe  
    (To Him)!

181. And Peace on the messengers!

182. And Praise to Allah,  
    The Lord and Cherisher  
    Of the Worlds.

⁴¹⁴⁵ This and the following two verses recapitulate: (1) Glory, Honour, and Power  
belong to Allah; (2) No one is equal to Him; (3) He sends messengers and revelations,  
and His aid will overcome all obstacles; for (4) He loves and cherishes all His Creation.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Ṣâd, 38.

For the place of this Sûra in the series of six, dealing with some aspects of the spiritual world, see Introduction to S. xxxiv.

This Sûra, both in chronology and subject-matter, is cognate to S. xxxvii., and carries forward the same argument. But here the emphasis is laid on the working of earthly power when combined with spiritual power, and it is pointed out how much more significant (and real) spiritual power is. For this reason the illustrative stories are mainly those of David and Solomon who were kings as well as prophets, and a parallel is suggested with the unfolding public life of our holy Prophet.

Summary.—Worldly and evil men are surprised at the renewal of Truth and Righteousness; but righteousness has more power than worldly strength, as is seen in the story of kings like David, who had both (xxxviii. 1-26).

So also Solomon loved the Lord more than worldly power, which may be good but may be misused by evil men; so also Job and other men of power and insight, chose the path of final bliss rather than final misery (xxxviii. 27-64).

So also in the case of the final Messenger: his Gospel of Unity must triumph over all Jealousy and Arrogance in God's good time (xxxviii. 65-88).
1. Šād:⁴¹⁴⁶
   By the Qur-ān,
   Full of Admonition:⁴¹⁴⁷
   (This is the Truth).

2. But the Unbelievers
   (Are steeped) in Self-glory⁴¹⁴⁸
   And opposition.

3. How many generations
   Before them did We destroy?
   In the end they cried⁴¹⁴⁹
   (For mercy)—when
   There was no longer time
   For being saved!

⁴¹⁴⁶ Šād is a letter of the Arabic alphabet. It is used here as an Abbreviated Letter, for which see Appendix I (at the end of Sūra ii.). See also the second para, of n. 989 to vii. 1 for this particular letter. No dogmatism is permissible in trying to interpret Abbreviated Letters. This Sūra is concerned mainly with the stories of David and Solomon as illustrative of the relative positions of spiritual and worldly power. Sale's note: “it may stand for Solomon”: is a real howler: for in Arabic the letter Šād does not occur at all in the name of Solomon.

⁴¹⁴⁷ Full of admonition: the word zikr is far more comprehensive than any single word or phrase that I can think of in English: it implies (1) remembrance in a spirit of reverence; (2) recital, celebrating the praises of Allah; (3) teaching, admonition, warning; (4) Message, Revelation, as in Ah-lu-zikr, “those who possess the Message” (xvi. 43, and n. 2069). Devotional exercises are also called zikr, with reference to meaning (2) above.

⁴¹⁴⁸ The great root of Evil and Unbelief is Self-glory or Arrogance, as is pointed out in several places with regard to Satan; cf. below, xxxviii. 74-76. This leads to Envy and opposition or a desire to start a peculiar doctrine or sect of one’s own, instead of a desire to find common grounds of belief and life, which lead to the Religion of Unity of Allah. This teaching of Unity was what the Pagans objected to in the holy Prophet (verse 5 below).

⁴¹⁴⁹ Teaching, Warning, Signs have been given by Allah to all nations and at all times, and yet nations have rebelled and gone wrong and suffered destruction. If only later generations could learn that wrong-doing results in self-destruction! For the justice of Allah merely carries out the result of their own choice and actions. At any time during
4. So they wonder
   That a Warnor has come
   To them from among themselves.\(^{4150}\)
   And the Unbelievers say,
   "This is a scorcheree
   Telling lies!"

5. "Has he made gods\(^{4151}\)
   (All) into one God?
   Truly this is
   A strange thing!"

6. And the leaders among them
   Go away (impatiently), (saying),\(^{4152}\)
   "Walk ye away, and remain
   Constant to your gods!
   For this is truly
   A thing designed (against you)!

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= their probation they could repent and obtain mercy, but their “Self-glory and Separatism” stand in the way. Ultimately they do cry for a way of escape, but it is then too late.

4150. Their wonder is only stimulated. They are full of envy and spite against one of themselves who has been chosen by Allah to be His Messenger, and they vent their spite by making all sorts of false accusations. The man who was pre-eminent for truth and conscientious consideration, they call “a sorcerer and a liar”!

4151. And what is the offence of the Messenger of Unity? That he has made all their fantastic gods disappear; that in place of chaos he has brought harmony; that in place of conflict he brings peace! It is a wonderful thing, but not in the sarcastic sense in which the Unbelievers scoff at it!

4152. When the message of Islam was being preached in its infancy, and the Preacher and his followers were being persecuted by the Pagans, one of the devices adopted by the Pagan leaders was to get the Prophet’s uncle Abū Ta‘līb to denounce or renounce his beloved nephew. A conference was held with Abū Ta‘līb for this purpose. On its failure the leaders walked away, and began to discredit the great movement by falsely giving out that it was designed against their personal influence, and to throw power into the hands of the Prophet. Ḥadhrat ‘Umar’s conversion occurred in the sixth year of the Mission (seventh year before the Hijrat). The circumstances connected with it (see Introduction to S. xx.) greatly alarmed the Quraish chiefs, who, greedy of autocracy themselves, confused the issue by accusing the righteous Preacher of plotting against their power.
7. “We never heard (the like)
   Of this in the last religion. This is nothing but
   A made-up tale!”

8. “What! Has the Message
    Been sent to him? (Of all persons) among us?...
    But they are in doubt
    Concerning My (own) Message!
    Nay, they have not yet
    Tasted My Punishment!

9. Or have they the Treasures
    Of the Mercy of thy Lord,
    The Exalted in Power,
    The Grantor of Bounties
    Without measure?

10. Or have they the dominion
    Of the heavens and the earth
    And all between? If so,
    Let them mount up.

4153. ‘Whatever may have been the case in the past’, they said, ‘our own immediate ancestors worshipped these idols in Makkah and why should we give them up?’ Self-complacency was stronger with them than Truth; and so they call Truth “a made-up tale”!

4154. Here comes in envy. ‘If a Message had to come, why should it come to him, the orphan son of ‘Abdullah, and not to one of our own great men?’

4155. They have no clear idea of how Allah’s Message comes! It is not a worldly thing to be given to any one. It is a divine thing requiring spiritual preparation. If they close their eyes to it now, it will be brought home to them when they taste the consequences of their folly!

4156. If they set themselves to judge Allah, have they anything to show comparable to Allah’s Mercy and Power! He has both in infinite measure. Who are they to question the grant of His Mercy and Revelation to His own Chosen One?

4157. Weak and puny creatures though they are, they dare to raise their heads against the Omnipotent, as if they had dominion over Creation and not He! If they had any power, let them mount up to heaven and use all the means they have to that end, and see how they can frustrate Allah’s Purpose!
With the ropes and means
(To reach that end)!

11. They are but
A host of confederates
And they will be
Put to flight.\(^{4158}\)

12. Before them (were many
Who) rejected messengers,—\(^{4159}\)
The People of Noah,
And ‘Ad, and Pharaoh
The Lord of Stakes,\(^{4160}\)

13. And Thamūd, and the People
Of Lūt, and the Companions!\(^{4161}\)
Of the Wood;—such were
The Confederates.\(^{4162}\)

14. Not one (of them) but
Rejected the messengers,
But My Punishment
Came justly and inevitably\(^{4163}\)
(On them).

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4158. Of course they cannot frustrate Allah’s Purpose. In that world—they will be ignominiously routed, even if they form the strongest confederacy of the Powers of Evil that ever could combine. Cf. the last clause of verse 13 below.

4159. In their day, Noah’s contemporaries, or the ‘Ad and the Thamūd, so frequently mentioned, or Pharaoh the mighty king of Egypt, or the people to whom Lot was sent (cf. xxxvii. 75-82; vii. 65-73; vii. 103-137; vii. 80-84) were examples of arrogance and rebellion against Allah: they rejected the divine Message brought by their messengers, and they all came to an evil end. Will not their posterity learn their lesson?

4160. The title of Pharaoh, “Lord of the Stakes”, denotes power and arrogance, in all or any of the following ways: (1) the stake makes a tent firm and stable, and is a symbol of firmness and stability; (2) many stakes mean a large camp and a numerous army to fight; (3) impaling with stakes was a cruel punishment resorted to by the Pharaohs in arrogant pride of power.

4161. Companions of the Wood; see xv. 78, and n. 2000.

4162. Cf. above, verse 11, and n. 4158.

4163. Cf. xv. 64, n. 1990; and xxii. 18.
SECTION 2.

15. These (to-day) only wait
For a single mighty Blast,\(^{4164}\)
Which (when it comes)
Will brook no delay.\(^{4165}\)

16. They say: “Our Lord!
Hasten to us our sentence\(^{4166}\)
(Even) before the Day
Of Account!”

17. Have patience at what they
Say, and remember Our Servant
David, the man of strength:\(^{4167}\)
For he ever turned (in repentance
to Allah).

18. It was We that made
The hills declare,\(^{4168}\)

\(^{4164}\) Cf. xxxvi. 29, n. 3973.

\(^{4165}\) Fawaq: delay, the interval between one milking of a she-camel, and another, either to give her a breathing space or to give her young time to suck,–or perhaps the milker to adjust his fingers. Such interval will be quite short. The derived meaning is that when the inevitable just punishment for sin arrives, it will not tarry, but do its work without delay.

\(^{4166}\) Cf. xxvi. 204 and n. 3230. Those who do not believe in the Hereafter say ironically: “Let us have our punishment and sentence now: why delay it?” The last verse and the next verse supply the commentary. As to those who mock, they will find out the truth soon enough, when it is too late for repentance or mercy. As to the prophets of Allah, who are mocked, they must wait patiently for Allah to fulfil His Plan: even men who had worldly strength and power, like David had to exercise infinite patience when mocked by their contemporaries.

\(^{4167}\) David was a man of exceptional strength, for even as a raw youth, he slew the Philistine giant Goliath. See ii. 249-252, and notes 286-87. Before that fight, he was mocked by his enemies and chidden even by his own elder brother. But he relied upon Allah, and won through, and afterwards became king.

\(^{4168}\) See n. 2733 to xxii. 79. All nature sings in unison and celebrates the praises of Allah. David was given the gift of music and psalmody, and therefore the hills and birds are expressed as singing Allah’s praises in unison with him. The special hours when the hills and groves echo the songs of birds are in the evening and at dawn, when also the birds gather together, for those are respectively their roosting hours and the hours of their concerted flight for the day.
In unison with him,
Our Praises, at eventide
And at break of day,

19. And the birds gathered
(In assemblies): all with him
Did turn (to Allah).\(^\text{4169}\)

20. We strengthened his kingdom,
And gave him wisdom
And sound judgment\(^\text{4170}\)
In speech and decision.

21. Has the Story of
The Disputants reached thee?\(^\text{4171}\)
Behold, they climbed over
The wall of the private chamber;

22. When they entered
To David,\(^\text{4172}\)
And he was terrified
Of them, they said:
"Fear not: we are two
Disputants, one of whom
Has wronged the other:
Decide now between us
With truth, and treat us not

4169. Note the mutual echo between this verse and verse 17 above. The Arabic
awwāb is common to both, and it furnishes the rhyme or rhythm of the greater part of
the Sūra, thus echoing the main theme: 'Turn to Allah in Prayer and Praise, for that
is more than any worldly power or wisdom.'

4170. Cf. n. 2732 to xxi. 79 for David’s sound judgment in decisions; he could also
express himself aptly.

4171. This story or Parable is not found in the Bible, unless the vision here described
be considered as equivalent to Nathan’s parable in II Samuel, xi, and xii. Baidhāwī would
seem to favour that view, but other Commentators reject it. David was a pious man, and
he had a well-guarded private chamber (mīhrāb) for Prayer and Praise.

4172. David used to retire to his private chamber at stated times for his devotions.
One day, suddenly, his privacy was invaded by two men, who had obtained access by
climbing over a wall. David was frightened at the apparition. But they said: "We have
come to seek thy justice as king: we are brothers, and we have a quarrel, which we wish
thee to decide."
23. “This man is my brother.”
He has nine and ninety
Ewes, and I have (but) one:
Yet he says, ‘Commit her
To my care,’ and he overcame me
In the argument.

24. (David) said: “He has
Undoubtedly wronged thee
In demanding thy (single) ewe
To be added to his (flock
Of) ewes: truly many
Are the Partners (in business)
Who wrong each other:
Not so do those who believe
And work deeds of righteousness,
And how few are they?”...  
And David gathered that We
Had tried him: he asked

4173. The brother who was most aggrieved said: “This my brother has a flock of
ninety-nine sheep, and I have but one; yet he wants me to give up my one sheep to
his keeping; and moreover he is not even fair-spoken. He talks like one meditating
mischief, and he has not even the grace to ask as an equal, or one sharing in a business
or an inheritance. What shall I do?”

4174. The circumstances were mysterious; the accusation was noval; it was not clear
why the unjust brother should also have come with the complainant, risking his life in
climbing the wall to evade the guard, and he certainly said nothing. David took them
literally, and began to preach about the falsehood and the fraud of men, who should be
content with what they have, but who always covet more.

4175. Especially, said David, is it wrong for brothers or men in partnership to take
advantage of each other; but how few are the men who are righteous? He had in his
mind his own devotion and justice. But lo and behold! the men disappeared as
mysteriously as they had come. It was then that David realised that the incident had been
a trial or temptation—a test of his moral or spiritual fibre! Great though he was as a king,
and just though he was as a judge, the moment that he thought of these things in self-
pride, his merit vanished. In himself he was as other men: it was Allah’s grace that gave
him wisdom and justice, and he should have been humble in the sight of Allah.
Forgiveness of his Lord,\textsuperscript{4176}  
Fell down, bowing  
(In prostration), and turned  
(To Allah in repentance).\textsuperscript{4176.A}

25. So We forgave him  
This (lapse): he enjoyed,  
Indeed, a Near Approach to Us,  
And a beautiful Place  
Of (final) Return.

26. O David! We did indeed  
Make thee a vicegerent\textsuperscript{4177}  
On earth: so judge thou  
Between men in truth (and justice):  
Nor follow thou the lust  
(Of thy heart), for it will  
Mislead thee from the Path\textsuperscript{4178}

\textsuperscript{4176.} Judged by ordinary standards, David had done no wrong; he was a good and just king. Judged by the highest standard of those nearest to Allah (\textit{Muqarrabūn}, lvi. 11), the thought of self-pride and self-righteousness had to be washed off from him by his own act of self-realisation and repentance. This was freely accepted by Allah, as the next verse shows.

\textsuperscript{4176-A.} Some commentators say that David's fault here was his hastiness in judging before hearing the case of the other party. When he realised his lapse, he fell down in repentance.

\textsuperscript{4177.} Cf. ii. 30, and n. 47. David's kingly power, and the gifts of wisdom, justice, psalmody, and prophethood were bestowed on him as a trust. These great gifts were not to be a matter of self-glory.

\textsuperscript{4178.} As stated in n. 1471 above, this vision and its moral are nowhere to be found in the Bible. Those who think they see a resemblance to the Parable of the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel, xii. 1-12) have nothing to go upon but the mention of the "one ewe" here and the "one little ewe-lamb" in Nathan's Parable. The whole story is here different, and the whole atmosphere is different. The Biblical title given to David, "a man after God's own heart" is refuted by the Bible itself in the scandalous tale of heinous crimes attributed to David in chapters xi and xii. of 2 Samuel, \textit{viz.}, adultery, fraudulent dealing with one of his own servants, and the contriving of his murder. Further, in chapter xiii, we have the story of rapes, incest, and fratricide in David's own household! The fact is that passages like those are mere \textit{chroniques scandaleuses}, \textit{i.e.}, narratives of scandalous crimes of the grossest character. The Muslim idea of David is that of a man just and upright, endowed with all the virtues, in whom even the least thought of self-elation has to be washed off by repentance and forgiveness.
Of Allah: for those who
Wander astray from the Path
Of Allah, is a Chastisement
Grievous,
For that they forget
The Day of Account.

SECTION 3.

27. Not without purpose did We\textsuperscript{4179}
Create heaven and earth
And all between! That
Were the thought of Unbelievers!
But woe to the Unbelievers
Because of the Fire (of Hell)!

28. Shall We treat those
Who believe and work deeds\textsuperscript{4180}
Of righteousness, the same
As those who do mischief
On earth? Shall We treat
Those who guard against evil,
The same as those who
Turn aside from the right?

29. (Here is) a Book which
We have sent down

\textsuperscript{4179} Cf. iii. 191. Unbelief is the subjective negation of a belief in Order, Beauty, Purpose, and Eternal Life. Unbelief is to Faith as Chaos is to Cosmos, as the Fire of Misery is to the Garden of Bliss.

\textsuperscript{4180} The reference to the Hereafter at the end of verse 26 above is of a piece with the whole tenor of this Sûra, which deals with the superiority of the spiritual kingdom and the Hereafter. If there were no Hereafter, how could you reconcile the inequalities of this world? Would not the Unbelievers be right in acting as if all Creation and all life were futile? But there is a Hereafter and Allah will not treat the Good and Evil alike. He is just and will fully restore the balance disturbed in this life.
Unto thee, full of blessings,\(^{4181}\)
That they may meditate
On its Signs, and that
Men of understanding may
Receive admonition.

30. To David We bestowed
Solomon (for a son),\(^{4182}\)
How excellent is the servant!
Ever did he turn (to Us in
repentance)!

31. Behold, there were brought\(^{4183}\)
Before him, at eventide,
Courser of the highest breeding,\(^{4184}\)
And swift of foot;

32. And he said, "Truly
Do I prefer wealth\(^{4185}\)

\(^{4181}\) Revelation is not a mere chance or haphazard thing. It is a real blessing—among the greatest that Allah has bestowed on man. By meditation on it in an earnest spirit man may learn of himself, and his relation to nature around him and to Allah the Author of all. Men of understanding may, by its help, resolve all genuine doubts that there may be in their minds, and learn the true lessons of spiritual life.

\(^{4182}\) The greatest in this life have yet need of this spiritual blessing: without it all worldly good is futile. Referring back to the story of David, we are now introduced to Solomon, who was a great king but greater still because he served Allah and turned to Him. The Qur-an, unlike the old Testament, represents Solomon as a righteous king, not as an idolater, doing "evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings. xi. 6).

\(^{4183}\) The passages about David and Solomon have been variously interpreted by the Commentators. The versions which I have suggested have good authority behind them, though I have followed my own judgment in filling in the details.

\(^{4184}\) Ṣāfīnāt: literally, horses that stand, when at ease, on three legs, firmly planted, with the hoof of the fourth leg resting lightly on the ground. This would imply breeding and a steady temper, to match with their quality of swiftness mentioned in the next clause.

\(^{4185}\) The story is not found in the Old Testament. I interpret it to mean that, like his father David, Solomon was also most meticulous in not allowing the least motive of self to be mixed up with his spiritual virtues. He was fond of horses; he had great armies and wealth; but he used them all in Allah’s service. Cf. xxvii. 19. n. 3259; xxvii. 40. n. 3276, etc. His battles were not fought for lust of blood, but as jihāds in the cause of
To the remembrance of my Lord.”
Until (the sun) was hidden
In the veil (of Night).  

33. “Bring them back to me.”
Then began he to pass
His hand over (their) legs
And their necks.

34. And We did try
Solomon: We placed
On his throne a body
But he did turn
(To Us in true devotion):

righteousness. His love of horses was not like that of a mere race-goer or of a warrior:
there was a spiritual element in it. He loved by a kind of love which was spiritual,—the
love of the highest Good.

Some commentators interpret this verse saying that Soloman, peace be upon him, was
so engrossed in the inspection of his fine horses that he completely forgot to say his ‘Asr
prayer before the sunset’.

4186. His review of his fine horses was interrupted by his evening devotions, but he
resumed it after his devotions.

4187. Like all lovers of horses, he patted them on their necks and passed his hands
over their fore-legs and was proud of having them—not as vanities but as a “lover of
Good”.

4188. What was the trial of Soloman? All the power, wealth, and glory, which were
given to him were a spiritual trial to him. They might have turned another man’s head,
but he was staunch and true, and while he enjoyed and used all the power he had—over
the jinns, men, and the forces of nature, (see below), he kept his mind steady to the
service of Allah. Cf. viii. 28, where “your possessions and your porgeny” are declared
to be “but a trial”.

4189. **“The body on his throne** has been variously interpreted. The interpretation
that appeals more is the following:

Sulaiman was at his utmost height of power and glory. Allah Ta’ala tested him with a severe illness during which he was no
more than a lifeless body on his throne. He came to realize how
weak and powerless he was in the eyes of Allah. In this state of
weakness and misery he turned to Allah with humility and
humbleness.
35. He said, “O my Lord! Forgive me, and grant me A Kingdom which, Will not belong to Another after me: For Thou art the Grantor Of Bounties (without measure).

36. Then We subjected the Wind To his power, to flow Gently to his order, Whithersoever he willed,—

37. As also the Satans, (Including) every kind Of builder and diver,—

38. As also others bound Together in fetters.

39. “Such are Our Bounties: Whether thou bestow them (On others) or withhold them, No account will be asked.”

4190. The seeking of worldly Power, even if intended to be used for Allah’s service, has a little of Self in it. It may be quite legitimate and even meritorious in ordinary men, but even the thought of it in a Prophet is to be apologised for. See a similar idea in the case of David explained in n. 4176 to xxxviii. 24 above.

4191. He asked for a Power that he would not misuse, though others might not be able to refrain from misusing it,—such as power over forces of nature or forces of violence (see the next three verses).

4192. Cf. xxxviii. 9 above.

4193. Cf. xxi. 81, and n. 2736.

4194. Cf. xxi. 82, and n. 2738. Cf. also xxxiv. 12-13 and notes there: in the latter passage the spirits mentioned are called Jinns. The divers were probably those employed in pearl-fisheries.

4195. Cf. xiv. 49, where the same expression “bound together in fetters” is applied to Sinners on the Day of Judgment.

4196. Allah bestowed such abundant powers and bounties on Solomon that they could not be counted or measured: and he was free to give away anything he liked or keep anything he liked. In this was great temptation for an ordinary man. Solomon as —
40. And he enjoyed, indeed, a near approach to us, and a beautiful place of (final) return.

SECTION 4.

41. Commemorate our servant Job, behold he cried to his Lord: “Satan has afflicted me with distress and suffering!”

42. “Strike with thy foot: here is (water) wherein to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink.”

43. And we gave him (back) his people and doubled their number, as a grace from us, and a thing for commemoration, for all who have understanding.

4197. The same words are used of David in xxxviii. 25 above, thus symmetrically closing the argument about the two greatest kings in Israel.

4198. For this passage, verses 41-44, Cf. xxi. 83-84.

4199. The distress was of many kinds. See n. 2739 to xxi. 83. He suffered from loathsome sores; he lost his home, his possessions, and his family; and almost his balance of mind. But he did not lose faith but turned to Allah (see verse 44 below), and the recuperative process began.

4200. The recuperative process having begun, he was commanded to strike the earth or a rock with his foot, and a fountain or fountains gushed forth, to give him a bath and clean his body; to refresh his spirits; and to give him drink and rest. This is a fresh touch, not mentioned in S. xxi. or in the Book of Job, but adding beautifully to our realisation of the picture.

4201. Cf. xxi. 84, and notes 2739-2740.
44. "And take in thy hand
A little grass, and strike
Therewith: and break not
(Thy oath)." Truly We found
Him full of patience and constancy.
How excellent is the servant!
Ever did he turn (to Us)!

45. And commemorate Our Servants
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Possessors of Power and Vision.

46. Verily We did choose them
For a special (purpose)—
The remembrance
Of the Hereafter.

47. They were, in Our sight,
Truly, of the company
Of the Elect and the Good.

4202. In his worst distress Job was patient and constant in faith, but apparently his wife was not. According to the Book of Job (ii. 9-10), "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." He must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant.

4203. Cf. xxxviii. 30 above, where similar words are spoken of Solomon. Patience and constancy are also a form of service, if our attitude is due to an active faith in Allah, and not mere passivity. So Milton in his Sonnet: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

4204. In the last Sūra (xxxvii. 83-113). Abraham and Isaac (and by implication Jacob) were mentioned as resisting Evil and winning through. Here they are mentioned as men with spiritual power and vision. Israelite patriarchs, who bore witness to the Gospel of the Hereafter, and were therefore a blessing to their people, for they taught the Truth.
48. And commemorate Ismā’il,⁴²⁰⁵
   Elisha, and Zul-Kifl:
   Each of them was
   Of the company of the Good.

49. This is a Message
   (Of admonition): and verily,
   For the Righteous,⁴²⁰⁶
   Is a beautiful place
   Of (final) Return,—

50. Gardens of Eternity,
   Whose doors will (ever)
   Be open to them,⁴²⁰⁷

51. Therein will they
   Recline (at ease);
   Therein can they
   Call (at pleasure)
   For fruit in abundance,⁴²⁰⁸
   And (delicious) drink;

52. And beside them will be
   Chaste women restraining⁴²⁰⁹

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⁴²⁰⁵. Ismā’il, the Patriarch of the Arab race, was also mentioned (xxxvii. 101-107) as a pattern of self-sacrifice; now he is mentioned in the company of the Good, i.e., of those who were a blessing to their people. Here he is bracketed with Elisha (for whom see n. 906 to vi. 86), and Zul-Kifl (for whom see n. 2743 to xxi. 85). All these three were examples of constancy and patience under suffering.

⁴²⁰⁶. Some of the pre-eminent examples of the Elect and the Good having been mentioned, we have now a reference to the Righteous as a body (rank and file as well as leaders) and their future in the Hereafter as won by victory over Evil.

⁴²⁰⁷. The Final Bliss will not be a hole-and-corner thing, a pale reflection of some Palace or Retreat, where mystery reigns behind closed doors. Its doors will be open, and its inmates will be free to go in and out as they will, because their wills will be purified and brought into accord with the Universal Law.

⁴²⁰⁸. See n. 4003 to xxxvi. 57.

⁴²⁰⁹. Cf. xxxvii. 48 and n. 4064, and xxxvi. 56, n. 4002. As we conceive happiness in this life, it is not complete if it is only solitary. How we hanker after some one who can share in our highest joy! That feeling is also figured here.
Their glances, (companions)  
Of equal age.⁴²¹⁰

53. Such is the Promise  
Made to you  
For the Day of Account!

54. Truly such will be  
Our Bounty (to you);  
It will never fail;—  

55. Yea, such! But—  
For the wrong-doers  
Will be an evil place⁴²¹¹  
Of (final) Return!—

56. Hell!—they will burn  
Therein,—an evil bed  
(Indeed, to lie on)!—⁴²¹²

57. Yea, such!—Then  
Shall they taste it,—  
A boiling fluid, and a fluid⁴²¹³  
Dark, murky, intensely cold!—

58. And other Penalties  
Of a similar kind,  
To match them!

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⁴²¹⁰. To make the social happiness complete, we want companionship of equal age. Age and youth cannot be happy together. It is not suggested that in the Timeless state figured here, there will be old age; but if it is possible to conceive of temperamental differences then, the company will be so arranged that it will be congenial. Or we can accept the type of youth and freshness as common to all in that happy state.

⁴²¹¹. This is in parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed in xxxviii. 49 above.

⁴²¹². Cf. xiv. 29. This continues the parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed already described.

⁴²¹³. Cf. x. 4, and n. 1390. The conjunction of the boiling fluid with the dark, murky, intensely cold fluid heightens the effect of the Penalty. In place of harmony, there is the discord of extreme opposites. And the discord is not confined to this; it runs through the whole idea of Hell. See the next verse.
59. Here is a troop
    Rushing headlong with you!\(^{4214}\)
    No welcome for them!
    Truly, they shall burn
    In the Fire!

60. (The followers shall cry
    To the misleaders:)
    "Nay, ye (too)! No welcome
    For you! It is ye who
    Have brought this upon us!\(^{4215}\)
    Now evil is (this) place
    To stay in!"

61. They will say: "Our Lord!
    Whoever brought this upon us,—
    Add to him a double\(^{4216}\)
    Chastisement in the Fire!"

62. And they will say:
    How is it with us:
    That we see not men
    Who we used to number
    Among the bad ones?\(^ {4217}\)

63. "Did we treat them
    (As such) in ridicule,

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\(^{4214}\) The wonder is that so many people should embrace Evil, and in so much hurry and eagerness! Here they may be welcomed by the leaders of Evil, but in the final state it will be the opposite of welcome. They will be followed with reproaches and curses.

\(^{4215}\) It is the nature of Evil to shift the blame on to others. The followers will reproach the leaders, but none can escape personal responsibility for his own acts and deeds!

\(^{4216}\) Cf. vii. 38, and n. 1019. See also xi. 20. The evil ones now vent their spite on others. Here they ask for a double penalty for their misleaders, but they forget their own personal responsibility. In the next verse, they express their surprise that others have escaped the torments, which they themselves have earned!

\(^{4217}\) The bad ones: i.e., the ones whom they (evil ones) ridiculed as fools sure to come to an evil end, because they refused to join in with the evil ones in their plots. The values are now reversed. The good ones are among the Blessed, and are not to be seen in the "Bed of Misery". The ridicule is now against the evil ones.
64. That is true.

The mutual recriminations
Of the People of the Fire!

SECTION 5.

65. Say: “Truly am I
A Warner: no god
Is there but Allah,
The One, Supreme and
Irresistible.

66. “The Lord of the heavens
And the earth, and all
Between,–Exalted in Might,
Ever-Forgiving.

67. Say: “That is a Tremendous
Tidings.

68. “From which ye
Do turn away!”

4218. The mutual recriminations and spite are themselves a part of the Penalty, for such feelings increase their unhappiness.

4219. Cf. xii. 39, where Joseph preaches to the men in prison. The one supreme Message of importance to mankind was (and is) the Unity of Allah: that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all: that His Will is supreme; that He can carry out His Will without question, and no powers of Evil can defeat it; and that He forgives by His grace again and again. This Message the holy Prophet came to deliver, and he delivered it.

4220. In n. 2818 to xxii. 40, I have explained the full import of ‘Aziz as a title applied to Allah, and I have expressed two of the leading ideas involved, in the two lines here. The argument in this Sūra turns upon the contrast between earthly Power and the Divine Power: the one is impotent and the other is supreme.

4221. Gaffūr is the emphatic intensive form, and I have accordingly translated it as “forgiving again and again”. Cf. xx. 82.

4222. The Message which is of supreme import to mankind–from that they turn away. Instead of profiting by it, they turn away to side issues, or unprofitable speculation: such as: what is the origin of Evil; when will Judgment come? etc.
69. "No knowledge have I
Of the Exalted Chiefs,
When they discuss
(Matters) among themselves."\(^{4223}\)

70. "Only this has been revealed
To me: that I am
To give warning
Plainly and publicly."\(^{4224}\)

71. Behold, thy Lord said\(^{4225}\)
To the angels: "I am
About to create man
From clay."\(^{4226}\)

72. "When I have fashioned him
And breathed
Into him of My spirit,\(^ {4227}\)
Fall ye down in prostration
Unto him."

73. So the angels prostrated themselves,
All of them together:

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\(^{4223}\) The hierarchy of angels in Heaven, discuss questions of high import in the Universe. Those are not necessarily revealed to men, except in so far as it is good for men to know, as in verses 71-85 below. But the chief thing for man is to know that Allah is Most Merciful, that He forgives again and again, and that Evil has no power over those who trust in Allah.

\(^{4224}\) Two things are implied in Mubin: (1) that the warning should be clear and perspicuous; there should be no mincing of matters, no ambiguity, no compromise with evil, vii. 184; (2) that the warning should be delivered publicly, before all people, in spite of opposition and persecution, xxvi. 115. Both these ideas I have tried to express in this passage.

\(^{4225}\) Two passages may be compared with this: viz.: (1) ii. 30-39, where merely the first stages of the Rebellion against Allah and its consequences to mankind are mentioned, and (2) xv. 29-40, where the further intrusion of evil in man’s life here below is referred to, and an assurance is given that Evil will have no power except over those who yield to it. The latter is the passage most relevant here, as we are now dealing with the spiritual power of Revelation to defeat the machinations of Evil.

\(^{4226}\) This shows that the material world round us was created by Allah before Allah fashioned man and breathed of His soul into him. Geology also shows that man came on the scene at a very late stage in the history of this planet.

\(^{4227}\) See n. 1968 to xv. 29, where the spiritual significance of this is explained.
74. Not so Iblis: he
   Was haughty, and became\textsuperscript{4228}
   One of those who reject Faith.

75. (Allah) said: “O Iblis!
   What prevents thee from
   Prostrating thyself to one
   Whom I have created
   With My hands?\textsuperscript{4229}
   Art thou haughty?
   Or art thou one\textsuperscript{4230}
   Of the high (and mighty) ones?

76. (Iblis) said: “I am better
   Than he: Thou creatdest
   Me from fire, and him
   Thou creatdest from clay.”

77. (Allah) said: “Then get thee
   Out from here: for thou
   Art rejected, accursed.

78. “And My Curse shall be
   On thee till the Day\textsuperscript{4231}
   Of Judgment.”

79. (Iblis) said: “O my Lord!
   Give me then respite\textsuperscript{4232}
   Till the Day
   The (dead) are raised.”

\textsuperscript{4228} Arrogance (self-love) is thus the root of Evil and of Unfaith.

\textsuperscript{4229} Man, as typified by Adam, is in himself nothing but frail clay. But as fashioned
   by Allah’s creative power into something with Allah’s spirit breathed into him, his dignity
   is raised above that of the highest creatures.

\textsuperscript{4230} If, then, Satan refuses, it is a rebellion against Allah. It arises from arrogance
   or haughtiness, an exaggerated idea of Self. Or, it is asked, are you really sufficiently
   high in rank to dispute with the Almighty? Of course he was not.

\textsuperscript{4231} See n. 1972 to xv. 35, where it is explained why the respite is to the Day of
   Judgment. The whole of that passage in S. xv. forms a good commentary on this.

\textsuperscript{4232} For the significance of the respite see n. 1973 to xv. 36.
80. (Allah) said: “Respite then
Is granted thee—
81. “Till the Day
Of the Time Appointed.” 4233
82. (Iblis) said: “Then,
By Thy Power, 4234 I will
Lead them all astray. 4235
83. “Except Thy Servants
Amongst them, sincere
And purified (by Thy grace).”
84. (Allah) said:
“This is the Truth,
And the Truth
I say. 4236
85. “That I will certainly fill 4237
Hell with thee
And those that follow thee,—
Every one.”

4233. It is not an indefinite respite. It is for a period definitely limited, while this
our Probation lasts in this world. It is part of the test as to how we use our limited free-
will. After that, our whole existence will be on a different plane. The good will have
been sorted out, the chain of consequences of the present world will be broken, and “a
new Creation” will have taken the place of the present World.

4234. This phrase, this oath of Satan, is a fresh point introduced in this passage,
because here we are dealing with Power—the Power of Good contrasted with Evil,—the
Power of Allah as contrasted with the power that we see in our earthly affairs. Satan
acknowledges that even his Power, such as it is, has no reality except in so far as it is
permitted to operate by Allah in Allah’s wise and universal Plan, and that it cannot harm
the true and sincere worshippers of Allah.

4235. See n. 1974 to xv. 39.
4236. Cf. n. 1990 to xv. 64.
4237. Cf. vii. 18; vii. 179; and xi. 119, n. 1623. The punishment of defiance,
disobedience, and rebellion is inevitable and just, and the followers who chose to identify
themselves with the disobedience must suffer as well as the leaders. Cf. x. 33.
86. Say: "No reward do I ask \(^{4238}\) Of you for this (Qur-\(\text{\textperiodcentered}\)), Nor am I a pretender. \(^{4239}\)

87. "This is no less than A Reminder to (all) \(^{4240}\) The Worlds.

88. "And ye shall certainly Know the truth of it (all) \(^{4241}\) After a while."

\(^{4238}\) Cf. xxv. 57; xxvi. 109; and many other passages. The prophet of Allah neither seeks nor expects any reward from men. On the contrary he suffers much at their hands. He is unselfish and offers his services under Allah's inspiration. He is satisfied with the hope "that each one who will may take a straight Path to his Lord." That is his reward. And the reward he hopes for from Allah is similarly unselfish. He earnestly hopes to win His Good Pleasure i.e. "to see His Face."

\(^{4239}\) Mutakallif: a man who pretends to things that are not true, or declares as facts things that do not exist, one who takes upon himself tasks to which he is not equal. True prophets are not people of that kind.

\(^{4240}\) So far from there being any false or selfish motive in the Message proclaimed in Revelation, it is a healing mercy to all mankind. More, it is in accord with all parts of Allah's Creation, and makes us kin with all Creation, the handiwork of the One True God.

\(^{4241}\) There may be many things which we in our "muddy vesture of decay" may not fully understand or take in. If we only follow the right Path, we shall arrive at the Goal in the Hereafter, and then everything will be clear to us.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Az-Zumar, 39.

This is the last of the series of six Sūras beginning with S. xxxiv., which deal with some aspects of the spiritual world, as leading up to the Ma'ād, or the Hereafter. See Introduction to S. xxxiv.

Its subject-matter is how Creation in its great variety is yet sorted out in Groups or Classes, all governed by one Plan, and created and sustained by One God, Who will separate Good from Evil at the last Day. The word zuimar occurs in verses 71 and 73.

It belongs to the later Makkah period.

Summary.—The variety in Creation yet points to unity of Plan: there is only One God: to Him is due all worship and from Him flow all Justice and Grace (xxxix. 1-21).

There is unity in Revelation, and guidance comes from Allah alone: turn to Him only, for all else is false (xxxix. 22-52).

Allah’s Mercy is all-embracing: despair not: seek it before it is too late: for Judgment and Justice will come for certain (xxxix. 53-75).
Az-Zumar, or the Groups.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. The revelation
   Of this Book
   Is from Allah,\(^{4242}\)
   The Exalted in Power,
   Full of Wisdom.

2. Verily it is We Who have
   Revealed the Book to thee
   In Truth: so serve Allah,
   Offering Him sincere devotion.

3. Is it not to Allah\(^{4243}\)
   That sincere devotion
   Is due? But those who
   Take for protectors others
   Than Allah (say): “We only
   Serve them in order that
   They may bring us nearer\(^{4244}\)
   To Allah.” Truly Allah
   Will judge between them
   In that wherein they differ.\(^{4245}\)

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4242. In connection with Revelation two qualities of Allah are mentioned: (1) that He is All-Powerful and can carry out His Will in spite of all opposition; and (2) that He is full of knowledge and wisdom. The first answers those who question how Allah can send Revelation to man; the second explains that true wisdom consists in carrying out Allah’s Will as revealed to us.

4243. In the many Signs in Creation as described below, there yet is a clear indication of the unity of Plan, pointing to the Unity of the Creator. Worship or service is due to none but Him. And He wants exclusive and sincere devotion.

4244. Worshippers of Idols or of deities other than Allah, e.g., saints or perhaps Wealth and Power, Science or Selfish Desire, may pretend that these are symbols that may get them nearer to their self-development, nearer to the goal of their life, nearer to Allah, but they are altogether on the wrong track.

4245. This departure of theirs from true worship, this divergence from the right way, produces endless disputations and sects. Allah will judge between them. But if they are determined to go after falsehoods and forget the gratitude and service which they owe to Allah, and Allah alone, they are putting themselves on a Path where they will get no guidance. They are cutting themselves off from revealed Truth.
4246. It is blasphemy to say that Allah begot a son. If that were true, He should have had a wife (vi. 101), and His son would have been of the same kind as Himself; whereas Allah is one, with no one else like unto Him (cxii. 4). Begetting is an animal act which goes with sex. How can it be consistent with our conception of One Who is above all Creatures? If such a blasphemous thought were possible, as that Allah wanted some one else to help Him, He could have chosen the best of His creatures instead of lowering Himself to an animal act. But glory to Allah! He is above such things! His Unity is the first thing that we have to learn about Him. As He is Omnipotent, He requires no creatures to help Him or bring other creatures to Him.

4247. Cf. vi. 73, and n. 896.

4248. His Power is equalled by His Mercy. Who can there be like unto Him?
6. He created you (all)
   From a single Person: \(^{4249}\)
   Then created, of like nature,
   His mate; and He
   Sent down for you eight head\(^{4250}\)
   Of cattle in pairs:
   He creates you,
   In the wombs
   Of your mothers,
   In stages, one after another,\(^{4251}\)
   In three veils of darkness.\(^{4252}\)
   Such is Allah, your Lord
   And Cherisher: to Him belongs
   (All) dominion. There is
   No god but He: then
   How are ye turned away\(^{4253}\)
   (From your true Lord)?

7. If ye reject (Allah),
   Truly Allah hath no need
   Of you; but He liketh not\(^{4254}\)
   Ingratitude from His servants:

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4249. Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504.

4250. See vi. 143-4, where four kinds of cattle are mentioned in pairs in connection with certain Arab superstitions which are there condemned. Here the same four kinds are mentioned as representative of domesticated cattle given by Allah as useful to man. These are sheep, goats, camels, and oxen. In Arab idiom the horse is not included among “cattle”.

For the wisdom and goodness of Allah in granting man dominion over cattle, see xxxvi. 71-73.

4251. See xxii. 5, where the gradual physical growth of man in several successive stages is mentioned as one of the Signs of Allah’s creative Power and cherishing care.

4252. The three veils of darkness which cover the unborn child are: the caul or membrane, the womb, and the hollow in which the womb is enclosed.

4253. It is clear that you owe your very existence and your maintenance, growth, and preservation, to Allah; How is it that you are turned away by chance things from Him?

4254. Allah is independent of all wants, and therefore man’s ingratitude does not affect Allah. But Allah cares for man, and therefore man’s gratitude and service earn Allah’s Good Pleasure, and man’s ingratitude and rebellion are displeasing to Allah.
If ye are grateful, He
Is pleased with you.
No bearer of burdens can bear of burden
Of another. In the End,
To your Lord is your Return,
When He will tell you
The truth of all
That ye did (in this life).
For He knoweth well
All that is in (men’s) hearts.

8. When some trouble toucheth man, He crieth unto his Lord,
Turning to Him in repentance:
But when He bestoweth A favour upon him
As from Himself, (man) Doth forget what he cried And prayed for before,
And he doth set up Rivals unto Allah,
Thus misleading others From Allah’s Path.

4255. Cf. vi. 164. The account is between you and Allah. No one else can take your burdens or carry your sins. Vicarious atonement would be unjust. You have to return to Allah in the Hereafter. You will find that He knows all that you did in this life, and its full significance. He will explain to you even better than you can understand yourself; because all your secret hidden motives, which you sometimes tried to ignore yourself, are fully known to Him.

4256. Cf. x. 12. Trouble and adversity often bring a man to his bearings. But if he is not firm and constant, he forgets the lessons which life is meant to teach him. As soon as he gets a little prosperity, he forgets that it is from Allah, and attributes it to something which may only be a secondary cause, e.g., his own efforts or the Powers of Nature, or something which he has invented and made into a god, e.g., idols or fate. Allah is the Ultimate Cause of all things. To set up rivals to him in this way is not only wrong and degrading to the false worshipper himself, but misleads countless ignorant people, who may not be able to make allowances for the figures of speech or the symbolism by which subtler minds can explain away falsehoods.
Say, “Enjoy thy disbelief”\textsuperscript{4257}
For a little while:
Verily thou art (one)
Of the Companions of the Fire!”

9. Is one who worships devoutly
During the hours of the night\textsuperscript{4258}
Prostrating himself or standing
(In adoration), who takes heed
Of the Hereafter, and who
Places his hope in the Mercy
Of his Lord—(like one
Who does not)? Say:
“Are those equal, those who know
And those who do not know?”
It is those who are
Endued with understanding
That receive admonition.\textsuperscript{4259}

SECTION 2.

10. Say: “O ye
My servants who believe!
Fear your Lord.\textsuperscript{4260}
Good is (the reward)
For those who do good
In this world.

4257. Those who practise and those who teach evil and blasphemy may seen to flourish in this world. But their satisfaction will be of very short duration. They are treading all the while the Path that leads to the Fire of Perdition.

4258. Cf. iii. 113-117. It is a great thing when a man gets into the attitude of humble devotion to Allah. To him the hereafter is a real thing, and he prepares for it with good works. He does not build his hopes on the vanities of this world, but on Allah’s Grace and Mercy. Such a man is “endued with understanding” and receives Allah’s Message with fervour and alacrity. He is not to be compared with the cynic or the unbeliever, who knows nothing of the real value of the inner life.

4259. Cf. iii. 19.

4260. The “fear of Allah” (\textit{Taqwā}) is explained in n. 26 to ii. 2. See also n. 2912 to xxiii. 60. The fear of Allah is akin to love, for it means that we are afraid to displease Him.
Spacious is Allah’s earth.\textsuperscript{4261}
Those who patiently persevere
Will truly receive
A reward without measure!”

11. Say: “Verily, I am commanded
To serve Allah
With sincere devotion;

12. “And I am commanded
To be the first\textsuperscript{4262}
Of those who submit
To Allah in Islam.”

13. Say: “I would, if I\textsuperscript{4263}
Disobeyed my Lord,
Indeed have fear
Of the Chastisement
Of a Mighty Day.”

14. Say: “It is Allah I serve,
With my sincere
(And exclusive) devotion:

15. “Serve ye what ye will\textsuperscript{4264}
Besides Him.” Say:
“Truly, those in loss

\textsuperscript{4261. Cf. xxix. 56 and n. 3489. We must always do right. We cannot plead that the circumstances in which we find ourselves force our hands. If our home conditions do not allow us to act according to the Faith that is in us, we must be prepared to suffer ostracism or even exile.}

\textsuperscript{4262. Cf. vi. 14. “The first” need not necessarily be chronological: it may also refer to the first rank in zeal, and in readiness to suffer for the Cause.}

\textsuperscript{4263. Cf. vi. 15. The worst penalty in a spiritual sense is the Displeasure of Allah, just as the highest achievement, the fulfilment of all desire, is the attainment of Allah’s Good Pleasure: vi. 16.}

\textsuperscript{4264. This is not a command or permission but a reproach and warning. The address of the Prophet of Allah may be paraphrased thus: ‘Whatever happens I will follow the command of Allah. He has revealed Himself, and I know that He is One, supreme over all creatures. Him alone will I serve. Is there any so ignorant as to seek anyone else? Let him do so and see the result. The loss will be his own. For he falls from Grace into Evil.’}
Are those who lose
Their own souls
And their people\(^{4265}\)
on the Day of Judgment:
Ah! that is indeed
The (real and) evident Loss!

16. They shall have Layers\(^{4266}\)
of Fire above them,
And Layers (of Fire)
Below them: with this
Doth Allah warn off\(^{4267}\)
His servants: "O My Servants!
Then fear ye Me!"

17. Those who eschew Taghut
And fall not into\(^{4268}\)
Its worship,—and turn
To Allah (in repentance),—
For them is Good News:
So announce the Good News
To My Servants,—

18. Those who listen
To the Word,

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4265. The cult of Evil results in the destruction of all that is best and most valuable in us, as well as poisons all the affections which link us to our families, friends, and people, in the Final Adjustment, which we call the Day of Judgment.

4266. The consequences of Sin when Judgment comes are aptly figured by Layers upon Layers of Fire, which hem in the sinners above and below. It is also suggested that the Layers, though of Fire, have something dark in them—the scorching quality of Sin.

4267. But Allah does not leave mankind without warning. Man has been granted a limited amount of free-will, and in order to help him in its right use, all the consequences of his action are clearly explained to him. To those who will listen to Reason are given arguments which can be apprehended by their own intelligence; to those who are swayed by affections and emotion, an appeal is made in the name of the love of Allah; to those who understand nothing but fear, the warning is conveyed by a portrayal of the dreadful consequences of wrong-doing.

4268. There is always the danger that Evil may seize us even if we approach it out of mere curiosity. If we take an interest in it we may become its worshippers or slaves. The wise man eschews it altogether, and so he enrols among the Servants of Allah, and gets the good news of His Mercy and Good Pleasure.
And follow
The best of it.\textsuperscript{4269}
Those are the ones
Who Allah has guided, and those
Are the ones endued
With understanding.

19. Is, then, one against whom
The decree of Punishment
Is justly due (equal
To one who eschews evil)?\textsuperscript{4270}
Wouldst thou, then, deliver
One (who is) in the Fire?

20. But it is for those
Who fear their Lord,
That lofty mansions,\textsuperscript{4271}
One above another,
Have been built:
Beneath them flow
Rivers: (such is)
The Promise of Allah:
Never doth Allah fail in
(His) promise.\textsuperscript{4272}

\textsuperscript{4269} The Commentators construe this clause in two alternative ways. (1) If “word” be taken as any word, the clause would mean that good men listen to all that is said and choose the best of it. (2) If “word” be taken to mean Allah’s Word, it would mean that they should listen reverently to it, and where permissive and alternative courses are allowed for those who are not strong enough to follow the higher course, those “endued with understanding” should prefer to attempt the higher course of conduct. For example, it is permitted (within limits) to punish those who wrong us, but the nobler course is to repel evil with good (xxiii. 96): we should try to follow the nobler course. I prefer the latter construction: it accords better with my interpretation of the last verse: see n. 4268.

\textsuperscript{4270} If a man is already steeped in sin and has rejected Allah’s Grace, how can we expect Revelation to work in his soul?

\textsuperscript{4271} Cf. xxix. 58, and xxxiv. 37. The idea of heaven here is that of a Home of sublimity and beauty, with a picturesque outlook, such as we would describe in this life by the type of a palace by gently-flowing streams. The mansions will also suggest generous space and architectural beauty, tiers upon tiers piled one upon another.

\textsuperscript{4272} Mr‘ād: the time, place, and manner of the fulfilment of a Promise. Allah’s promise will be fulfilled in all particulars better than we can possibly imagine.
21. Seest thou not that Allah
Sends down rain from
The sky, and leads it
Through springs in the earth? 4273
Then He causes to grow,
Therewith, produce of various
Colours: then it withers;
Thou wilt see it grow yellow;
Then He makes it
Dry up and crumble away.
Truly, in this, is
A Message of remembrance to
Men of understanding.

SECTION 3.

22. Is one whose heart
Allah has opened to Islam, 4274
So that he has received
Light from Allah,
(No better than one hard-hearted)?
Woe to those whose hearts

4273. The circuit of water, by which the rain falls from the clouds, is absorbed through the earth, and flows through rivers or underground streams to the sea, where it again rises as vapour and forms clouds, was explained in notes 3111-12 to xxv 53. Here our attention is drawn to one portion of the process. The rain fructifies the soil and the seeds. Produce of various kinds is raised. The harvest ripens and is gathered in. The plants wither, dry up, and crumble away. Men and animals are fed. And the circuit starts again in another season. Here is a Sign of the Grace and Goodness of Allah, clear to those who understand.

4274. Those who listen to Allah's Message find at each stage Allah's Grace helping them more and more to expand their spiritual understanding and to receive Allah's light, so that they travel farther and farther to their Goal in the Path of Truth and Righteousness. They are not to be compared to those who shut out Allah's Light from their hearts. See next note.
Are hardened against the remembrance\textsuperscript{4275}

Of Allah! They are manifestly wandering (in error)!

23. Allah has revealed (from time to time)
The most beautiful Message
In the form of a Book,
Consistent with itself,\textsuperscript{4276}
(Yet) repeating its teaching in various aspects):\textsuperscript{4277}
The skins of those who fear their Lord tremble\textsuperscript{4278}
Threat; then their skins and their hearts do soften
To the remembrance of Allah.

\textsuperscript{4275} Just as there is spiritual progress for those who seek Allah, so there is more and more spiritual retrogression for those who close their hearts to Allah. Their hearts get hardened, and they allow less and less Allah’s Grace to penetrate within. But it is obvious that they flounder on the Way, and cannot walk with the firm steps of those of assured Faith.

\textsuperscript{4276} Is Muashâbih here to be understood in the same sense as in iii. 77? See n. 347. The better opinion is that there is a slightly different shade of meaning here, as suggested by the context. In the earlier passage, it was opposed to Mu-kam: here it is contrasted or compared to Mathâni. The root meaning is: ‘having something similar; working by analogy or allegory, or parable; having its parts consistent with each other’. The last meaning I adopt here. The Qur’ân was revealed in parts at different times. And yet its parts all conform to each other. There is no contradiction or inconsistency anywhere.

\textsuperscript{4277} Mathâni: Cf. xv. 87, where we have translated “oft-repeated”: “the seven oft-repeated (verses)”. See n. 2008 to that passage. Here the meaning is similar, but the context gives a different colour to it, as is seen in the translation.

\textsuperscript{4278} The skin is the outer integument of the body. It receives the first shock from the impact of anything unusual, and it trembles and its hair stands on end under excitement. So in spiritual matters the first stimulation from Allah’s Message is external. Those who receive Faith do it as it were with tremor and not with apathy. But the next stage is that it penetrates their outer nature and goes right into their hearts. Their whole nature is “softened” to receive the beneficent Message, and it transforms them through and through.
Allah. Such is
The guidance of Allah;
He guides therewith
Whom He pleases, but such
As Allah leaves to stray,
Can have none to guide.

24. Is, then, one who
Has to ward off the brunt
Of the Chastisement on the Day
Of Judgment (and receive it)
By his face, (like one
Guarded therefrom)? It will
Be said to the wrong-doers:
“Taste ye (the fruits
Of) what ye earned!”

25. Those before them (also)
Rejected (revelation), and so
The Punishment came to them
From directions they did not
Perceive.

26. So Allah gave them
A taste of humiliation

4279. “Whom He pleases” and “leaves to stray” are explained fully in n. 2133 to xvi. 93. See also xiv. 4 and n. 1875.

4280. The unrepentant Sinners will receive the full Penalty on the Day of Judgment. They will receive it full in the face, i.e., their whole being will be affected by it. Their hands will be tied, and they cannot therefore use their hands to ward off the Penalty of the Fire: in any case their hands will not have the power to ward it off. Are such helpless people to be compared for a moment with people who have received Grace and are therefore guarded from all harm and danger? Certainly not. To the evil the fruit of their deed, and to the good the grace of their Lord!

4281. That is, of all their misdeeds, all the evil which they did in the world.

4282. Cf. xvi. 26. They will be punished from quarters or in ways they do not perceive. From their Unbelief and Rebellion they think they derive great advantages, but they suddenly find out, when too late, that that which they exulted in was the cause of their own undoing.
In the present life,\(^{4283}\)
But greater is the Punishment
Of the Hereafter,
If they only knew!

27. We have put forth
For men, in the Qur-ān
Every kind of Parable,\(^{4284}\)
In order that they
May receive admonition.

28. (It is) a Qur-ān
In Arabic,\(^{4285}\) without any
Crookedness (therein):\(^{4286}\)
In order that they
May guard against Evil.

29. Allah puts forth a Parable—
A man belonging to many\(^{4287}\)
Partners at variance with each other,
And a man belonging entirely

\(^{4283}\). Cf. ii. 114. Sin often brings disgrace and humiliation in this life, but the greater and truer punishment is in the Hereafter. But men often do not know the inwardness of this matter. If they flourish here for a time, they think they will escape the real consequences in the Hereafter. Or if they suffer little harm here, they think that will make up the Penalty, and they will escape the Hereafter. Both ideas are wrong.

\(^{4284}\). Men can only understand high spiritual truths by parables and similitudes and these are given abundantly in the Qur-ān. The object is, not merely to tell stories, but to teach lessons of spiritual wisdom.

\(^{4285}\). Previous revelations had been in other languages. Now the revelation was given in Arabia in Arabic itself, the language of the country which all could understand. And it is a beautiful language, straight and flexible, and fit to be the vehicle of sublime truths.

\(^{4286}\). See xviii. 1 and n. 2326. Cf. also vii. 45, n. 1024; and xix. 36, n. 2488.

\(^{4287}\). The difference between the creed of Polytheism and the Gospel of Unity is explained by the analogy of two men. One belongs to many masters; the masters disagree among themselves, and the poor man of many masters has to suffer from the quarrel of his many masters; it is an impossible and unnatural position. The other serves only one master, his master is good, and does all he can for his servant; the servant can concentrate his attention on his service; he is happy himself and his service is efficiently performed. Can there be any doubt as to (1) which of them is the happier, and (2) which of them is in a more natural position? No man can serve two, still less numerous, masters.
To one master: are those two
Equal in comparison?
Praise be to Allah! 4288
But most of them
Have no knowledge.

30. Truly thou wilt die 4289
(One day), and truly they
(Too) will die (one day).

31. In the End will ye
(All) dispute 4290 on the Day
Of Judgment,
In the presence of your Lord.

SECTION 4.

32. Who, then, doth more wrong
Than one who utters
A lie concerning Allah 4291
And rejects the Truth
When it comes to him!
Is there not in Hell 4292
An abode for the unbelievers?

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4288. Allah is praised that He has put us, not under gods many and lords many,
but has, out of His infinite Mercy, allowed us direct approach to Him, the One, the True,
the Eternal.

4289. Even the prophets are not exempt from bodily death, much less the righteous,
but they live in their beneficent work and the memories they leave behind them. All men
have to die, good and bad alike. But there is a life after death, and in that life all the
unexplained things about which people dispute in this world will be made clear in the
presence of Allah.

4290. See last note.

4291. When the creature deliberately adopts and utters falsehoods against his own
Creator, in spite of the Truth being brought, as it were, to his very door by Allah’s Signs,
what offence can we imagine more heinous than this? In Christian theology this is the
blasphemy “against the Holy Ghost” spoken of in Matt. xii. 31-32: “whosoever speaketh
a word against the Son of man”, (Christ), “it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever
speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world,
neither in the world to come”.

4292. Cf. iii. 151; xvi. 29.
33. And he who brings the Truth
   And he who confirms (And supports) it—such are
   The men who do right.

34. They shall have all
   That they wish, With their Lord:
   Such is the reward Of those who do good:

35. So that Allah will
   Remit from them
   (Even) the worst in their deeds And give them their reward
   According to the best
   Of what they have done.

36. Is not Allah enough For His servant? But

4293. This is true of the Prophet, and all Prophets of God and all righteous persons. Any one who preaches the Truth and brings home Allah’s Signs to men is performing the duty of a right and noble life. In this he confirms the teaching of all previous Prophets of Allah. Any one who supports and confirms such a teacher is also doing his duty and on the right way.

4294. At that stage their wills will have been purified. If an earthly king gives a decoration, how much greater is the honour when the investiture takes place by the king himself personally?

4295. The conjunction (lām in Arabic, translated “so that”) indicates here the results, not the purpose. Allah’s Reward is so bounteous, that if we truly and sincerely put our will into His keeping, He will remove the consequences not only of our minor faults but of the worst of our sins, and judge us according to the very best of our deeds.

4296. The righteous man will find Allah enough for all the protection he needs, all the rest and peace he craves for, and all the happiness he can imagine. If Satans wish to frighten him with false gods, he knows that that is mere superstition. In the case of idols to whom worship is paid, this is easily intelligible. But there are other false gods which men worship,—wealth, position, power, science, selfish desire, and so on. The idea may occur to them: “this is the right course, but what will men say?” or “shall I lose my case if I tell the truth?” or “will it ruin my chances if I denounce sin in high places?” All such false gods will only mislead and leave their victims in the lurch. The worship of them will lose them the Mercy of Allah, which wants to guide and comfort all who seek Allah.
They try to frighten thee
With other (gods) besides Him!
For such as Allah leaves
To stray, there can be
No guide.

37. And such as Allah doth
Guide there can be
None to lead astray.
Is not Allah Exalted
In Power,
Lord of Retribution?

38. If indeed thou ask them
Who it is that created
The heavens and the earth,
They would be sure to say,
"Allah". Say: "See ye then?
The things that ye invoke
Besides Allah,—can they,
If Allah wills some affliction
For me, remove His affliction
Or if He wills some Mercy
For me, can they keep back
His Mercy” Say: “Sufficient
Is Allah for me!

4297. On the other hand if any one holds fast to Allah’s Truth, nothing can mislead or betray him.

4298. Allah’s Power can protect, and will defeat all plots against His Will, as well as punish Evil when it gets beyond bounds.

4299. Cf. xxix. 61; also n. 2927 to xxiii. 85. Most worshippers of false gods are not either atheists or sceptics. They admit the existence of Allah but it has not come into their hearts and souls: it has not been translated into their lives. They run after false worship on account of ancestral custom or on account of their thoughtlessness or false environment, or on account of their own selfish desires or limited outlook. To them is addressed the argument: ‘Ultimately your false gods can do nothing for you: why not turn to the One True God, on Whom you depend, and Who can give you Grace and Mercy, Justice and Punishment?’

4300. Cf. xxxiii. 17.
In Him trust those
Who put their trust.” 4301

39. Say: “O my people!
Do whatever ye can:
I will do (my part): 4302
But soon will ye know—

40. “Who it is to whom
Comes a Chastisement 4303
Or ignominy, and on whom
Descends a Chastisement that
abides.”

41. Verily We have revealed
The Book to thee
In Truth, for (instructing)
mankind. 4304
He, then, that receives guidance
Benefits his own soul:
But he that strays
Injures his own soul.
Nor art thou set 4305
A Custodian
Over them.

4301. Cf. xii. 67 and xiv. 12. Allah alone is He Who will and can discharge any trust put in Him. All other things will fail. Therefore those who put their trust in anything should put their trust in Allah.

4302. Cf. xi. 121 and n. 1624-A.

4303. Cf. xi. 93. The two clauses, about those who suffer a Penalty of ignominy and those on whom descends a lasting Penalty, apparently refer to the same persons in two different aspects: (1) they suffer shame, and (2) their punishment endures.

4304. Revelation is sent by Allah through His messenger, but it is for all. It is given in order that men and women may be taught Righteousness. It is given in Truth: there is no pretence about it. It is for their own good. If they reject it and follow Evil, the loss is their own.

4305. Allah’s messengers do all they can to teach mankind. But they cannot force men’s wills. If men reject their teaching, the account of the rejecters is with Allah Cf. vi. 107 and n. 935.
SECTION 5.

42. It is Allah that takes
The souls (of men) at death; 4306
And those that die not
(He takes) during their sleep. 4307
Those on whom He
Has passed the decree
Of death, He keeps back4308
(From returning to life),
But the rest He sends
(To their bodies)
For a term appointed.

4306. The mystery of life and death, sleep and dreams, is a fascinating enigma, of which the solution is perhaps beyond the ken of man. A vast mass of superstition as well as imaginative and psychological literature has grown up about it. But the simplest and truest religious doctrine is laid down here in a few words. In death we surrender our physical life, but our soul does not die; it goes back to a plane of existence in which it is more conscious of the realities of the spiritual world: “Allah takes the soul”.

4307. Cf. vi. 60. What is sleep? As far as animal life is concerned, it is the cessation of the working of the nervous system, though other animal functions, such as digestion, growth, and the circulation of the blood, continue, possibly at a different pace. It is the repose of the nervous system, and in this respect it is common to man and animals, and perhaps even to plants, if, as is probable, plants have a nervous system. The mental processes (and certainly volition) are also suspended in sleep, except that in ordinary dreams there is a medley of recollections, which often present vividly to our consciousness things that do not or cannot happen in nature as we know it in our co-ordinated minds. But there is another kind of dream which is rarer—one in which the dreamer sees things as they actually happen, backwards or forwards in time, or in which gifted individuals see spiritual truths otherwise imperceptible to them. How can we explain this? It is suggested that our soul or personality,—that something which is above our animal life—is then in a plane of spiritual existence akin to physical death (see last note), when we are nearer to Allah. In poetic imagery, Sleep is “twin-brother to Death”.

4308. Sleep being twin-brother to Death, our souls are for the time being released from the bondage of the flesh. Allah takes them for the time being. If, as some do, we are to die peacefully in sleep, our soul does not come back to the physical body, and the latter decays and die. If we have still some period of life to fulfil according to Allah’s decree, our soul comes back to the body, and we resume our functions in this life.
4309. If we contemplate these things, we can see more clearly many spiritual truths: e.g. (1) that our bodily life and death are not the whole story of our existence; (2) that in our bodily life we may be dead to the spiritual world, and in our bodily death, may be our awakening to the spiritual world; (3) that our nightly Sleep, besides performing the function of rest to our physical life, gives us a foretaste of what we call death, which does not end our personality; and (4) that the Resurrection is not more wonderful than our daily rising from Sleep, “twin-brother to Death”.

4310. Let alone worship, men should not rely upon any power or person other than Allah to help them out or intercede for them. When it is idols, they are poor lifeless things which have obviously neither power nor intelligence. But even prophets or saints or heroes have no power to intercede except as Allah wills and permits. See next note.

4311. For Shafāʾat (Intercession, Advocacy) see ii. 255; x. 3; xx. 109, n. 2634; and xxi. 28, n. 2688. It follows that no one can intercede with Allah, except (1) by Allah’s permission, and (2) for those who have prepared themselves by penitence for Allah’s acceptance. Even in earthly Courts, Advocacy is not permitted to any one; the Advocate must be granted the position of Advocate before he can plead before the judge. Nor can it be supposed that a plea for forgiveness or mercy can be put forward except on grounds recognised by equity and justice.

4312. At all times, including our present life, all dominion belongs to Allah. At the End of the present plane of existence, we shall be placed before Allah for Judgment. Cf. x. 4.
4313. To evil ones, the mention of the exclusive service of Good is hateful: they only rejoice when other motives are added, e.g., personal indulgence, ancestral custom, and numerous things in life which compete with Allah's Law in this world.

4314. The mysteries of life and death, of worship and spiritual growth, are matters of high moment, which it may be difficult for us to apprehend in this present life. It is no use arguing about them and plunging in endless controversies. The proper attitude is to appeal to Allah humbly to accept our purified hearts and Faith, in the firm hope that everything which is now vague to us will be cleared up in the Hereafter, and to pray to Him for His guidance and mercy.

4315. Cf. xiii. 18. Those who reject Allah's Message must realise that the time will come when they will wish they had sacrificed everything in the cause of Truth and Righteousness. It will be too late then. Why not examine the matter seriously now and accept Allah's Grace and Light?
Which they could never
Have counted upon!\textsuperscript{4316}

48. For the evils of their Deeds
Will confront them,
And they will be (completely)\textsuperscript{4317}
Encircled by that which
They used to mock at!

49. Now, when trouble touches man,
He cries to Us:\textsuperscript{4318}
But when We bestow
A favour upon him\textsuperscript{4319}
As from Us,
He says, "This has been
Given to me because of
A certain knowledge (I have)!"\textsuperscript{4320}
Nay, but this is
But a trial, but most
Of them understand not!

50. Thus did the (generations)
Before them say! But
All that they did
Was of no profit to them.

51. Nay, the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them.\textsuperscript{4321}
And the wrong-doers
Of this (generation)—

\textsuperscript{4316} This something will be beyond anything they can conceive of in this life. Just as the righteous will then attain a bliss which no human imagination can conceive of now, so the unrighteous will be in a misery of which they can form no conception now. See next note.

\textsuperscript{4317} How humiliating it will be for them to realise that the things they used to mock at are realities all around them, and the things they were so eager to pursue are mere falsehoods or vanities!

\textsuperscript{4318} Cf. xxx. 33 and n. 3545.

\textsuperscript{4319} Cf. xxxix. 8 above.

\textsuperscript{4320} Cf. xxxviii. 78, and n. 3408. Prosperity may be a trial as much as adversity.

\textsuperscript{4321} Cf. xvi. 34.
The evil results of their deeds
Will soon overtake them (too),
And they shall not escape!

52. Know they not that
Allah enlarges the provision
Or restricts it, for any
He pleases? Verily, in this are
Signs for those who believe!

SECTION 6.

53. Say: "O my Servants who
Have transgressed against their souls!
Despair not of the Mercy
Of Allah: for Allah forgives
All sins: for He is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

54. "Turn ye to your Lord
(In repentance) and submit
To Him, before
The Chastisement comes on you:
After that ye shall not
Be helped.

4322. It is the same story through the ages. People laugh at Truth, persecute Truth, and try to destroy Truth. But Allah's Plan is never to be frustrated. It will be carried out, and only the enemies of Truth will accomplish their own undoing. So it happened in Arabia: so will it happen always and everywhere.

4323. Cf. xxviii. 82. Allah's gifts are given to all men—to some in a greater degree than to others. But it is all done according to His wise Plan, for His Will is just and looks to the good of all creatures. No one should therefore be puffed up in prosperity or cast down in adversity. Prosperity does not necessarily mean merit on man's part, nor adversity the reverse. Thinking men bear in mind the large Plan—which is visible in all Allah's Signs.

4324. Forgives all sins: i.e., on sincere repentance and amendment of conduct.

4325. The exhortation in brief is: 'Repent and work righteousness, before it becomes too late'. No help will come to you when the Judgment is actually established and you stand before Allah.
55. "And follow the Best That which was revealed To you from your Lord, Before the Chastisement comes On you—of a sudden, While ye perceive not!—

56. "Lest the soul should (then) Say: 'Ah! woe is me! In that I neglected (My Duty) towards Allah, And was but among those Who mocked!'—

57. "Or (lest) it should say: 'If only Allah had guided Me, I should certainly Have been among the righteous!'—

58. "Or (lest) it should say When it (actually) sees

4326. Cf. xxxix. 18, and n. 4269. Allah's Command meets the weakness of His weakest servants, and only asks that His servants should surrender their selfish will to Allah's Will. In divine compassion, therefore, we are allowed to do just what we can, even though our standard should fall short of the highest standard. But our aim should be to follow the highest standard, and Allah's Grace will come to our assistance. But we must do so in this life,—and at once, as soon as the Word penetrates our mind or understanding. We must not delay a moment, for the Judgment may come at any time, suddenly, before we even perceive where we are.

4327. Many kinds of sighs and regrets will then assail us. In the first place, we shall see our shortcomings: we were negligent when we should have been serious: we mocked when we should have tried to learn and understand. But it will be too late then to retrieve our position.

4328. In the second place, we might be inclined to say, 'I wish I had received warning or guidance'. But this would not be true, because the warning and guidance are being conveyed in the clearest manner in Allah's Revelation. That is the force of 'lest it should say'. It could have said so, had it not seen that the objection is clearly anticipated in the call to repent and in the warning about the Hereafter.

4329. In the third place, when we stand face to face with the Penalty of our own deeds, we might say, 'I wish I had another chance' But not one, but many, chances are being given, especially when we are told (verse 53 above): 'Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'. The force of 'lest it should say' here is the same as explained in the last note.
The Chastisement: 'If only I had another chance, I should certainly be Among those who do good!'

59. "(The reply will be:) 'Nay, But there came to thee My Signs, and thou didst Reject them: thou wast Haughty, and became one Of those who reject Faith!"

60. On the Day of Judgment Wilt thou see those Who told lies against Allah; Their faces will be turned Black; is there not In Hell an abode For the Haughty?

61. But Allah will deliver The righteous for they have earned Salvation: no evil Shall touch them, Nor shall they grieve.

4330. The reply explains how all such pleas have been anticipated and met. It was deliberate rejection that will deserve and meet its consequences. It is further explained that the motive of sin, as with Satan, was haughtiness and Self.

4331. Cf. ii. 34. The example of the arch-sinner illustrates what happens in a minor degree in every kind of sinner.

4332. As spotless white is the symbol of purity, honour and truth, so black is the symbol of evil, disgrace, and falsehood. Perhaps "black" in connection with Hell also refers to the scorching punishment of the Fire.

4333. Cf. above, xxxix. 32, and n. 4292, where the subtle implication of the interrogative form is explained.

4334. Mafāzat: place or state of safety or salvation, place or state of victory or achievement; accomplishment of wish or desire. This contrasted against the frustration, failure, and perdition of the children of evil,—what may be called damnation in theological phrase.
62. Allah is the Creator
   Of all things, and He
   Is the Guardian and Disposer\footnote{4335}
   Of all affairs.

63. To Him belong the keys
   Of the heavens
   And the earth:
   And those who reject
   The Signs of Allah,—
   It is they who will\footnote{4336}
   Be in loss.

SECTION 7.

64. Say: “Is it
   Some one other than Allah
   That ye order me\footnote{4337}
   To worship, O ye
   Ignorant ones?”

65. But it has already
   Been revealed to thee,—\footnote{4338}
   As it was to those
   Before thee,—“If thou

\footnote{4335.} Allah has not only created all the Worlds, but He maintains them and cares
for them. He does not sit apart from His world. Everything depends upon Him.

\footnote{4336.} Allah has nothing to lose by the rebellion or disobedience of His creatures.
It is they who lose, because they go counter to their own nature, the beautiful mould
in which Allah created them.

\footnote{4337.} “Order me”: there is great irony here. The Prophet of Allah turns to his critics
and says: “You arrogate to yourselves the right to order me how to worship! But who
are you? You are only ignorant men! My commission is from Allah. It is the same as
came to Prophets of Allah before me in all ages, viz., (1) that the only Truth is in the
Gospel of Unity; and (2) that if you worship other things and turn away from Allah,
your life will be wasted and all your probation will have been of no account.”

\footnote{4338.} The Message of Unity, renewed in Islam, has been the Message of Allah since
the world began.
Wert to join (gods
With Allah), truly fruitless4339
Will be thy work (in life),
And thou wilt surely
Be among the losers.”

66. Nay, but worship Allah,
And be of those who
Give thanks.4340

67. No just estimate
Have they made of Allah,4341
Such as is due to Him:
On the Day of Judgment
The whole of the earth
Will be but His handful,4342
And the heavens will be
Rolled up in His right hand:
Glory to Him!
High is He above
The Partners they attribute
To Him!

68. The Trumpet will (just)
Be sounded, when all
That are in the heavens
And on earth will swoon,4343

4339. Cf. v. 6. False worship means that we run after fruitless things, and the main purpose of our spiritual lives is lost.

4340. To “give thanks” is to show by our conduct that we esteem the gifts of Allah and will use them in His service.

4341. Cf. vi. 91, and n. 909; and xxii. 74. In running after false gods or the powers of nature they have forgotten that all creatures are as nothing before Allah.

4342. See last note. The whole earth will be no more to Allah than a thing that a man might enclose in the hollow of his hand, nor will the heavens with their vast expanse be more than a scroll, which a man might roll up with his right hand, the hand of power and action. Cf. xxii. 104, and lxxxi. 1.

4343. Sa‘iqa implies the idea of a swoon, or loss of all consciousness of being: it implies a cessation of the normal functioning of the usual powers of life or feeling. With the first Trumpet of the Resurrection the whole world will cease to be in the form and the relations which we see now: there will be a new heaven and a new earth, see xiv. =
4344. It will be a new Earth. All traces of injustice or inequality, darkness or evil, will have gone. There will be the one universal Light, the Glory of Allah, which will now illuminate all. Falsehood, pretence, and illusion will have disappeared. Everything will be seen in its true light.

4345. It is in such a scene of Reality that Judgment will be held. Before the Throne of Allah, the book of each man’s deeds and motives will be placed wide open, which all may see; the Prophets and Preachers of Truth and the martyrs who gave their lives or made their real sacrifices in the cause of Truth, will be in the Court, to give evidence; and the decision pronounced will be absolutely just, for the Judge will not only be just, but He will know every fact and circumstance, and His wisdom will give due weight to everything, great or small.

4346. In an earthly court, a decision may possibly go wrong because the judge is deceived; here no deceit or mistake will be possible, for Allah knows all, and knows it better than any one else can.
SECTION 8.

71. The Unbelievers will be Led to Hell in groups:4347
Until, when they arrive there, Its gates will be opened.
And its Keepers will say,4348
“Did not messengers come To you from among yourselves, Rehearsing to you the Signs Of your Lord, and warning you Of the Meeting of this Day Of yours?” The answer Will be: “True: but The Decree of Chastisement Has been proved true4349 Against the Unbelievers!”

72. (To them) will be said: “Enter ye the gates of Hell, To dwell therein: And evil is (this) Abode of the arrogant!”4350

73. And those who feared Their Lord will be led

4347. Groups: this is the word which gives the key-note to the Sūra. If the soul does not stand to its own convictions or search out the Truth by itself, it will be classed with the crowds that go to Perdition!

4348. The Keepers may be supposed to be angels, who know nothing of the conditions of evil on this earth, and are surprised at such crowds coming to the “Evil Abode”.

4349. Cf. x. 33. The answer is perhaps given by other angels: ‘yes; messengers were sent to them from among themselves, to warn them and proclaim to them Mercy through repentance; but the decree of Allah, which warned them of punishment, has now come true against them, for they rebelled and were haughty; they rejected Truth, Faith, and Mercy!’

4350. As elsewhere, the root of Evil is pointed out to be in self-love and arrogance. Cf. ii. 34, etc.
To the Garden in groups: \[4351\]

Until behold, they arrive there; Its gates will be opened; And its Keepers will say: “Peace be upon you! Well have ye done!” Enter ye here, To dwell therein.”

74. They will say: “Praise be \(4353\) To Allah, Who has Truly fulfilled His promise To us, and has given us (This) land in heritage: \(4354\) We can dwell in the Garden As we will: how excellent A reward for those Who work (righteousness)!"

75. And thou wilt see The angels surrounding The Throne (Divine) On all sides, singing Glory And Praise to their Lord. The Decision between them (At Judgment) will be In (perfect) justice,

4351. The righteous ones will also go in crowds, and not be alone. There is now a true sorting out. Verses 73-75 are parallel in contrast to verses 71-72 above.

4352. The angels in heaven are not surprised at the advent of the good and righteous souls. They are glad; they greet them with the salutation of Peace; they congratulate them; and they welcome them in.

4353. This is said by the new arrivals in heaven. As is right, they begin with the Praises of Allah, which shows at once their satisfaction and their gratitude.

4354. In heritage: i.e. as our Portion. Cf. iii. 180, and n. 485; vi. 165, and n. 988. There is no question here of their passing on any property to heirs. They are the final possessors of Heaven for eternity, by the grace of Allah.
And the cry (on all sides)
Will be, “Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the Worlds!”

4355. These are the opening words of the first Sūra, and they describe the atmosphere of the final Bliss in Heaven, in the light of the Countenance of their Lord, the Lord of all!
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Mū-min or Gāfir 40

This Sūra is called “The Believer” (Mū-min) from the story of the individual Believer among the people of Pharaoh, who declares his faith and looks to the Future (verses 28-45). It is also called Gāfir (He who forgives, see verse 3). In S. xxiii, called The Believers (Mūminūn), the argument was about the collective force of Faith and virtue. Here it is about the Individual's witness to Faith and Virtue, and his triumph in the End.

We now begin a series of seven Sūras (xl-xlvi) to which are affixed the Abbreviated Letters Ḥā-Mīm. Chronologically they all belong to the same period, the later Makkān Period, and they immediately follow the last Sūra in time. About the Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I at the end of S. II. As to the precise meaning of Ḥā-Mīm no authoritative explanation is available.

The general theme of the whole series is the relation of Faith to Unfaith, Revelation to Rejection, Goodness to Evil, Truth to Falsehood. It is shown that the first in each of these pairs is the real friend, helper, and protector of man, while the second is his enemy. The very word Ḥamīm in that sense is used in Sūras xl and xli (xl. 18 and xli. 34), while in the other Sūras we have words of equivalent import, e.g. wālī or nasīr (xlii. 8 and 31); qarīn (xliii. 36, 38); maulā (xliv. 41); auliyyā or nāṣirīn (xlv. 19, 34); and auliyyā (xlvi. 32).

Summary.—Faith is ever justified, for Allah forgives: but evil deeds must have evil fruits, for Allah knows and is just (xl. 1-20).

In all history Evil came to evil; the protest of Faith, in the midst of Evil, may be ignored; but Faith is protected by Allah, while Evil perishes (xl. 21-50).

No doubt is there of the Future Judgment; the Power, Goodness, and Justice of God are manifest; will man dispute, or will he accept the Signs before it is too late? (xl. 51-85).
Al-Mūmin, or The Believer.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Hā-Mīm.\textsuperscript{4356}

2. The revelation
   Of this Book
   Is from Allah,
   Exalted in Power,
   Full of Knowledge.\textsuperscript{4357}

3. Who forgiveth Sin,
   Accepteth Repentance,\textsuperscript{4358}
   Is Severe in Punishment,
   And is all-Bountiful.
   There is no god
   But He: to Him
   Is the Final Goal.

4. None can dispute
   About the Signs of Allah\textsuperscript{4359}
   But the Unbelievers.
   Let not, then
   Their strutting about\textsuperscript{4360}
   Through the land
   Deceive thee!

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\textsuperscript{4356} See the Introduction to this Sūra.

\textsuperscript{4357} This verse is the same as xxxix: 1, except for the last words describing the attribute of Allah. In S. xxxix. 1, it was “Full of Wisdom”, because stress was laid on the wisdom of Allah’s Plan in ordering His World. In this Sūra the stress is laid on Allah’s Knowledge, before which the shallow knowledge of men is vain (xl. 83).

\textsuperscript{4358} Allah’s knowledge is supreme and all-reaching. But there are other attributes of His, which concern us even more intimately; \textit{e.g.}, He forgives sin and accepts our repentance when it is sincere and results in our change of heart and life: but He is also just, and strict in punishment; and so no loophole will be left for Evil except in repentance. And further, all His attributes reach forward to everything: His Mercy, as well as His Knowledge and Justice; His Bounties as well as His Punishments.

\textsuperscript{4359} Allah’s knowledge and attributes are perfect, and everything around us proclaims this. We are surrounded by His Signs. It is only want of Faith that will make people dispute about them.

\textsuperscript{4360} Cf. iii. 196. Their strutting about shows how little they can read the Signs.
5. But (there were people) before them, Who denied (the Signs),— The People of Noah, And the Confederates\(^\text{4361}\) After them; And every People plotted Against their prophet, To seize him, and disputed By means of vanities,\(^\text{4362}\) Therewith to obliterate The Truth: but it was I That seized them! And how (terrible)\(^\text{4363}\) Was My Requital!

6. Thus was the Word Of thy Lord proved true Against the Unbelievers;\(^\text{4364}\) That truly they are Companions of the Fire!

7. Those who bear\(^\text{4365}\) The Throne (of Allah) And those around it Sing Glory and Praise

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4361. Cf. xxxviii. 11-13, and n. 4158. All the hosts of wickedness collected together from history will have no power against Allah's Truth, or the Messenger of that Truth, or Allah's holy Plan for all His Creation.

4362. Whenever a great or vital Truth is proclaimed and renewed, there are always shallow minds that are ready to dispute about it! And what petty and vain arguments they advance! They think they can discredit or condemn the Truth in this way, or render "of none effect" Allah's Plan. But they are mistaken. If they seem to succeed for a time, that is merely their trial. They may try to plan and plot against Allah's men. But their plots will fail in the long run. They will themselves be caught in their own snares. And then, how terrible will be their Punishment!

4363. Cf. xiii. 32.

4364. Cf. xxxix. 71. The Decree, or Word of Allah, by which Evil was to be judged and condemned, was proved true against these men. They are "Companions of the Fire": in other words, they are fit to live only in Hell.

4365. Cf. xxxix. 75.
To their Lord; believe
In Him; and implore Forgiveness
For those who believe:
“Our Lord! Thou embracest
All things,
In Mercy and Knowledge.
Forgive, then, those who
Turn in Repentance, and follow
Thy Path; and preserve them
From the Chastisement
Of the Blazing Fire!

8. “And grant, our Lord!
That they enter
The Gardens of Eternity,
Which Thou hast promised
To them, and to the righteous
Among their fathers,
Their wives, and their posterity!
For Thou art (He),
The Exalted in Might,
Full of Wisdom.

9. “And preserve them
From (all) ills;
And any whom Thou
Dost preserve from ills
That Day,—on them
Wilt Thou have bestowed

4366. Cf. vi. 80; vii. 89 and 98.

4367. There is nothing selfish in prayer. We pray for all who are true and sincere. But just as Evil is catching, so Goodness is catching in another sense. The associates of the Good and those near and dear to them also share in their goodness and happiness, if only they try to walk in the same Way. And the Grace of Allah is working for all, all the time.

4368. That is the final Judgment, and any who is saved from the evil consequences of their deeds in this life will truly have been saved by Allah's Mercy, and for them it is the highest achievement they could have, the attainment of all their wishes, the fulfilment of their destiny and the noblest purpose of their Life, the supreme Salvation and Felicity.
Mercy indeed: and that
Will be truly
The highest Achievement."\textsuperscript{4369}

SECTION 2.

10. The Unbelievers will be
Addressed: “Greater was
The aversion of Allah to you\textsuperscript{4370}
Than (is) your aversion
To yourselves, seeing that ye
Were called to the Faith
And ye used to refuse.”

11. They will say: “Our Lord!
Twice hast Thou made us\textsuperscript{4371}
To die, and twice
Hast Thou given us Life!
Now have we recognised
Our sins: is there
Any way out (of this)?”

12. (The answer will be:)
“This is because, when
Allah was invoked as

\textsuperscript{4369} Muslim Salvation, then, is more positive than mere safety from dangers or evils: it is the complete fulfilment of the noble destiny of man in the attainment of the fullest Grace.

\textsuperscript{4370} The Unbelievers having rejected Allah’s Signs, they now see how they are shut out from Grace, and they feel disgusted with themselves. How much greater was Allah’s displeasure with them, when He showered mercy upon mercy on them and they yet rebelled! How could they now hope for Grace!

\textsuperscript{4371} Cf. ii. 28: “How can ye reject the faith in Allah?—seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return.” Non-existence, or existence as clay without life was equivalent to death. Then came true Life on this earth; then came physical death or the cessation of our physical life; and now at the Resurrection, is the second life.
The Only (object of worship). Ye did reject Faith, But when partners were Joined to Him, ye believed! The Command is with Allah, Most High, Most Great!"

13. He it is Who showeth You His Signs, and sendeth Down Sustenance for you From the sky: but only Those receive admonition Who turn (to Allah).

14. Call ye, then, upon Allah With sincere devotion to Him, Even though the Unbelievers May detest it.

15. Exalted is He in His attributes. (He is) the Lord Of the Throne:

4372. Cf. xxxix. 45, and n. 4313. When exclusive devotion is not rendered to Allah, there is no true understanding, in the mind of a creature, of his own true position, or of the working of the Divine Will and Purpose. How can he then hope to achieve the purpose of his life, or obtain Allah's Mercy, which is the only way to obtain release from the consequences of Sin?

4373. At the Judgment, the matter will have passed out of the stage at which further chances could have been hoped for. But in any case Allah is High above all things, Great above all that we can conceive of, both in Mercy and in Justice. The Decision will be with Him, and Him alone.

4374. Lest it should be thought that Allah's Grace did not meet the Sinner again and again and offer Allah's Mercy again and again, it is pointed out that Allah's Signs were freely vouchsafed everywhere and continuously, and that every kind of means was provided for man's "Sustenance" or growth and development, physical, mental, and spiritual. But only those could take advantage of it who turned their attention to Allah, who submitted their will to Him.

4375. Cf. ix. 33.

4376. He is raised far above any rank or degree which we can imagine. It is possible also to treat Raft, as equivalent to Raft', meaning that He can raise His creatures to the highest ranks and degrees for He is the fountain of all honour.
By His Command doth He
Send the spirit (of inspiration)
To any of His servants\(^{4377}\)
He pleases, that it may
Warn (men) of the Day
Of Mutual Meeting,\(^{4378}\)

16. The Day wherein
They will (all) come forth:
Not a single thing
Concerning them is hidden
From Allah. Whose will be
The Dominion that Day?\(^{4379}\)
That of Allah, the One,
The Overpowering!

17. That Day will every soul
Be requited for what
It earned; no injustice
Will there be that Day,
For Allah is Swift\(^{4380}\)
In taking account.

18. Warn them of the Day
That is (ever) drawing near,
When the Hearts

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4377. The choosing of a man to be the recipient of inspiration—to be the standard bearer of Allah's Truth—is the highest honour possible in the Kingdom of Allah. And Allah bestows that honour according to His own most perfect Will and Plan, which no one can question, for He is the fountain of all honour, dignity, and authority.

4378. All men will meet together and meet their Lord at the Resurrection, no matter how far scattered they may have been in life or in death.

4379. The Kingdom of Allah—of Justice, Truth, and Righteousness—will then be fully established. Evil can then no more come into competition with Good, even in the subjective consciousness of man.

4380. Swift in several senses; (1) the time of the present life or of the interval before Judgment. i.e., before the restoration of true values, is so short as compared to Eternity, that it may be counted as negligible: in the next verse the Day is characterised as “(ever) drawing near”; (2) in spite of the great concourse of souls to be judged, the process of Judgment will be almost instantaneous, “in the twinkling of an eye” (xvi. 77), because everything is already known to Allah; and yet not the least injustice will be done.
(Come) right up to the Throats\textsuperscript{4381} To choke (them); No intimate friend\textsuperscript{4382} Nor intercessors will the wrong-doers Have, who could be Listened to.

19. (Allah) knows the treachery Of the eyes,\textsuperscript{4383} And all that the hearts (Of men) conceal.

20. And Allah will judge With (Justice and) Truth: But those whom (men) Invoke besides Him, will Not (be in a position) To judge at all.

4381. *Hearts will come right up to the Throats to choke them:* an idiom implying that the whole of their life-functions will be choked up with terror. But a more subtle meaning emerges from further analysis. The heart (or the breast) is the seat of affection, emotion, and every kind of feeling, such as terror, pain, despair, etc. These things will as it were overflow right up to the throat and choke it. The throat is the vehicle for the voice; their voice will be choked, and they will be able to say nothing. The throat is the channel for food, which goes to the stomach and maintains a healthy functioning of life; the choking means that the healthy functioning will stop, and there will be nothing but woe.

4382. In that enforcement of personal responsibility, what sympathy or intercession can the wrong-doers get?

4383. Men may be taken in by tricks that deceive with the eyes, but Allah’s perfect knowledge penetrates through all mysteries. “Treachery of the eyes” may mean several things; (1) a sleight of hand (literally or figuratively) may deceive in respect of the eyes of beholders, for the things that they see do not actually happen; (2) it may be the deceiver’s own eyes that play false, because, for example, they show love when hatred is meant; or (3) it may be that the eyes of the beholder play him false, in that he sees things that he should not see, and thus sins with his eyes.

4384. Here we come into the region of evil motives and thoughts which may be concealed in the hearts, breast, or mind, but which are all perfectly known to Allah.
Verily it is Allah (alone) Who hears and sees\(^{4385}\) (All things).

SECTION 3.

21. Do they not travel Through the earth and see What was the End Of those before them?\(^{4386}\) They were even superior To them in strength, And in the traces (they\(^{4387}\) Have left) in the land: But Allah did call them To account for their sins, And none had they To defend them against Allah.

22. That was because there came To them their messengers\(^{4388}\) With Clear (Signs),

\(^{4385.}\) If men build their hopes or their faith in anything except the Divine Grace, they will find themselves deserted. Any pretences that they make will be known to Allah. On the other hand every single good act, or word, or motive, or aspiration of their will, will reach Allah's Throne of Mercy.

\(^{4386.}\) Cf. xxx. 9. and several other similar passages.

\(^{4387.}\) See n. 3515 to xxx. 9. We can learn from the history of previous nations. Many of them were more powerful, or have left finer and more imposing monuments and made a deeper impression on the world around them than any particular generation addressed. "Traces" in the text may be taken in that extended sense. And yet all this did not save them from the consequences of their sins. They were called to account and punished. None of the power or pomp or skill of which they boasted could for a moment ward off the punishment when it came in God's good time.

\(^{4388.}\) But Allah in His Mercy always sends a Message of warning and good news through his messengers, and He gives His messengers Clear Signs and an authority that can be recognised. Among the Clear Signs are: (1) the pure and unselfish lives of the messengers; (2) the revelation of truth which they bring; (3) their influence on the course of events in their own and succeeding generations; etc. Some of these may be so remarkable that they merit the name of Miracles.
But they rejected them:
So Allah called them
To account: for He is
Full of Strength,
Severe in Punishment.

23. Of old We sent Moses,\textsuperscript{4389}
With Our Signs
And an Authority manifest,

24. To Pharaoh, Hāmān,\textsuperscript{4390}
And Qārūn; but they
Called (him) “a sorcerer
Telling lies!”...

25. Now, when he brought them\textsuperscript{4391}
The Truth, from Us,
They said, “Slay the sons
Of those who believe\textsuperscript{4392}

\textsuperscript{4389}. This is not the story of Moses himself, so much as an introduction to the story of the one just man who believed, in the court of Pharaoh: see verse 28 below. This Sūra (“The Believer”) is called after him.

\textsuperscript{4390}. Here are three types of Unfaith, each showing a different phase, and yet all united in opposition to the Truth and Mission of Moses. (1) Pharaoh is the type of arrogance, cruelty, and reliance on brute force; cf. xxviii. 38-39. (2) Hāmān was Pharaoh’s minister (n. 3331 to xxvii. 6; also xxvii. 38): he was the type of a sycophant who would pander to the vanity of any man in power. (3) Qārūn excelled in his wealth, was selfish in its use, and overbearing to the poor (xxviii. 76-81, and n. 3404). They all came to an evil end eventually.

\textsuperscript{4391}. Verse 24 described the opposition of three types of Unfaith, which opposed Faith, in different ways, as described in the last note. Qārūn, in his overweening insolence, may well have called Moses and Aaron “sorcerers telling lies” in the Sinai desert, as he despised priests and men of God, and might cast the Egyptian reproach in their teeth as a reminiscence. Here, in verse 25, we have an episode about the time of the birth of Moses: “them” and “they” refer to Pharaoh and his Court; the “coming” of Moses here refers to the time of his birth. On that construction, “with him”, lower down in their speech would be elliptical, referring to “slay the sons”, as if they had said, “Kill all Israelite male children: the unknown Prophet to be born would be amongst them: so kill them all with him.” In verse 26 we again skip some years and recall an episode when Moses, having got his mission, stood in Pharaoh’s Court, and some of the Egyptian Commonalty were almost ready to believe in him.

\textsuperscript{4392}. That is, the Israelites, for they were the custodians of Allah’s Faith then. For the slaughter of Israelite children by Pharaoh, see xxviii. 4-6, and notes.
With him, and keep alive
Their females,” but the plots
Of unbelievers (end) in nothing
But errors (and delusions)!

26. Said Pharaoh: “Leave me
To slay Moses; and let him
Call on his Lord! 4393
What I fear is lest
He should change your religion, 4394
Or lest he should cause
Mischief to appear
In the land!”

27. Moses said: “I have indeed
Called upon my Lord
And your Lord 4395
(For protection) from every
Arrogant one who believes not
In the Day of Account!”

SECTION 4.

28. A Believer, a man 4396
From among the people

4393. This is an episode that occurs when Moses, invested with his mission, confronts
Pharaoh in his Court and preaches to him: see xx. 49 and following verses; also xx. 57, 63.

4394. Some of Pharaoh’s people did afterwards give up the worship of Pharaoh and
of the Egyptian gods and believed “in the Lord of Aaron and Moses” and in fact suffered
martyrdom for the Faith of Unity: xx. 70-73.

4395. The whole point of the Gospel of Unity which Moses preached was that the
God of Moses and the God of Pharaoh, of Israel and Egypt, the Lord of all the Worlds,
was One,—Allah, the only True God. See xx. 49-50 and notes 2572 and 2573.

4396. There is nothing to justify the identification of this man with the man
mentioned in xxviii. 20, who warned Moses long before Moses had received his mission.
On the contrary, in this passage, the man is evidently speaking after Moses had received
his mission, preached to Pharaoh, and got a certain amount of success, for which Pharaoh
and his people were trying, to seek his life. Moses had evidently already brought his Clear
Signs.
Of Pharaoh, who had concealed
His faith, said: "Will ye
Slay a man because he
Says, 'My Lord is Allah'?—
When he has indeed come
To you with Clear (Signs)
From your Lord? And if
He be a liar, on him
Is (the sin of) his lie;
But, if he is telling the Truth, then will
Fall on you something
Of the (calamity) of which
He warns you: truly
Allah guides not one
Who transgresses and lies!

"O my People! yours
Is the dominion this day:
Ye have the upper hand
In the land: but who
Will help us from
The Punishment of Allah,
Should it befall us?"
Pharaoh said: "I but
Point out to you that

4397. A commonsense view is put before them by an Egyptian who loves his own people and does not wish them to perish in sin. "Will you kill this man for calling on Allah? Have you not seen his character and behaviour? Do you not see the 'Clear Signs' about him that bespeak his credentials? Suppose for a moment that he is a liar and pretender: he will suffer for his falsehood, but why should you turn against Allah? But suppose that he is really inspired by Allah to tell you the truth and warn you against evil, what will be your fate when Allah's Wrath descends? For it must descend if he is a true Messenger sent by Allah."

4398. This is with reference to the "Clear signs". 'They are Signs of Allah's guidance, for Allah would never guide a man who exceeds the bounds of truth and tells you lies! Such a man is bound to be found out!'

4399. 'Do not be puffed up with arrogance because the power is in your hands at present! Do you deserve it? Will it last? If you are sinning and drawing upon yourselves Allah's Punishment, is there anything that can shield you from it?"
Which I see (myself);\textsuperscript{4400} Nor do I guide you But to the Path of Right!”

30. Then said the man Who believed: “O my People! Truly I do fear For you something like\textsuperscript{4401} The Day (of disaster) Of the Confederates (is sin)\textsuperscript{4402}

31. “Something like the fate Of the People of Noah, The ‘Ad, and the Thamûd, And those who came After them: but Allah Never wishes injustice\textsuperscript{4403} To His Servants.

32. “And O my People! I fear for you a Day\textsuperscript{4404} When there will be Mutual calling (and wailing),--

\textsuperscript{4400} Pharaoh’s egotism and arrogance come out. ‘I can see and understand everything. As I see things, so do I direct you. The Path which I see must be right, and you must follow it.’

\textsuperscript{4401} He appeals to past history. “Have you not heard of people who lived before you?--like the generations of Noah, the ‘Ad, the Thamûd, and many more—who held together in sin against Allah’s Preachers, but were wiped out for their sins?”

\textsuperscript{4402} Cf. xxxviii. 11-13, and n. 4158, also xl. 5, and n. 4361.

\textsuperscript{4403} ‘All these disasters happened in history, and they will happen again to you if you do not give up evil. Do not for a moment think that Allah is unjust. It is you who are deliberately preparing the disasters by your conduct.’

\textsuperscript{4404} This Day may refer to the Day of Judgment, of which three features are here referred to. (1) People may wail and call to each other, but no one can help another: each one will have his own judgment to face; (2) the wicked will then be driven to Hell from the Judgment-Seat; and (3) there will be no one to help, guide, or intercede, because the grace and guidance of Allah had already been rejected. But the words are perfectly general, and are applicable to all stages at which the Wrath of Allah is manifest.
33. "A Day when ye
    Shall turn your backs
    And flee: no defender
    Shall ye have from Allah:
    Any whom Allah leaves
    To stray, there is none
    To guide...

34. "And to you there came
    Joseph in times gone by, 4405
    With Clear Signs, but
    Ye ceased not to doubt
    Of the (mission) for which
    He had come: at length,
    When he died, ye said:
    'No messenger will Allah send 4406
    After him.' Thus doth Allah
    Leave to stray such as
    Transgress and live in doubt,—

35. "(Such) as dispute about
    The Signs of Allah,
    Without any authority
    That hath reached them,
    Very hateful

4405. So far he has been speaking of general religious tradition. Now, as an
Egyptian, addressing Egyptians, he refers to the mission of Joseph in Egypt, for which
see the whole of Sūra xii. Joseph was not born in Egypt, nor was he an Egyptian. With
what wonderful incidents he came into Egypt! What difficulties did he not surmount
among his own brothers first, and in the Egyptian family which afterwards adopted him?
How injustice, spite, and forgetfulness on the part of others, yet wove a spell round
him and made him a ruler and saviour of Egypt in times of famine! How he preached to
prisoners in prison, the wife of 'Azīz in her household, to the Egyptian ladies
in their banquet, and to the Court of Pharaoh generally. The Egyptians profited
by the material gains which came to them through him, but as a nation remained sceptical of his spiritual
truths for many generations after him.

4406. The interval between Joseph and Moses was about one to three centuries, a
very short period for the memory of a learned nation like the Egyptians. And yet they
as a nation ignored his spiritual work, and afterwards even persecuted Israel in Egypt
until Moses delivered them. They actually saw the benefits conferred by Joseph, but did
not realise that Allah's Kingdom works continuously even though men ignore it.
(Is such conduct) 
In the sight of Allah 
And of the Believers. 
Thus doth Allah seal up Their hearts of arrogant Tyrantical."

36. Pharaoh said: "O Haman! 
Build me a lofty palace," That I may attain The ways and means—

37. "The ways and means 
Of (reaching) the heavens, 
And that I may look up To the God of Moses: 
But surely, 
I think (Moses) is a liar!" 
Thus was made alluring, In Pharaoh's eyes, The evil of his deeds, And he was hindered From the Path; and the plot

4407. See the last note. The arrogant transgressors having closed their hearts to the Message of Allah and to every appeal made to them, it followed by Allah's Law that their hearts were sealed up to any fresh influences for good. Cf. vii. 100; also ii. 7, and n. 31.

4408. Cf. xxviii. 38, and n. 3371. There are two points to be noted here. (1) Pharaoh, in the arrogance of his materialism, thinks of the Kingdom of Heaven like a kingdom on earth; he thinks of spiritual things in terms of palaces and ladders: notice that the word asbāb (ways and means) is emphasised by repetition (2) His sarcasm turns Moses and Allah to ridicule, and he frankly states that 'for his part he thinks Moses is a liar', though other men less lofty than he (Pharaoh) may be deceived by the Clear Signs of Moses.

4409. Pharaoh's speech shows how his own egotism and haughty arrogance brought him to this pass, that even the evil which he did seemed alluring in his own eyes! His heart was indeed sealed, and his arrogance prevented him from seeing the right path. (With the Kufi Qirāʿat I read sudda in the passive voice).

4410. Pharaoh had plotted to slay Moses (x1. 26) and to kill the Children of Israel (x1. 25). The plot recoiled on his own head and on the head of his people who joined in the plot; for they were all drowned in the Red Sea.

- 1436 -
Of Pharaoh led to nothing
But perdition (for him).

SECTION 5.

38. The man who believed said
Further: "O my People!
Follow me: I will lead
You to the Path of Right."

39. "O my People! This life
Of the present is nothing
But (temporary) enjoyment:
It is the Hereafter
That is the Home
That will last.

40. "He that works evil
Will not be requited
But by the like thereof:
And he that works
A righteous deed—whether
Man or woman—and is
A Believer—such will enter
The Garden (of Bliss): therein
Will they have abundance
Without measure.

41. "And O my People!
How (strange) it is
For me to call you

4411. Note the contrast between the earnest beseeching tone of the Believer here and the hectoring tone of Pharaoh in using similar words in xl. 29 above.

4412. Faith makes him see the contrast between vanities, even though they may glitter temporarily, and the eternal Good that is destined for man.

4413. Cf. ii. 212. This sustenance will not only last. It will be a most liberal reward, far above any merits of the recipient.

4414. It may seem strange according to the laws of this world that he should be seeking their Good while they are seeking his damnation! But that is the merit of Faith.
Its mission is to rescue its enemies and Allah's enemies, as far as their will will consent!
42. "Ye do call upon me
To blaspheme against Allah,4415
And to join with Him
Partners of whom I have
No knowledge; and I
Call you to the Exalted
In Power, Who forgives
Again and again!

43. "Without doubt ye do call
Me to one who has no claim
To be called to,4416
Whether in this world,
Or in the Hereafter;
Our Return will be
To Allah; and the Transgressors
Will be Companions
Of the Fire!

44. "Soon will ye remember
What I say to you (now).4417
My (own) affair I commit
To Allah: for Allah (ever)
Watches over His Servants"

4415. The worship of Pharaoh was blasphemy, but it had many sides, including the worship of heroes, animals, powers of good and evil in nature, and idols of all kinds. It is this comprehensive cult which required warnings again and again, but Allah is Exalted in Power, and gives such forgiveness on repentance.

4416. Faith is not content with its own inner vision and conviction. It can give ample arguments. Three are mentioned here: (1) nothing but Allah is worthy of worship, either in this world of sense or in the next world; (2) our Return will be to Allah, the Eternal Reality; and (3) the worship of Falsehood must necessarily lead to the Penalty of Falsehood, unless Allah's Mercy intervenes and forgives on our sincere repentance.

4417. The wording suggests as if there was a plot to kill him, but he was saved, as the next verse shows. His thought to the last is with his People. 'No matter what you do to me: you will have cause to remember my admonition, when perhaps it is too late for you to repent. For my part I commit myself to the care of Allah, and my Faith tells me that all will be right.'
45. Then Allah saved him From (every) evil that they Plotted (against him), But the brunt of the Chastisement Encompassed on all sides The People of Pharaoh.

46. In front of the Fire Will they be brought, Morning and evening: And (the Sentence will be) On the Day when The Hour comes to pass: “Cast ye the People Of Pharaoh into The severest Penalty”

47. Behold, they will dispute With each other in the Fire The weak ones (who followed) Will say to those who Had been arrogant, “We but Followed you: can ye then Take (on yourselves) from us Some share of the Fire?”

48. Those who had been arrogant Will say: “We are all In this (Fire)! Truly,

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4418. The Pharaoh of the time of Moses, and his people, suffered many calamities in this world: vii. 130-136. But those were nothing to the Penalties mentioned in the next verse.

4419. When the Judgment really comes, it is not like an ordinary physical disaster. The Fire of Punishment is ever present—morning and evening—i.e., at all times. The sentence becomes final and there is no mitigation.

4420. Just as Unity, Harmony, and Peace are indications of Truth, Bliss, and Salvation, so Reproaches, Disputes, and Disorders are indications of Hell.

4421. Note the evasion and cynicism of the answer, befitting the character of spiritual misleaders! ‘What! are we not suffering with you in the same Fire! Pray to Allah if you like! He has pronounced His Judgment!’ Cf. xiv. 21-22.
49. Those in the Fire will say
To the Keepers of Hell: [4422]
"Pray to your Lord
To lighten us the Chastisement
For a Day (at least)!"]

50. They will say: "Did there
Not come to you
Your messengers with Clear Signs?"
They will say, "Yes".
They will reply, "Then[4423]
Pray (as ye like)! But
The Prayer of those
Without Faith is nothing
But (futile wandering)
In (mazes of) error!"

SECTION 6.

51. We will, without doubt,
Help Our messengers and those
Who believe, (both)
In this world's life
And on the Day
When the Witnesses[4424]
Will stand forth,
52. The Day when no profit
Will it be to Wrong-doers
To present their excuses,\(^{4425}\)
But they will (only) have
The Curse and the Home
Of Misery.

53. We did aforetime give Moses
The Guidance,\(^{4426}\)
And We gave the Book
In inheritance to the Children
Of Israel,—

54. A Guide and a Reminder
To men of understanding.

55. Patiently, then, persevere:\(^{4427}\)
For the Promise of Allah
Is true: and ask forgiveness\(^{4428}\)
For thy fault, and celebrate
The Praises of thy Lord
In the evening
And in the morning.\(^{4429}\)

\(^{4425}\) After the testimony mentioned in the last note, there will be no room for excuses, and if any were made, they could serve no purpose, unlike the state of matters in this world, where there is much make-believe, and Falsehood often masquerades as Truth and is accepted as such even by those who should know better.

\(^{4426}\) Moses was given a Revelation, and it was given in heritage to the Children of Israel, to preserve it, guide their conduct by it, and hold aloft its Message: but they failed in all these particulars.

\(^{4427}\) The Israelites corrupted or lost their Book; they disobeyed Allah’s Law; and failed to proclaim and exemplify Allah’s Message. That is why the new Revelation came to the holy Prophet. If, in the beginning, it was rejected and persecuted, there was no cause for discouragement; on the contrary, there was all the greater need for patience and perseverance.

\(^{4428}\) Every mortal according to his nature and degree of spiritual enlightenment falls short of the perfect standard of Allah (xvi. 61), and should therefore ask Allah for forgiveness. What is merit in an ordinary man may be a human shortcoming in one nearest to Allah: see xxxviii. 24-25, and notes 4175-76. Prophets have a further responsibility for their People or their Ummat, and they ask in a representative capacity.

\(^{4429}\) Cf. iii. 41. Evening and morning are the best times for contemplation and prayer. But the phrase “evening and morning” may mean “at all times”. 
56. Those who dispute
   About the Signs of Allah
   Without any authority
   Bestowed on them, there is Nothing in their breasts
   But (the quest of) greatness,
   Which they shall never Attain to: seek refuge,
   Then, in Allah: it is He
   Who hears and sees (all things).

57. Assuredly the creation
   Of the heavens
   And the earth
   Is a greater (matter)
   Than the creation of men:
   Yet most men Know not.

58. Not equal are the blind
   And those who (clearly) see:
   Nor are (equal) those
   Who believe and work
   Deeds of righteousness, and
   Those who do evil.
   Little do ye learn
   By admonition!

4430. The Disputes are actuated by nothing but the desire for self-glory and self-aggrandizement. Their desire is not likely to receive fruition, but others should take warning from it.

4431. The heavens and the earth include mankind and all other creatures and millions of stars. Man is himself but a tiny part of creation. Why should he be so ego-centric? The whole is greater than a tiny part of it. And Allah Who created the whole of the Worlds is able to do much more wonderful things than can enter the imagination of man. Why should man be arrogant and doubt the Resurrection, and take upon himself to doubt the possibility of Allah’s Revelation? It is only because he has made himself blind. See next verse.

4432. The man of Faith who backs his faith by righteous conduct is like the man of clear vision, who sees things in their true perspective and walks with firm steps in the Way of Allah. The man who does evil is like a blind man: the Light of Allah is all around him, but he is blind, and he can see nothing. He has rejected Faith and cannot even learn by other people’s admonition.
The Hour will certainly come.\footnote{4433} Therein is no doubt: Yet most men believe not.

And your Lord says: \footnote{4434} “Call on Me; I Will answer your (Prayer). But those who are Too arrogant to serve Me Will surely enter Hell Abased.”

\section*{SECTION 7.}

It is Allah Who has\footnote{4435} Made the Night for you, That ye may rest therein, And the Day, to give You light. Verily Allah is Full of Grace and Bounty to men: Yet most men give No thanks.

Such is Allah, your Lord, The Creator of all things, There is no god but He: Then how ye are deluded\footnote{4436} Away from the Truth!

\footnote{4433. “The Hour” is the crown and consummation of man’s life on this earth,—the gateway to the Hereafter.}

\footnote{4434. As this life is not the end of all things, and we are to have its fulfilment in the Hereafter: we have only to pray to the Lord of the Present and the Hereafter, and He will hear us, forgive us, guide us, and make our Path smooth. But Pride will have its fall,—and its humiliating Punishment: Cf. xxxviii. 18.}

\footnote{4435. The succession of Day and Night in our physical life is frequently appealed to, as a symbol to draw our attention to the Mercy and Bounty of Allah. If we viewed these things aright, we should serve Allah and seek Light from Him and Rest from Him, and celebrate His praises with gratitude.}

\footnote{4436. If we worship false gods, \textit{i.e.}, go after vanities, what is it that deludes us and leads us astray? What could it be but our rank ingratitude and failure to use the understanding which Allah has given us?}
63. Thus are deluded those\textsuperscript{4437} Who are wont to reject The Signs of Allah.

64. It is Allah Who has\textsuperscript{4438} Made you the earth As a resting place,\textsuperscript{4439} And the sky as a canopy, And has given you shape—\textsuperscript{4440} And made your shapes Beautiful—and has provided For you Sustenance,\textsuperscript{4441} Of things pure and good;— Such is Allah your Lord. So Glory to Allah, The Lord of the Worlds!

65. He is the Living (One).\textsuperscript{4442} There is no god but He: Call upon Him, giving Him Sincere devotion. Praise be To Allah, Lord of the Worlds!

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\textsuperscript{4437} See the last two notes. If men are deluded by Falsehoods, it is because they reject Revelation and refuse to learn from the Signs of Allah all around them.

\textsuperscript{4438} The argument in the last two verses was from man’s personal experiences of his physical life. In this and the next verse a parallel argument is addressed to man on a much higher plane: ‘look at the spacious earth and the canopy of the sky; look at the special position you occupy above other animals that you know, in shape and form, and moral and spiritual capacities; consider your refinements in food and fruits and the higher spiritual Sustenance of which your physical food is a type; would you not indeed say that the Lord is good, and would you not glorify His holy name?’

\textsuperscript{4439} A resting place: I understand this to imply a temporary place of rest or sojourn, a period of probation, to be followed by the eternal Home.

\textsuperscript{4440} Cf. vii. 11 and n. 996. The shape and form refer to the physical form as well as to the inborn moral and spiritual capacities of man. As regards physical form, Cf. Milton’s description of Adam and Eve, “Two of far noble shape, erect and tall” (Paradise Lost, iv. 288). As regards moral and spiritual capacities, they are typified by the breathing of Allah’s spirit into man: xv. 29.

\textsuperscript{4441} “Sustenance”: all that is necessary for growth and development, physical, moral, and spiritual. Cf. n. 2105 to xvi. 73.

\textsuperscript{4442} The real, self-subsisting Life is only in Him: Cf. ii. 255, and n. 296.
66. Say: "I have been forbidden to invoke those whom ye invoke besides Allah, seeing that The Clear Signs have come to me from my Lord; and I have been commanded to submit (in Islam) to the Lord of the Worlds."

67. It is He Who has created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then does He get you out (into the light) as a child; then lets you grow and reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old; though of you there are some who die before; and lets you reach a Term appointed; in order that ye may understand.

4443. All objects of worship besides Allah are mere delusions. To any one who sees this clearly, through Allah’s Self-revelations, the only possible course is to give up everything else, which his own inner experience as well as outer Revelation tell him is false or of a temporary nature, and to bring his own will and actions into complete unison with Allah’s Will: for that is the meaning of Islam, bowing to the Will of Allah. When we bow to the Real and Everlasting, we are automatically saved from falling victims to the False and Evanescent.

4444. Cf. this passage with xxii. 5 and notes 2773 and 2774. The various stages of man’s physical life are: (1) first, simple matter (dust); (2) the sperm-drop in the father; (3) the fertilised ovum in the mother’s womb; (4) out into the light, as a human child; (5) youth and full maturity; (6) decay; and (7) death. In some cases the later stages are curtailed or cut off; but in any case, a Term appointed is reached, so that the higher purpose of Allah’s Will and Plan may be fulfilled in each given case, that man “may understand.”
68. It is He Who gives Life\textsuperscript{4445} And Death; and when He Decides upon an affair, He says to it, “Be”, And it is.

SECTION 8.

69. Seest thou not those That dispute concerning The Signs of Allah? How are they turned away\textsuperscript{4446} (From Reality)?

70. Those who reject the Book\textsuperscript{4447} And the (revelations) with which We sent Our messengers: But soon shall they know,-

71. When the yokes (shall be)\textsuperscript{4448} Round their necks, And the chains; They shall be dragged along-

\textsuperscript{4445} The keys of life and death are in Allah's hands. But He is not dependent on time or place or instruments or materials. All that He has to do is to say “Be”, and it comes into existence. \textit{Cf.} xvi. 40, and n. 2066; xxxvi. 82, and n. 4029. Conversely, His Will or Command is sufficient to annihilate Existence into Non-Existence (Life into Death) or determine the limits or conditions of Existence or Non-Existence.

\textsuperscript{4446} Those who dispute about the Signs of Allah which are clear to all who care to see, are merely in the mists of Unreality: \textit{Cf.} x. 32.

\textsuperscript{4447} “The Book” may refer to the Holy Qur'an or to the fundamental, Revelation the “Mother of the Book” (xiii. 39), while the Books revealed to the messengers are the definite Revelations that came down to men from time to time.

\textsuperscript{4448} The rejection of Allah's Message, however brought, carries its own penalty. The yoke of slavery to Sin and Evil is fastened more and more firmly round the rejecter's neck, because there is no one to safeguard his freedom, and the chains of superstitions and the ugly consequences of evil restrict his freedom and the limited faculty of choice which was given by Allah to man. This process receives its climax at the Hour of Judgment.
72. In the boiling fetid fluid;\textsuperscript{4449} Then in the Fire
Shall they be burned;

73. Then shall it be said To them: “Where are The (deities) to which Ye gave part-worship—
“74. Besides Allah?”
They will reply: “They have\textsuperscript{4450}
Left us in the lurch:
Nay, we invoked not,
Of old, anything (that had Real existence).” Thus
Does Allah leave
The Unbelievers to stray.

75. “That was because\textsuperscript{4451}
Ye were wont to rejoice On the earth in things Other than the Truth, And that ye were wont To be insolent.

76. “Enter ye the gates\textsuperscript{4452}
Of Hell, to dwell therein: And evil is (this) abode Of the arrogant!”

\textsuperscript{4449.} The sinner gets dragged further and further in the disgusting consequences of his evil actions, until the fire of destruction closes in upon him.

\textsuperscript{4450.} All falsehoods will vanish: Cf. vii. 36. The only Reality will be fully manifest even to those to whom Evil was made to seem alluring in the lower life. They will feel in their inmost souls that they had been pursuing mere shadows, things of no real existence. This was the result of their rejecting the Light and the Grace of Allah: they got entangled in the mazes of error.

\textsuperscript{4451.} Allah does not withdraw His grace from any unless (1) they actively and deliberately take a delight in things that are vain or false, and (2) they insolently reject the things that are true,—in other words, unless men are deliberately false to their own lights, as illuminated by the Light of Allah.

\textsuperscript{4452.} Cf. xxxix. 72.
The Signs of Allah are everywhere, and can be seen by the discerning eye at all times. But if any extraordinary Signs are demanded by cynics or Unbelievers, they will not be granted merely because they are demanded. It is Allah's Will that issues them, not merely the desire of human beings, even if he be a Messenger of Allah. But when an extraordinary Sign does issue by the Command of Allah, it means that the cup of the iniquitous is full; that their case is decided, and their time of respite is past; and that Justice takes the place of Mercy, and evil is blotted out.

4453. Cf. x. 46, and n. 1438. As the eventual justice and readjustment of values must take place, when every soul returns to the Judgment-Seat of Allah, it makes no difference if good and evil meet their deserts in this very life or not. Cf. also xii. 40.

4454. Cf. iv. 164. Allah sent Messengers of His Truth to every people. There are some whose names are known to us through the holy Qur-an, but there are a large number whose names are not made known to us through that medium. We must recognise the Truth wherever we find it.

4455. The Signs of Allah are everywhere, and can be seen by the discerning eye at all times. But if any extraordinary Signs are demanded by cynics or Unbelievers, they will not be granted merely because they are demanded. It is Allah's Will that issues them, not merely the desire of human beings, even if he be a Messenger of Allah. But when an extraordinary Sign does issue by the Command of Allah, it means that the cup of the iniquitous is full; that their case is decided, and their time of respite is past; and that Justice takes the place of Mercy, and evil is blotted out.
And there perished,  
There and then, those  
Who stood on Falsehoods.

SECTION 9.

79. It is Allah who made\textsuperscript{4456} Cattle for you, that ye  
May use some for riding  
And some for food;

80. And there are (other) advantages  
In them for you (besides);  
That ye may through them  
Attain to any need  
(There may be) in your hearts;  
And on them and on ships  
Ye are carried.

81. And He shows you (always)\textsuperscript{4457} His Signs: then which  
Of the Signs of Allah  
Will ye deny?

82. Do they not travel through  
The earth and see what  
Was the End of those

\textsuperscript{4456} Cf. xvi. 5-8. The fact that beasts, which in their wild state are so noxious, are, when domesticated, so useful to man, is itself one of the great and standing Signs of Allah's care for man. The great usefulness of cattle is very instructive. They serve for riding, and many of them for food; further, they are used for the plough, and they produce milk, or wool, or hair; and from their carcases man derives bones and horns for many industrial uses; but passing on to higher aspects of life, they further social, moral, and spiritual uses as draught-animals, in that transport serves one of the fundamental purposes of civilisation, being in this respect like ships for international commerce: xxx. 46, and n. 3565. It is by means of human intercourse through transport that we can carry out the highest needs of our culture, "any need there may be in our hearts", \textit{i.e.}, in our inner being.

\textsuperscript{4457} The Signs of Allah's goodness and mercy are so numerous that it is impossible to enumerate them. Which of them can any mortal deny? This is the theme of that highly poetical Sûra, \textit{Raḥmân} (S. iv).
Before them? They were
More numerous than these
And superior in strength
And in the traces
(They have left) in the land:
Yet all that they accomplished
Was of no profit to them.

83. For when their messengers
Came to them
With Clear Signs, they exulted
In such knowledge (and skill)
As they had; but
That very (Wrath) at which
They were wont to scoff
Hemmed them in.

84. But when they saw
Our Might, they said:
"We believe in Allah,-
The One God—and we
Reject the partners we used
To join with Him."

4458. Cf. ix. 69. For any generation to take inordinate pride in its own single achievements in science or skill becomes ridiculous if we consider the broad stream of history. In the first place, men will find that a great deal of what they attribute to their own merits only became possible owing to the earlier work of their predecessors. Secondly, many of their predecessors were more numerous and mightier in power than they, although the perspective of time may have reduced the apparent depth of their influence, and the monuments which they have left behind may have suffered from the destroying hand of Time. Thirdly, and most important of all, when they forgot Allah and His inexorable Law, nothing of their own handiwork profited them: they perished in the common ruin as all vanities must perish. Cf. also xl. 21 above, and n. 4387. See how the recapitulation rounds off the argument.

4459. Arrogance and an exaggerated idea of Self were at the bottom of the Evil to which they succumbed.

4460. Cf. xvi. 34. Nothing could stop Justice of Allah punishing Evil. What they had ridiculed came as an inexorable fact. None of their grandeur or art or science or skill was of any use when they lost their souls!
85. But their professing the Faith\footnote{4461} When they (actually) saw Our Punishment was not going To profit them. (Such has been) Allah's way Of dealing with His servants (From the most ancient times). And even thus did The rejecters of Allah Lose (utterly)!

4461. Again and again were they given chances, and again and again did they reject them. When it was too late, and in fact when it had no meaning, they offered to profess Faith. That was of no use. Allah does not accept unmeaning things of that kind. He wants to train and purify our will. For their disobedience and rebellion they perished utterly.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ḥā-Mīm, or Fussilat 41.

This is the second of the series of seven Sūras bearing the Abbreviated Letters Ḥā-Mīm. To prevent confusion with other Sūras of the Ḥā-Mīm series, the word Sajda is sometimes added to the title, making it Ḥā-Mīm as-Sajda, the double title being necessary as there is another Sūra called Sajda (S. xxxii). To avoid the double title, it is sometimes called Fussilat, from the occurrence of the word in verse 3.

The meaning of Ḥā-Mīm has been explained in the Introduction to S. xl, where will also be found a note on the chronology and general theme of the seven Ḥā-Mīm Sūras.

For this particular Sūra the theme is that the basis of Faith and Revelation is Allah's Power and Goodness, and the fruit of both is man's righteousness and healing.

Summary.—What is Revelation and Faith, and what is man's attitude to both, and what are its consequences? (xli. 1-32).

The fruits of Faith and Unfaith, Truth and Falsehood (xli. 33-54).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. **Hā-Mīm**:4462

2. A revelation from The Most Gracious, Most Merciful;—4463

3. A Book, whereof the verses Are explained in detail;—
   A Qur-ān in Arabic, For people who understand;—

4. Giving Good News And Admonition: yet most Of them turn away, And so they hear not.

5. They say: “Our hearts are Under veils, (concealed) From that to which thou Dost invite us, and

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4462. Abbreviated Letters: see Introduction to S. xl. See also n. 4382 to xl. 18, and n. 4505 to xli. 34.

4463. In the last Sūra (xl. 2-3) the revelation was described with reference to some of the qualities of Allah from Whom it came. Here it is described mainly with reference to its subject-matter. (1) It brings the Message of Grace and Mercy; (2) it is not merely a book of Dark Sayings, but everything is explained clearly and from various points of view; (3) it is in Arabic, the language of the people among whom it was first promulgated, and therefore easily intelligible to them if they take the trouble to understand; and (4) it opens the way to Forgiveness through Repentance and gives warning of all spiritual Dangers.

4464. With all the qualities mentioned in the last note, if men do not profit by its blessings, the fault lies in their will: they turn away, and thus fail to hear the voice that calls to them.

4465. The consequence of their wilful rejection is that a distance is created between Revelation and those for whom it is meant; their ears become deaf, so that the voice falls fainter and fainter on their ears: they feel a bar between themselves and the Messenger who comes to teach them. Cf. vii. 25.
In our ears is a deafness,  
And between us and thee  
Is a screen: so do Thou (what thou wilt);  
For us, we shall do (What we will!)

6. Say thou: "I am  
But a man like you:  
It is revealed to me  
By inspiration, that your God  
Is One God: so take  
The straight path unto Him  
And ask for His forgiveness." And woe to those who  
Join gods with Allah,-

7. Those who pay not  
Zakat and who  
Even deny the Hereafter.

8. For those who believe  
And work deeds of righteousness  
Is a reward that will  
Never fail.

4466. This is either a superiority complex adopting the sarcastic tone of an inferiority complex, or it expresses calculated indifference to spiritual teaching. In effect it says: 'Our hearts and minds are not intelligent enough to understand your noble ideas, nor our ears sufficiently acute to hear their exposition: you and we are quite different; there is a gulf between us. Why worry about us? You go your way, and we shall go ours!'

4467. The reply is in effect: that the bringer of the Message is not an angel nor a god, and so there can and ought to be no barrier between him and his hearers; but he has been chosen to bring a Message of Truth and Hope to them; they should accept the Gospel of Unity, and by Repentance obtain Allah's Grace and Forgiveness.

4468. There is nothing but pity for those who reject Truth, run after false worship, have no sympathy or charity for their fellow-men, and even deny that there is any future Life.

4469. But blessed are those who have Faith. They will have a Future and a Bliss that will never fail.
SECTION 2.


10. He set on the (earth), Mountains standing firm, High above it, And bestowed blessings on The earth, and measured therein Its sustenance In four Days, Alike for (All) who ask.

4470. This is a difficult passage, describing the primal creation of our physical earth and the physical heavens around us. If we count the two Days mentioned in this verse, the four Days, mentioned in verse 10, and the two Days mentioned in verse 12, we get a total of eight Days, while in many passages the creation is stated to have taken place in six Days: see vii. 54, n. 1031; and xxxii. 4, n. 3632. The Commentators understand the “four Days” in verse 10 to include the two Days in verse 9, so that the total for the universe comes to six Days. This is reasonable, because the processes described in verses 9 and 10 form really one series. In the one case it is the creation of the formless matter of the earth; in the other case it is the gradual evolution of the form of the earth, its mountains and seas, and its animal and vegetable life, with the “nourishment in due proportion”, proper to each. Cf. also xv. 19-20.

4471. Cf. xiii. 3 and xvi. 15, n. 2038. High above it: the highest mountains are 29,000 feet above sea-level, and the lowest depths of the bottom of the ocean are 31,600 feet below sea-level, so that the vertical difference between the highest and lowest points on the solid crust of the earth is about 11 1/2 miles. The highland areas are the main sources of the water-supply in all the regions of the earth, and vegetable and animal life depends on water-supply.

4472. See n. 4470 above.

4473. Sā-ilīn may mean either (1) those who seek, or (2) those who ask or enquire. If the former meaning is adopted, the clause means that everything is apportioned to the needs and appetites of Allah’s creatures. If the latter, it means that the needs of enquirers are sufficiently met by what is stated here.
11. Then He turned to the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it And to the earth: “Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly.” They said: “We do come (Together), in willing obedience.”

12. So He completed them As seven firmaments In two Days, and He Assigned to each heaven Its duty and command.

4474. For istawā see n. 1386 to x. 3. Cf. also ii. 29.

4475. From lxix. 30 it would appear as if the earth was spread out after the sky was made. In the present passage the creation of the earth and the evolution of life on our globe are mentioned first; and the making of the sky into the seven firmaments is mentioned last. The two statements are not inconsistent. It is stated here that when the sky was made into seven firmaments, it had existed previously as smoke, or vapour, or steam. The idea I derive from a collation of the relevant Quranic passages is that Allah first created primeval matter, which was as yet without order, shape, or symmetry. This state is called Chaos as opposed to Cosmos in Greek Cosmogony. The next stage would be the condensation of this primeval matter, into gases, liquids, or solids: on this subject no precise information is given to us: it belongs to the realm of Physics. About the earth we are told of four stages or Days, and about the heavens, of two stages or Days. For Days see n. 4477 below. If these stages proceeded or proceed together in time, it is obvious that each stage as we know it on earth is half as long as each stage in the heavens. But these are questions of Physics, Astronomy, or Geology.

4476. I take this to mean that Allah’s design in creation was not to keep heaven and earth separate, but together, as we indeed are, being part of the solar system, and travellers through space, crossing the path of several comets. And all matter created by Allah willingly obeys the laws laid down for it.

4477. For “Days”, which may include thousands of years, see vii. 54, and n. 1031. They refer to stages in the evolution of physical nature. In the Biblical cosmogony, (Gen. i, and ii. 1-7), which reflects old Babylonian cosmogony, the scheme is apparently to be taken literally as to days and is as follows. The first day Allah created light; the second, the firmament; the third, the earth and vegetation; the fourth, the stars and plants; the fifth, fish and fowl from the sea; and the sixth, cattle, creeping things, beasts on land, and man; on the seventh day He ended His work and rested. Our scheme is wholly different. (1) Allah did not rest, and never rests. “His Throne doth extend over the
And We adorned
The lower heaven
With lights, and (provided it)\textsuperscript{4478}
With guard. Such
Is the Decree of (Him)
The Exalted in Might,
Full of knowledge.

13. But if they turn away,
Say thou: “I have warned
You of a thunderbolt\textsuperscript{4479}
Like the thunderbolt of
The ‘Ad and the Thamūd!”

14. Behold, the messengers came
To them, from before them\textsuperscript{4480}
And behind them, (preaching):
“Serve none but Allah.”
They said, “If our Lord
Had so pleased, He would
Certainly have sent down angels.\textsuperscript{4481}

\textsuperscript{4478.} Cf. xv. 17, and n. 1951; also xxxvii. 6-9. The transition from the third person
(“He completed,” etc.) to the first person (“We adorned,” etc.) may be noted. The act
of creation is an impersonal act: the act of adornment and guarding is a personal favour
to Allah’s creatures.

\textsuperscript{4479.} See verse 17 below.

\textsuperscript{4480.} “From before them and behind them”: i.e., from every side. They were warned
from every point of view.

\textsuperscript{4481.} Cf. xv. 7, n. 1941; vi. 8-9, n. 841-42. The ‘Ad had more power and material
civilisation than the Pagan Arabs contemporary with the holy Prophet. But the greater
the material civilisation, the greater the arrogance as the besetting sin.
So we disbelieve in
The Message you were
Sent with.

15. Now the ‘Ad behaved
Arrogantly through the land,
Against (all) truth and reason, And said: “Who is superior
To us in strength?” What!
Did they not see that
Allah, Who created them,
Was superior to them
In strength? But they
Continued to reject Our Signs!

16. So We sent against them
A furious Wind through days Of disaster, that We might
Give them a taste
Of a Chastisement of humiliation
In this Life; but the Penalty
Of the Hereafter will be
More humiliating still:
And they will find
No help.

17. As to the Thamûd, We gave them guidance,
But they preferred blindness
(Of heart) to Guidance:

4482. Against (all) truth and reason: Cf. vii. 33. Their estimate of their own strength
was greater than was justified by facts, but if they had all the strength which they
arrogated to themselves, yet how could they stand before Allah?

4483. The detailed story of the ‘Ad and their besetting sin, and the preaching of their
Prophet Hûd to them will be found in xxvi. 123-140; also vii. 65-72, and n. 1040. For
the furious Wind, Cf. liv. 19.

4484. The story of the Thamûd usually goes with that of the ‘Ad. Cf. xxvi. 140-59;
also vii. 73-79, and n. 1043.
So the thunderbolt of the Chastisement
Of humiliation seized them,
Because of what they had earned.

18. But We delivered those
Who believed and practised righteousness.

SECTION 3.

19. The Day that
The enemies of Allah
Will be gathered together
To the Fire, they will
Be marched in ranks.

20. At length, when they reach
The (Fire), their hearing,
Their sight, and their skins
Will bear witness against them,
As to (all) their deeds.

21. They will say to their skins:
"Why bear ye witness

4485. "The thunderbolt:" i.e., deafening noises like those of thunder and lightning; or the rumbling of a terrible earthquake. In vii. 78, an earthquake is suggested: see n. 1047 to that verse. Cf. also above. xli. 13.

4486. "Marched in ranks:" to show their further humiliation: for they will be like prisoners going to Punishment.

4487. All the members of their bodies and the faculties of their minds, which they misused, will bear witness against them. Similarly, in xxxvi. 65, their hands and their feet bear witness against them. The "skin" not only includes the sense of touch (which is so often misused in sex), but also the sense of taste and the sense of smell, which are specialised forms of the organ of touch. All the sensory organs, and all their intellectual and emotional counterparts advance us by their use and pull us down by their misuse. They become tell-tale witnesses against us if abused.

4488. A new phase of their existence will now dawn on them. They used to think that if they concealed their evil deeds from the rest of the world, nothing would happen to them! But Allah can give "tongues to trees", and can make every fact in life, known and unknown to the world, contribute to the elucidation of truth and justice. When we succumb to evil, our limbs and faculties themselves betray us.
Against us?” They will say: “Allah hath given us speech,—(He) Who giveth speech To everything: He created You for the first time, And unto Him were ye To return.

22. “Ye did not seek To hide yourselves, lest Your hearing, your sight, And your skins should bear Witness against you! But Ye did think that Allah Knew not many of the things That ye used to do!

23. “But this thought of yours Which ye did entertain Concerning your Lord, hath Brought you to destruction, And (now) have ye become Of those utterly lost!”

24. If, then, they have patience, The Fire will be A Home for them! And if they beg For pardon, Their suit shall not Be granted.

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4489. The limbs and faculties will say: “You did not seek to hide your evil from us: in fact you used us for your evil, because we were in your power. Did you not know that Allah knew everything and that our knowledge would be evidence against you?”

4490. “You now see the situation! We were given for your use and service. You misused us, to your own utter and irretrievable destruction!”

4491. If they have patience: there is sarcasm in the meaning. “Let them not be impatient: they will soon find a home in the Fire of Hell! If they ask for grace and forgiveness then, it will be too late.”
25. And We have destined
   For them intimate companions\(^{4492}\) (Of like nature), who made
   Alluring to them what was
   Before them and behind them;\(^{4493}\)
   And the word among
   The previous generations of Jinns\(^{4494}\)
   And men, who have passed away,
   Is proved against them;
   For they are utterly lost.\(^{4495}\)

SECTION 4.

26. The Unbelievers say:
   "Listen not to this Qur-ān,\(^{4496}\)
   But talk at random
   In the midst
   Of its (reading), that ye
   May gain the upper hand!"

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\(^{4492}\) Just as the idea of happiness in heaven is expressed, not only by individual satisfaction, but by congenial society, so the idea of Punishment in hell is deepened by the fact that Evil will be made to meet evil: those who made sin fair-seeming in this life will be there to share in the regrets and mutual recriminations which will make life a burden. In fact, in these Ḥâ-Mīm verses, the idea of fit companionship for the Good and uncongenial company for the Evil, runs like a thread throughout. See Introduction to S. xl.

\(^{4493}\) They painted in glowing colours the pleasures of sin in the past and the pleasure of sin in the future, thus practising a double deception, which will now be found out.

\(^{4494}\) Jinns: see n. 929 to vi. 100. All spirits of wickedness and all men who submitted to them, in the past, were under one common sentence; and future generations who embrace evil will also join them. Cf. vi. 128.

\(^{4495}\) The echo here of verse 23 above completes the argument from another point of view.

\(^{4496}\) A favourite trick of those who wish to dishonour Revelation is, not only not to listen to it themselves, but to talk loudly and insolently when it is being read, so that even the true listeners may not be able to perform their devotions. They think that they are drowning the voice of Allah: in fact they are piling up misery for themselves in the future. For Allah’s voice can never be silenced.
27. But We will certainly
Give the Unbelievers a taste
Of a severe Chastisement,
And We will requite them
For the worst of their deeds. 4497

28. Such is the requital
Of the enemies of Allah,—
The Fire: therein will be
For them the Eternal Home:
A (fit) requital, for
That they were wont
To reject Our Signs.

29. And the Unbelievers will say:
“Our Lord! Show us those, 4498
Among Jinns and men,
Who misled us: we shall
Crush them beneath our feet,
So that they become
The vilest.”

30. In the case of those
Who say, “Our Lord
Is Allah”, and, further, 4499
Stand straight and steadfast,
The angels descend on them
(From time to time):
“Fear ye not!” (they suggest),

4497. Nothing that they can do, however outrageous, will escape its fit punishment. And to reject Allah’s Signs is to shut the very door to His Grace and Mercy.

4498. It is one of the qualities of sin and all evil, that it wishes to drag down others in its own camp, and rejoices to see them humiliated and disgraced, just as, in the opposite case, the good rejoice to help and honour others and make them happy wherever they can. Cf. vi. 112-113.

4499. The people who succeed in eternal Life are those who recognise and understand the one and only Eternal Reality, that is Allah, and further shape their probationary Life firmly and steadfastly on the principles of that Truth and Reality. They will have their friends and protectors in the good angels, in contrast to the evil ones, who will have no friendship or protection, but only the reproaches of the Satan.
“Nor grieve! But receive
The Glad Tidings
Of the Garden (of Bliss),
The which ye were promised!

31. “We are your protectors⁴⁵⁰⁰
In this life and
In the Hereafter:
Therein shall ye have
All that ye⁴⁵⁰¹
Shall desire; therein
Shall ye have all
That ye ask for!–

32. “A hospitable gift from One⁴⁵⁰²
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!”

SECTION 5.

33. Who is better in speech⁴⁵⁰³
Than one who calls (men)
To Allah, works righteousness,
And says, “I am of those
Who bow in Islam”? —

⁴⁵⁰⁰ “Protectors”: Cf. n. 4492 to xli. 25 above, and n. 4505 to xli. 34 below.

⁴⁵⁰¹ Cf. xxi. 102, xliii. 71, lii, 22.

⁴⁵⁰² Cf. iii. 198. Through Allah’s infinite Mercy and Forgiveness, they will now be in the position of guests to Host, and will receive unnumbered gifts out of all proportion to their own merits.

⁴⁵⁰³ Better in speech: i.e., speaks better counsel; or is more worthy of being listened to. That his word reaches the highest mark of human speech is evidenced by three facts: (1) that he calls all to the Truth of Allah, showing that his thoughts are not centred on himself; (2) every deed of his is righteousness, showing that there is no divergence between his preaching and his conduct; and (3) he completely associates himself with the Will of Allah, showing that he is the full embodiment of Islam. What a fine description of the holy Prophet!
34. Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!  

35. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.  

36. And if (at any time) an incitement to discord is made to thee by the Satan, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One who hears and knows all things.

4504. You do not return good for evil, for there is no equality or comparison between the two. You repel or destroy evil with something which is far better, just as an antidote is better than poison. You foil hatred with love. You repel ignorance with knowledge, folly and wickedness with the friendly message of Revelation. The man who was in the bondage of sin, you not only liberate from sin, but make him your greatest friend and helper in the cause of Allah! Such is the alchemy of the Word of Allah! Cf. xxiii. 96; xxviii. 54.

4505. Hamim: See n. 4500 above, and Introduction to S. xl.

4506. The moral standard referred to in the last verse can only be reached by the exercise of the highest patience and self-restraint. All sorts of human weaknesses and counsels of pseudo-wisdom and "self-respect" will keep breaking in, but resist them as suggestions of Evil (see next verse). If you reach anywhere near that high standard, you will be indeed most fortunate in a spiritual sense, for Allah’s Revelation will have made you great and free.

4507. Nazaga has in it the idea of discord, slander, disharmony, as well as incitements to such disturbances in the soul. They can only proceed from evil, and should be resisted with the help of Allah. See also last note.
37. Among His Signs are

The Night and the Day,
And the Sun and the Moon.
Prostrate not to the sun
And the moon, but prostrate to
Allah, Who created them,
If it is Him ye wish
To serve.

38. But if the (Unbelievers)
Are arrogant, (no matter).
For in the presence
Of thy Lord are those
Who celebrate His praises
By night and by day.
And they never flag
(Nor feel themselves
Above it).

39. And among His Signs
Is this: thou seest
The earth humble;
But when We send down
Rain to it, it is stirred

4508. Night and Day are opposites, and yet, by the alchemy of Allah, they can both subserve the purpose of human good, because the Night can give rest while the Day can promote activity. The Sun and the Moon are similarly complementary. So, in moral and spiritual affairs, seeming opposites may by Allah’s alchemy be made to subserve the purposes of Good. They are but instruments: Allah is the Cause. Adore Allah, and not the things which He has created. Use the things which He has created, but do not adore them.

4509. It does not in any way affect Allah if men rebel against Him. It is men’s own loss. Allah’s glory is being celebrated night and day by angels and men who receive the privilege of approaching His presence. To them it is delight and an honour to be in the sunshine of Truth and Happiness.

4510. Evil makes of the souls of men what drought makes of land: it kills life, beauty, and fruitfulness. Allah’s Word in the spiritual world has the same wonderful effect as rain has on barren land: it gives life, beauty, and fruitfulness. And the effect of Allah’s Word is also seen through the lives of men who repel evil with what is better. They also convert dead souls (which harbour spite and hatred) into living souls, which come into the main current of spiritual life, and help in carrying out Allah’s beneficent Purpose.
To life and yields increase. Truly, He Who gives life to the (dead) earth Can surely give life to (men) who are dead. For He has power over all things.

40. Those who pervert the Truth in Our Signs Are not hidden from Us. Which is better?—he that is cast into the Fire, or he that comes safe through, on the Day of Judgment? Do what ye will: Verily He seeth (clearly) all that ye do.

41. Those who reject the Message When it comes to them (are not hidden from Us). And indeed it is a Book Of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, worthy of all praise.

4511. Why should we wonder then at the potency of Allah’s Word, whether in our probationary lives here, or in the eternal life of the Hereafter.

4512. Pervert the Truth in Our Signs: either by corrupting the scriptures or turning them to false and selfish uses; or by neglecting the Signs of Allah in nature around them, or silencing His voice in their own conscience. Everything is known to Allah. Why not work for true salvation at the final Judgment?

4513. Mere rejection by men will not silence the Signs of Allah, which will work uninterruptedly and with the fullest potency.

4514. Allah’s Truth is fully guarded on all sides. No one can get the better of it by attacking it from before or behind it, openly or secretly, or in any way whatever.
43. Nothing is said to thee
That was not said
To the messengers before thee: 4515
Surely thy Lord has
At His command (all) Forgiveness
As well as a most
Grievous Chastisement.

44. Had We sent this as
A Qurân (in a language) 4516
Other than Arabic, they would
Have said: “Why are not
Its verses explained in detail?
What! a foreign (tongue)
And (a Messenger) an Arab?”
Say: “It is a guide
And a healing to those
Who believe; and for those
Who believe not, there is
A deafness in their ears, 4517
And it is blindness in their (eyes):
They are (as it were)
Being called from a place
Far distant!”

4515. The gist of Allah’s Message, now, before, and for ever, is the same: Mercy to the erring and repentant; just punishment to those who wilfully rebel against Allah.

4516. Cf. xvi. 103-105; xii. 2; etc. It was most natural and reasonable that the Messenger being Arab, the Message should be in his own tongue, that he might explain it in every detail, with the greatest power and eloquence. Even though it was to be for the whole world, its initial exposition was thus to be in Arabic. But if people had no faith and were spiritually deaf or blind, it would not matter in what language it came.

4517. Cf. xii. 5, and vi. 25. They pretended that it was too deep for them, when they meant that they were superior to it! The fact was that by putting themselves in an artificially false position, they rendered themselves impervious to the Message. The voice of Revelation or the voice of conscience sounded to them as if it came from a far-off place! They themselves made themselves strangers to it.
45. We certainly gave Moses The Book aforetime: but disputes Arose therein. Had it not Been for a Word⁴⁵¹⁸ That went forth before From thy Lord, (their differences) Would have been settled Between them: but they Remained in suspicious Disquieting doubt thereon.

46. Whoever works righteousness Benefits his own soul; Whoever works evil, it is Against his own soul: Nor is thy Lord ever Unjust (in the least) To His servants.

47. To Him is referred⁴⁵¹⁹ The Knowledge of the Hour (Of Judgment: He knows all): No fruit comes out Of its sheath, nor does

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⁴⁵¹⁸ Callousness and self-sufficiency in religion are often illustrated by sects like the Pharisees and Sadducees among the Jews. Where there are honest differences of opinion, they can, in Allah's Plan, lead to greater enquiry and emulation. Where the differences are fractious, there is often even then time left for repentance. In any case the Word or Decree of God is for the best good of all, and should not disturb Faith. Cf. x. 19. A good life, of faith and truth, is in our own interests, and the opposite against our own interests. Allah is never unjust.

⁴⁵¹⁹ There are profound mysteries which the knowledge of man cannot fathom but which are all open knowledge to Allah, because He plans, guides and controls all things. The precise time of the Hour of Judgment is one of these. We are not to dispute about matters like these, which are matters of speculation as far as human intelligence is concerned. Such speculations ruined the Ummat of Moses, and set them on the arid path of doubts and controversies. Our task is to do our duty and love Allah and man (see the last two verses). Cf. also xxi. 4.
A female conceive (within Her womb) nor bring forth (Young), but by His Knowledge. The Day that (Allah) will propound To them the (question),<sup>4520</sup> "Where are the Partners (Ye attributed) to Me?" They will say, "We do Assure Thee not one Of us can bear witness!"

48. The (deities) they used to invoke Aforetime will leave them In the lurch, and they Will perceive that they Have no way of escape.

49. Man does not weary<sup>4521</sup> Of asking for good (things), But if ill touches him, He gives up all hope (And) is lost in despair.

50. When We give him a taste<sup>4522</sup> Of some mercy from Us, After some adversity has Touched him, he is sure

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4520. When the final restoration of true values comes, all falsehood will be exposed openly and publicly. The false gods will vanish, and their falsehood will be acknowledged by those who had lapsed from true worship. But it will be too late then for repentance.

4521. Not only is man prone to doubts and speculations in matters beyond his ken, thus disturbing the even tenor of his spiritual life: he is apt to run into opposite extremes in his daily experiences in this life. He is always hankering after the good things of this life. They are not all good for him. If he receives a little check, even though it may be to bring him to his bearings and turn his thoughts to higher things, he is apt to fall into despair.

4522. When men entertain false ideas of values in life, there are two or three possible attitudes they may adopt in reaction to their experiences. In the first place, their desire may be inordinate for the good things of this life, and any little check brings them into a mood of despair. See last note. In the second place, if their desire is granted,
To say, “This is due
To my (merit): I think not
That the Hour (of Judgment)
Will (ever) be established;
But if I am brought back
To my Lord, I have
(Much) good (stored) in His sight!”
But We will show
The Unbelievers the truth
Of all that they did,
And We shall give them
The taste of a severe
Chastisement.

51. When We bestow favours4523
On man, he turns away,
And gets himself remote
On his side (instead of4524
Coming to Us); and when
Evil seizes him, (he comes)
Full of prolonged prayer!

52. Say: “See ye if4524-A
The (Revelation) is (really)

= are puffed up, and think that everything is due to their own cleverness or merit, and they forget Allah. Not only that, but they go a step further, and begin to doubt a Hereafter at all! If by chance they have a faint glimmering of the Hereafter, which they cannot help recognising, they think themselves “favoured of Heaven”, because of some small favours given to them in this life by way of trial. Thus they turn all things, good or evil, away from their real purpose, because they are devoted to falsehood.

4523. The last verse and note dealt with men's distortion of the values of life. Here we come to men's ingratitude and hypocrisy. If they receive good, they go farther away from Allah, instead of coming nearer to him. If they suffer ill, they call on Allah and offer prolonged prayers, but it is not sincere devotion and therefore worthless.

4524. Cf. xvii. 83.

4524-A. An argument is now addressed, of a most searching nature. Examine your own souls. See if you do not really find something unusual in Allah's Revelation! If you do, and yet you reject it, what a terrible responsibility fastens itself on you? Could anything be more foolish or more misguided than to reject a Message which is transforming the whole world?
53. Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) Regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until It becomes manifest to them That this is the Truth.

54. Ah indeed! are they In doubt concerning The Meeting with their Lord? Ah indeed! it is He That doth encompass All things!

4524-B. 'If you resist the convictions of the whole world, you are only forming a Cave or a narrow obscure sect or schism, which serves no purpose, and is unfit to live in the broad light of Universal Religion.' Cf. ii. 176, n. 176.

4524-C. Allah's Truth always spreads, in its own good time, across to the uttermost ends of the earth, as it did in the case of Islam. But its intensive spread in the hearts and souls of people is even more remarkable than its extensive spread over large areas. Men like the four Companions of the Prophet—and many more—became leaders of men and arbiters of the world's fate. Madinah from being a focus of jarring tribes and factions that hated each other, became the seat of heroic actions and plans and the nursery of great and noble heroic deeds that resounded throughout the world. It makes no difference what men may say or do. Allah's Truth must prevail, and He knows who obstruct and who help.

4525. Short-sighted people may like to think that there may be no Judgment. But Judgment is inevitable and cannot be escaped, for Allah "doth encompass all things."
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Ash-Shūrā*, 42.

This is the third  Sūra of the Ḥā-Mīm  series of seven Sūras, for which see the Introduction to S. xl.

The theme is how evil and blasphemy can be cured by the Mercy and Guidance of Allah, which come through His Revelation. Men are asked to settle their differences in patience by mutual Consultation (xlii. 38); which explains the title of the Sūra.

Summary.—The Contrast of blasphemy and disputation against Revelation, Unity, and Faith, as relying on the Signs and the Mercy of Allah (xlii. 1-29).

Evil comes through men's own deeds, of which they cannot avoid the consequences, but Guidance comes through Allah's Mercy and Revelation (xlii. 30-53).
1. **Hā-Mīm**;\textsuperscript{4526}

2. ‘Ain. Sin. Qāf.\textsuperscript{4527}

3. Thus doth (He) send Inspiration to thee As (He did) to those before thee,-- Allah, Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.

4. To Him belongs all That is in the heavens And on earth: and He Is Most High, Most Great.\textsuperscript{4529}

5. The heavens are almost Rent asunder from above them\textsuperscript{4530} (By His Glory): And the angels celebrate The Praises of their Lord,

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\textsuperscript{4526} See Introduction to S. xl.

\textsuperscript{4527} This Sūra has a double set of Abbreviated Letters, one in the first verse, and one in this second verse. No authoritative explanation of this second set is available, and I refrain from speculation. See Appendix I.

\textsuperscript{4528} Inspiration is full of Power and Wisdom, and both these qualities are derived from the Power and Wisdom of Allah. Unlike human power, this Power is necessarily good and merciful; unlike human wisdom, this Wisdom is necessarily complete and indisputable.

\textsuperscript{4529} We cannot conceive the distance which separates the Most High from the highest of His creatures, Allah Most Great from the greatest of the beings that we can imagine. The highest heavens are mentioned in the next verse, as well as the noblest creatures that we can imagine, the angels.

\textsuperscript{4530} How can we conceive of sublimity and greatness in a higher degree than this, that the highest heavens are almost ready to burst asunder by His Glory, which is higher than all?
And pray for forgiveness
For all beings on earth:  
Behold! Verily Allah is He,
The Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

6. And those who take
As protectors others besides Him,  
Allah doth watch over them;
And thou art not
The disposer of their affairs.

7. Thus have We sent
By inspiration to thee
An Arabic Qur'an:  
That thou mayest warn
The Mother of Cities
And all around her,—
And warn (them) of
The Day of Assembly,
Of which there is no doubt:
(When) some will be
In the Garden, and some
In the Blazing Fire.

4531. The angels are the noblest and purest beings of whom we can conceive. They reflect on the one side Allah's Glory and Praise, and on the other, two other attributes of Allah, that look towards His erring creatures, viz., Forgiveness and Mercy. The two sets of attributes are complementary. They thus proclaim in their own being and in their prayers the Greatness and unbounded Goodness of Allah.

4532. We now come to the contrast, the folly and ingratitude of man. But that cannot escape its final doom in the Universal Plan of Allah. Only Judgment rests with Allah. A Prophet is not responsible for the conduct of men, in a system which permits some limited free-will and personal responsibility.

4533. The point of the Qur'an being in Arabic is that it is plain and intelligible to the people through whom and among whom it was promulgated; see next clause.

4534. The City of Makkah. See n. 913 to vi. 92. This is undoubtedly a Makkan verse. Even apart from the Qibla, Makkah is the centre of Islam, and “all around her” is the whole world.

4535. The contrast is again emphasised, as explained in the Summary.
8. If Allah had so willed, He could have made them a single people; but He Admits whom He will To His Mercy; And the wrong-doers Will have no protector Nor helper.

9. What! Have they taken (For worship) protectors Besides Him? But it is Allah,—He is the Protector, And it is He Who Gives life to the dead: It is He Who has power Over all things.

SECTION 2.

10. Whatever it be wherein Ye differ, the decision Thereof is with Allah: Such is Allah my Lord: In Him I trust, And to Him I turn.

4536. Cf. v. 51, and n. 761. It is one of the Signs of Allah that He has made us different, that we may be tried in the exercise of our will, and that we may reach, through righteousness and Faith, our highest development, and enjoy His gifts of Mercy and Grace. But we must not become contentious, and fall into evil: we must understand our own limitations. Otherwise we shall lose His grace and protection.

4537. There can be no greater ingratitude or blasphemy than to worship false gods, or to seek protection from things that have no power, when Allah—Who has power over all things—is always seeking to protect and cherish His creatures, and placing in their way all the means for attaining the best in them.

4538. In the highest issues of life men may see things differently. If their differences arise merely from selfish motives, or narrowness of vision, they are sinning against their own souls. If their differences arise from sincere but mistaken notions, their proper course is not to form divisions and sects, or to increase contention and hatred among men, but to leave all things to Allah, trusting in Him and turning to Him in all difficulties. The final decision in all things is with Him.
11. (He is) the Creator
Of the heavens and
The earth: He has made
For you pairs
From among yourselves,\(^{4539}\)
And pairs among cattle:
By this means does He
Multiply you: there is nothing
Whatever like unto Him,
And He is the One
That hears and sees.

12. To Him belong the keys
Of the heavens and the earth:
He enlarges and restricts\(^{4540}\)
The Sustenance to whom
He will: for He knows
Full well all things.

13. The same religion has He
Established for you as that
Which He enjoined on Noah\(^ {4541}\)
The which We have sent
By inspiration to thee--

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\(^{4539}\) The mystery of sex has not only its physical aspects, but its moral and spiritual aspects, and therefore mankind is in this respect differentiated from the lower animals, and among mankind the grades and qualities are suggested by the phrase "from among yourselves". As regards cattle, they are specially mentioned among the animals, as having special relations with man and specially subserving his needs, not only in the physical sphere, but also in the matter of transport, which is the key to all civilization and culture: Cf. xxxvi. 71-73; also xxiii. 21-22, where they are compared to ships, the symbol of international intercourse.

\(^{4540}\) "Sustenance", here as elsewhere, stands for all things that support every phase of life, physical, social, intellectual, or spiritual. Cf. x. 59, n. 1447. The source of all gifts is Allah; His bounty is inexhaustible, and He gives to all; but He does not give to all in the same measure, because, out of the fullness of His knowledge and wisdom, He can judge best what is best for any of His creatures.

\(^{4541}\) Allah's Religion is the same in essence, whether given, for example, to Noah, Abraham, Moses, or Jesus, or to our holy Prophet. The source of unity is the revelation from Allah. In Islam it is "established" as an institution, and does not remain merely a vague suggestion.
And that which We enjoined
On Abraham, Moses, and Jesus:
Namely, that ye should remain
Steadfast in Religion, and make
No divisions therein.\(^{4542}\)
To those who worship
Other things than Allah,
Hard is the (way)
To which thou callest them.\(^{4543}\)
Allah chooses to Himself
Those whom He pleases,
And guides to Himself
Those who turn (to Him).

14. And they became divided\(^{4544}\)
Only after knowledge
Reached them,—being insolent to
One another.
Had it not been
For a Word that
Went forth before\(^{4545}\)
From thy Lord,
(Tending) to a Term appointed,

\(^{4542}\). Faith, Duty or Religion, is not a matter to dispute about. The formation of sects is against the very principle of Religion and Unity. What we should strive for is steadfastness in duty and faith, and unity among mankind.

\(^{4543}\). Unity, unselfishness, love for Allah and man,—these things are inconsistent with selfish aggrandizement, unjust suppression of our fellow-creatures, false worship, and false conduct to our brethren. Hence the Gospel of Unity, though it is in complete accord with the pure pattern after which Allah made us, is yet hard to those who love self and falsehood. But Grace is free to all, and in His wise Plan, He will specially select Teachers to show the Way to humanity, and no one who turns to Him will lack guidance.

\(^{4544}\). Cf. ii. 213. If you reject Truth after it has reached you, it can only be through selfish contumacy or envy.

\(^{4545}\). Cf. x. 19, and n. 1407. Allah’s decree has allowed a certain Term during which a sinner has the chance of repentance and forgiveness. Were it not so, sin would be punished at once, and the matter would be decided straightway. So also, when people reject Truth from selfish or contumacious motives, they get rope: perchance they may repent.
The matter would have
Been settled between them:
But truly those who have
Inherited the Book after them
Are in suspicious (disquieting)\(^{4546}\)
Doubt concerning it.

15. Now then, for that (reason),\(^{4547}\)
Call (them to the Faith),
And stand steadfast
As thou art commanded,
Nor follow thou their vain
Desires; but say: “I believe
In whatever Book
Allah has sent down;
And I am commanded
To judge justly between you.
Allah is our Lord\(^{4548}\)
And your Lord! For us
(Is the responsibility for)
Our deeds, and for you
For your deeds. There is
No contention between us

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4546. Cf. xiv. 9 and n. 1884. “Those who have inherited the Book” are the People of the Book, of the ages since the Book or Revelation came to them. Referring to the Jews and Christians, contemporary with our Prophet, how true it is that they were broken up into hostile sects which hated and persecuted each other! Islam came to unite them, and it did. For the present phases of Christianity and Judaism are of later growth.

4547. How beautifully the mission of Islam is commended in this verse! (1) The more sectarianism and division there is in the world, the more need is there for the Gospel of Unity. (2) It must steadfastly pursue its way. (3) It must not be deflected by worldly or political motives. (4) Its faith must be directly in Allah and in Allah’s Revelation. “The Book” mentioned here covers all the revelations sent by Allah to His prophets. (5) It must judge justly between warring factions, as the Religion of Peace and Unity.

4548. The Mission of Islam is further described. (6) The God whom it preaches is not an exclusive God: He is the Lord of the Worlds: to any given person, of whatever faith, ‘He is your Allah, as well as mine.’ (7) Our Faith is not a question of words; it is deeds which decide; each one of us has personal responsibility for his own conduct. (8) There is no cause of contention whatever, when we preach Unity, Truth, and the Hereafter. (9) If you have doubts, the final arbiter is Allah, and His pleasure is our Goal.
And you. Allah will
Bring us together,
And to Him is
(Our) final goal."

16. But those who dispute
Concerning Allah after He
Has been accepted, 4549
Futile is their argument
In the sight of
Their Lord: on them
Is Wrath, and for them
Will be a Chastisement
Terrible.

17. It is Allah Who has
Sent down the Book in truth,
And the Balance 4550
And what will make thee
Realise that perhaps the Hour
Is close at hand?

18. Only those wish to 4551
Hasten it who believe not
In it: those who believe

4549. After He has been accepted. The disputants are the Unbelievers who
pugnaciously assault the minds of Believers after the Believers have by conviction
accepted Faith in Allah as leading to spiritual Light. Such disputation is futile. An inner
spiritual experience can never be shaken by dialectical assaults. On the contrary such
disputations recoil on the heads of those who indulge in them. Allah’s Wrath is on them
in this life, and the terrible Penalty of the Hereafter must inevitably follow their evil plots
against Truth.

4550. Revelation is like a balance, an instrument placed by Allah in our hands, by
which we can weigh all moral issues, all questions of right and wrong in conduct. We
must do so constantly. For the Judgment in any given case may come at any time: it
may be quite near, and we must always be prepared. The Balance may also refer to the
God given faculty by which man can judge between right and wrong.

4551. The Unbelievers do not believe in Judgment and laugh at it. They say
defiantly, “If there is to be a punishment, let it come at once!” The threefold answer
to this will be found in n. 1810 to xiii. 6. With those who believe, the case is different.
They know that the Hereafter is an awful Reality, and prepare for it. They see clearly
on what a wrong track the scoffers are!
Hold it in awe,
And know that it is
The Truth. Behold, verily
Those that dispute concerning
The Hour are far astray.

19. Gracious is Allah\textsuperscript{4552}
To His servants:\textsuperscript{4553}
He gives Sustenance\textsuperscript{4554}
To whom He pleases:
And He is the Strong,
The Mighty.

SECTION 3.

20. To any that desires
The tilth of the Hereafter,
We give increase
In his tilth; and to any
That desires the tilth
Of this world, We grant
Somewhat thereof, but he\textsuperscript{4555}
Has no share or lot
In the Hereafter.

\textsuperscript{4552} Latif: so kind, gracious, and understanding, as to bestow gifts finely suited to the needs of the recipients. For the various meanings of \textit{Latif}, see n. 2844 to xxii. 63. Cf. also xii. 100.

\textsuperscript{4553} “Servants” here seems to include all men, just and unjust, for Allah provides for them all.

\textsuperscript{4554} Sustenance, \textit{i.e.}, provision for all needs. “To whom He pleases” is not restrictive, but modal. ‘Allah provides for all, but His provision is according to His wise Will and Plan, and not according to people’s extravagant demands.’ He can provide for all, because He has complete power and can carry out His Will. A further comment will be found in the next verse.

\textsuperscript{4555} The parable is from the efforts of the husbandman, who ploughs and prepares the soil, sows the seed, weeds in due season, and reaps the harvest. You reap as you sow. But Allah will add manifold advantages for spiritual tilth. To those who are only engrossed in the vanities of this world, something may accrue in this world, but the next world is closed to them.
21. What! Have they partners\(^{4556}\) (In godhead), who have established for them some religion without the permission of Allah? Had it not been for the decree of judgment, the matter would have been decided between them (at once). But verily the wrong-doers will have a grievous chastisement.

22. Thou wilt see the wrong-doers in fear on account of what they have earned, and (the burden) of that must (necessarily) fall on them. But those who believe and work righteous deeds will be in the meadows of the gardens: they shall have, before their Lord, all that they wish for. That will indeed be the magnificent bounty (Of Allah).

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4556. Nothing can exist without the permission of Allah. Can people, who indulge in false worship say: “Why does Allah permit it?” The answer is: “a certain latitude is allowed with the grant of a limited form of free will. When the time for judgment comes, the punishment is sure.” See n. 1810 to xiii. 6. Decree (or Word) of Judgment: See n. 1407 to x. 19.

4557. The chief feature of the punishment of wrong-doing is that the minds of the wrong-doers are haunted with terror on account of their own guilty conscience. They cannot possibly escape the weight of that terror.

4558. In contrast with the withering terror of the wrong-doers is the ease and rational happiness of those who do good. “On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve” (ii. 38). Their wills will have been purified, and they shall have all that they shall desire, “before their Lord”. That is, their highest bliss will be the sight of their Lord. No higher bounty can they wish for.
23. That is (the Bounty) whereof\textsuperscript{4559} Allah gives Glad Tidings To His Servants who Believe and do righteous deeds. Say: “No reward do I Ask of you for this Except the love Of those near of kin.”\textsuperscript{4560} And if any one earns Any good, We shall give Him an increase of good In respect thereof: for Allah Is Oft-Forgiving, Grateful.\textsuperscript{4561}

24. What! Do they say, “He has forged a falsehood Against Allah”? But if Allah Willed, He could seal up\textsuperscript{4562} Thy heart. And Allah Blots out falsehood, and proves The Truth by His Words. For He knows well The secrets of all hearts.

\textsuperscript{4559} Heaven may be pictured to our minds in various forms. This is one of the highest, and Allah announces it freely to the righteous.

\textsuperscript{4560} No sort of tangible reward does the prophet of Allah ask for proclaiming the Glad Tidings of Allah. But at least he has the right to ask that his kith and kin should not persecute him and put all sorts of obstacles in his way, as did the Quraish against the holy Prophet.

\textsuperscript{4561} Cf. xxxv. 29-30, and notes 3915 (for increase) and 3917 (for Allah’s appreciation of service).

\textsuperscript{4562} If any one has a doubt about a prophet’s mission, let him look at the prophet’s life, at his work, at his character. Allah loves Truth, not Falsehood. Allah’s aid goes with Truth, not with Falsehood. The beauty and power of Allah’s Word cannot be found in Falsehood. The false man’s heart would be sealed, not expanded to new heights, as is that of the Message-bearer of Allah.
25. He is the One that accepts\textsuperscript{4563} Repentance from His Servants And forgives sins: And He knows all That ye do.

26. And He listens to\textsuperscript{4564} Those who believe and Do deeds of righteousness, And gives them increase Of His Bounty: but For the Unbelievers there is A terrible Chastisement.

27. If Allah were to enlarge\textsuperscript{4565} The provision for His Servants, They would indeed transgress Beyond all bounds Through the earth; But He sends (it) down In due measure As He pleases.\textsuperscript{4566} For He is with His Servants Well-acquainted, Watchful.

\textsuperscript{4563} Whatever the sin, Allah's Mercy is open to sincere Repentance, at all times, until the decree of condemnation issues.

\textsuperscript{4564} To the prayers of the righteous He listens, and He gives them of His Bounty beyond their deserts. Every time they do a little good, they are increased in their goodness. Every right impulse or aspiration is strengthened and leads to progressive spiritual advancement.

\textsuperscript{4565} It may be objected that all prayers, even of good people, are not answered. The reply is: (1) that even everyone who is good does not necessarily know what is best for him, for the values in this life are curiously distorted; and (2) on account of their want of knowledge, if everyone got all he asked for, there would be chaos and confusion, and “transgression beyond bounds through the earth”, for the different interests are so intermingled and balanced that some measure must be observed in granting people’s wishes. This measure is best supplied by the watchful care of Allah and His perfect knowledge of all our real needs.

\textsuperscript{4566} “As He pleases” is here almost equivalent to “as He thinks best”.
28. He is the One that sends down Rain (even) after (men) have Given up all hope, And scatters His Mercy (Far and wide). And He Is the Protector, Worthy Of all Praise.

29. And among His Signs Is the creation of The heavens and the earth, And the living creatures That He has scattered Through them: and He Has power to gather them Together when He wills.

4567. That men should get such a blessing as rain when they expect it according to ordinary calculations or probabilities does not impress them, as it is a daily occurrence. But Allah's mercy is more than this. It comes to our aid even when all hope is lost, and gives us new chances and new openings where we least expect them. His quality of cherishing and protecting His creatures is always active, and what higher praise can we give?

4568. Dâbbatun: beasts, living, crawling creatures of all kinds: see n. 166 to ii. 164. Similarly in xxiv. 45, and other passages, the word is used for living creatures of all kinds, life generally, whose material basis is the mysterious thing which science calls protoplasm. The more our biological knowledge increases, the more do we marvel at the unity of Life on the one hand, and its diversity on the other.

4569. Life is not confined to our one little Planet. It is a very old speculation to imagine some life like human life on the planet Mars. Though no scientific demonstration is possible, it is reasonable to suppose that Life in some form or other is scattered through some of the millions of heavenly bodies scattered through space. What a wonderful Sign of Allah! The Almighty Who created such countless beings has surely the power to bring them together.
SECTION 4.

30. Whatever misfortune

Happens to you, is because

Of the things your hands Have wrought, and for many

(A sin) He grants forgiveness.

31. Nor can ye escape

Through the earth; Nor have ye, besides Allah, Any one to protect Or to help.

32. And among His Signs Are the ships, smooth-running Through the ocean, (tall) As mountains.

33. If it be His Will, He can still the Wind: Then would they become Motionless on the back Of the (ocean). Verily

4570. All evil, all sorrow, all pain and affliction, are things not normal, things twisted from the pure and holy nature as created by Allah's hands. As far as man is concerned, his misfortunes are but the consequences of the things he has done. He must bear personal responsibility for them and not throw the blame on others.

4571. Every evil deed or word or thought must have its evil consequences: but if Allah forgives anything—and He forgives much,—let no one imagine that he has defeated—or can defeat—Allah's Will or Plan. The only help or protection that is possible is from Allah. Cf. xxix. 22.

4572. The great and stately ships are appealed to again and again as being among the Signs of Allah, from many aspects. The aspect referred to here is how the great sailing ship runs prosperously as long as "the breath of heaven fills the sail", and what a miserable helpless creature she becomes when she once becomes becalmed. Students of English literature will remember the striking picture which Coleridge draws in his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The becalmed ship is as it were in the grip of Death because of the crime which the sailor had committed, and his mind feels psychologically the full force of the Sign. By analogy we can apply this to other craft: the steamer is not free from other dangers of the sea, nor air-craft from numerous dangers of the air.
In this are Signs
For everyone who patiently \(^{4573}\)
Perseveres and is grateful.

34. Or He can cause them
To perish because of
The (evil) which (the men)
Have earned; but much
Doth He forgive.

35. But let those know, who \(^{4574}\)
Dispute about Our Signs,
That there is for them
No way of escape.

36. Whatever ye are given (here)
Is (but) the enjoyment \(^{4575}\)
Of this Life: but that
Which is with Allah
Is better and more lasting:
(It is) for those who believe \(^{4576}\)

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4573. If we study such Signs in the right spirit, we learn the highest lessons for our spiritual life: on the one hand, patient perseverance with reliance on Allah, and on the other a feeling or attitude of grateful thanks to Allah, that He enables us to achieve so much in spite of our shortcomings, and forgives in us so much that deserves punishment and disaster.

4574. If we treat Allah’s Signs in the wrong spirit, i.e., contumaciously reject them or constantly dispute about them instead of trying to understand them, we are told that such tactics will avail us nothing: we cannot escape the consequences of our sins. The only way to escape is by repentance on our part and the grant of mercy by Allah.

4575. Any good (or ill) which is our lot is only a temporary phase to serve the convenience of this life. But there is a higher good, which comes from Allah’s own Presence. Such good is both superior in quality, and more permanent. In the same way, any ills that we may suffer in this life, have reference only to the conditions of this our life of probation. The ills that we “earn” in our spiritual Life—such as deprivation of Allah’s Grace—are far more momentous and permanent.

4576. The higher and more permanent gifts which come from Allah’s Presence are for those who truly worship and serve Allah. These are described by nine of their characteristics: viz. (1) they have Faith: and it follows that (2) they trust in Allah, instead of running after false standards or values: (3) they eschew the more serious offences against Allah’s Law, and of course keep clear of any offences against sex (indecencies); (4) while knowing that they are not themselves perfect, they are ready to forgive others, even though they are sorely tried with anger and provocation; for the rest see n. 4578.
And put their trust
In their Lord:

37. Those who avoid the greater Sins and indecencies
And, when they are angry
Even then forgive;

38. Those who respond To their Lord, and establish Regular prayer; who (conduct)
Their affairs by mutual Consultation,
Who spend out of what We bestow on them For Sustenance;

4577. Here we are speaking of the ordinary man or woman who tries to follow Allah's Law: he or she is not perfect, but at least eschews the major breaches of conduct. For those higher in spiritual degree there is of course a stricter standard. But all are entitled to the blessing of Islam, whatever their degree.

4578. Continuing the enumeration of the characteristics described in n. 4576 above, we have the following further qualities in those who wish to serve Allah. (5) They are ready at all times to hearken to Allah's Signs, or to listen to the admonitions of prophets of Allah, and to follow the true Path, as they understand it; (6) they keep personal contact with Allah, by habits of Prayer and Praise; (7) their conduct in life is open and determined by mutual Consultation between those who are entitled to voice, e.g., in private domestic affairs, as between husband and wife, or other responsible members of the household; in affairs of business, as between partners or parties interested; and in State affairs, as between rulers and ruled, or as between different departments of administration, to preserve the unity of administration; (8) they do not forget Charity, or the help due to their weaker brethren, out of the wealth or gifts or talents or opportunities, which Allah has provided for themselves; and (9) when other people use them despitefully, they are not cowed down or terrorised into submission and acceptance of evil, but stand up for their rights within the limits mentioned in verse 40.

4579. “Consultation.” This is the key-word of the Sūra, and suggests the ideal way in which a good man should conduct his affairs, so that, on the one hand, he may not become too egotistical, and, on the other, he may not lightly abandon the responsibilities which devolve on him as a Personality whose development counts in the sight of Allah. See the points in head (7) under n. 4578 above. This principle was applied to its fullest extent by the holy Prophet in his private and public life, and was fully acted upon by the early rulers of Islam. Modern representative government is an attempt—by no means perfect—to apply this principle in State affairs. See my Religious Polity of Islam.
39. And those who, when
An oppressive wrong is inflicted
On them, (are not cowed
But) help and defend themselves.\(^{4580}\)

40. The recompense for an injury
Is an injury equal thereto\(^{4581}\)
(In degree): but if a person
Forgives and makes reconciliation,
His reward is due\(^{4582}\)
From Allah: for (Allah)

\(^{4580}\). This follows from the high value attached to an individual soul's Personality in Islam. Cf. last note. There are four possible situations that may arise: an individual may have to stand up against an oppressor (1) for his own trampled rights, or (2) for the rights of others within his ken; or (3) a community may have similarly to stand up for its own rights collectively; or (4) for the rights of others. Nos. 2, 3, and 4 are considered highly meritorious for all, though few have the courage or the spirit to rise to so high a standard. No. 1 is specially liable to abuse on account of man's selfishness; Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are also abused by men pretending to motives of public good when they are serving their own personal interests or idiosyncracies; hence the qualifications mentioned in the next four verses and the notes thereto.

\(^{4581}\). See last note. When you stand up for rights, either on private or public grounds, it may be through processes of law, or by way of private defence in so far as the law permits private action. But in all cases you must not seek a compensation greater than the injury suffered. The most you can do is to demand equal redress, \textit{i.e.}, a harm equivalent to the harm done to you. Even this may serve to curb your unregenerate soul, or a community bent on revenge. But the ideal mode is not to slake your thirst for vengeance, but to follow better ways leading to the reform of the offender or his reconciliation. See xli. 34, and xxiii. 96. You can take steps to prevent repetition, by physical or moral means; the best moral means would be to turn hatred into friendship by forgiveness and love. In that case the compensation or reward (if we must use such terms) is infinitely greater, for it wins the good pleasure of Allah.

But this active righting of wrongs, whether by physical or by moral or spiritual means, which are commended as better, is an antithesis to the monkish doctrine, when you are smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also. This would not suppress, but encourage wrong-doing. It is practised by none but poltroons, and is preached only by hypocrites, or men who want to make slaves of others by depriving them of the power of self-defence. It occurs in two of the four canonical Gospels (Matt. v. 39, and Luke vi. 29), but we need not therefore assume that it was preached by Jesus.

\(^{4582}\). To love Allah is the highest motive of our conduct, for it leads to the love of Allah's creatures; to win the approbation and love of Allah, is the highest reward, far transcending any compensation or satisfaction we can obtain in this life.
4583. Allah does not love those who do wrong. If, therefore we tolerate wrong, or encourage wrong by allowing it to run rampant when we can prevent it, we fail in our duty to Allah.

4584. Such people are not to be blamed, though they are following the lower law. The blame is on those who arrogantly ride rough-shod over the land, oppressing people with grievous wrong. See next verse.

4585. The fact that men seek the lower rather than the higher Law is itself a result of arrogant wrong-doing of which the type was the Pharaoh who claimed to be "your Lord Most High" and oppressed the Israelites, and kept his own people under slavery and subjection, and the false glamour of magic and deception.

4586. It is harder to be patient and forgive, and yet to get wrongs righted, as was done by the holy Prophet, than to bluster about and "punish the guilty" or "teach them lessons". It may look like futility or lack of purpose, but in reality it is the highest and noblest form of courage and resolution. And it may carry out the purpose of reform and the suppression of evil even better than stern punishment. The gentleness of innocence often "persuades where stronger measures fail." But of course circumstances alter cases, and there is some allowance also to be made for the personal equation of the men you have to deal with: in some cases severity may be called for, but it should be from a strict judicial motive, and not merely from personal anger or spite or any lower motive in disguise.
That would truly be
An affair of great
Resolution.

44. For any whom Allah
Leaves astray, there is
No protector thereafter.
And thou wilt see
The wrong-doers, when
In sight of the Chastisement,
Say: "Is there any way (To effect) a return?"

45. And thou wilt see them
Brought forward to the (Penalty),
Abject in humbleness (And) looking with a stealthy
Glance. And the Believers
Will say: "Those are indeed In loss who lose themselves
And their families.
On the Day of Judgment.
Behold! Truly the wrong-doers
Are in a lasting Chastisement!"

4587. When the actual consequences of evil are in sight, the foolish sinner wishes that it were possible to get back to the life of probation. But he neglected or abused it and rejected Allah's Grace all the time. How can he then be restored to a closed chapter of his life?

4588. They were very arrogant in their probationary life. Now they will be humbled to the dust. And they will be in utter despair and misery. They will not be able to see the favours and good things of the other life (Cf. xx. 124-126). Even their misery, which will face them as a terrible Reality, they will only be able to look at askance, so thoroughly cowed will be their spirit.

4589. This will be their thought, and their realised experience: 'after all, any troubles and sorrows, any persecutions and taunts which they suffered in the life of probation from the enemies of truth, were of no consequence; the real loss was that revealed at the Judgment at the restoration of true values; the wicked and the arrogant have lost their own souls, and have brought to perdition all who attached themselves to them and followed their evil ways; and this Penalty is one that will endure! How much more real it is!'
46. And no protectors have they ⁴⁵⁹⁰ To help them, 
Other than Allah. 
And for any whom Allah 
Leaves to stray, there is 
No way (to the Goal).

47. Respond ye to your Lord, 
Before there come a Day 
Which there will be 
No putting back, because ⁴⁵⁹¹ 
Of (the ordainment of) Allah! 
That Day there will be 
For you no place of refuge 
Nor will there be for you 
Any room for denial ⁴⁵⁹² 
(Of your sins)!

48. If then they turn away, 
We have not sent thee 
As a guard over them. ⁴⁵⁹³ 
Thy duty is but to convey 
(The Message). And truly, 
When We give man

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⁴⁵⁹⁰. The argument begun in verse 44 above is here rounded off. 'If once men finally cut themselves off from Allah's guidance and care, they will have no protection whatever. All their false objects of worship will only mislead them further and further. How they will wish the fact blotted out when they are in sight of Judgment, and vainly wish for time to be reversed! They will be in the Fire, while the men whom they despised and rejected will have reached the final Goal! For them there will be no such way!'.

⁴⁵⁹¹. The Day of Judgment is inevitable. Allah has ordained it, and it cannot in any way be put back.

⁴⁵⁹². At Judgment no one can escape the consequences of his crimes or deeds. And no one can disavow them or deny them, or by any chance pretend that they do not apply to him.

⁴⁵⁹³. The warning is now given, that men may repent and do good, and pray for Allah's Mercy and Grace. If the warning is not heeded or is rejected, the prophet of Allah is not responsible for bringing about the Penalty or for forcing people to come to the right Path. He is not a guard set over them to free them from the need of exercising their limited free-will.
A taste of a Mercy. From Us, he doth
Exult thereat, but
When some ill happens
To him, on account
Of the deeds which
His hands have sent forth,
Truly then is man ungrateful!

49. To Allah belongs the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth.
He creates what He wills.
He bestows
(Children) male or female
According to His Will,

50. Or He bestows both males
And females, and He leaves
Barren whom He will:

4594. Cf. xxx. 36. It is a sad reflection that men, when they receive some gift out of Allah’s Mercy, exult in their good fortune and attribute it to some merit in themselves, instead of to the Grace and Mercy of Allah, thus missing the real lesson of Life. On the other hand, when they are in trouble, due to their own errors and shortcomings, they fall into despair and blame Allah, instead of blaming themselves. This is rank ingratitude. So they miss the true lesson of Life in that case also.

4595. Verses 49-50 deal, in their ordinary meaning, with Allah’s creative power replete with knowledge and continued purpose, contrasted with man’s instincts and gropings after knowledge. The mystery of sex and parenthood is referred to in a new light. With reference to children, a parent is often spoken of as the “author” of their being. The growth of population and the proportion of males and females in it have various sociological and psychological implications; yet how little do parents really know about them? If advancing knowledge threw light on what may be called the mechanical aspects of the question, the profounder problems touched by it are beyond the reach of man. Yet they are not governed by chance. Allah has a meaning and purpose in all things, and His power is complete to carry out His purpose.

4596. To parents themselves it is a mystery why a male or female child is given at any birth, or how the balance of the two sexes is made up in a family or in large groups of mankind, or why in some cases the womb is barren and the would be parents are denied the joys and responsibilities of parenthood. But each individual human soul is precious in the Plan of Allah, and all these variations, besides their reactions on parents and on society, have a purpose to fulfil in the large Plan of Allah.
For He is full
Of knowledge and power.

51. It is not fitting⁴⁵⁹⁷
For a man that Allah
Should speak to him
Except by inspiration,⁴⁵⁹⁸
Or from behind a veil,⁴⁵⁹⁹
Or by the sending
Of a Messenger⁴⁶⁰⁰
To reveal, with Allah's permission,
What Allah wills: for He
Is Most High, Most Wise.

52. And thus have We,
By Our command, sent

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⁴⁵⁹⁷. This leads us on to the higher spiritual meaning of verses 49-50, as leading up to verses 51-53. Man is but a speck in Allah's creation. His growth and family relationships are not by any means comparable to Allah's creative acts, whose various stages are referred to in n. 120 to ii. 117, n. 916 to vi. 94, and n. 923 to vi. 98. That being so in the mysteries of man's daily life, how much more profound is the contrast between man and Allah in the apprehension of the higher spiritual problems concerned with Revelation? How can man be fit to speak to Allah? He is not fit. But there are three ways in which Allah, in His infinite Mercy, communicates with man, as described in verses 51-53.

⁴⁵⁹⁸. Allah is Most High, Most Wise: man is, in spite of his high destiny, often the lowest of the low (xcv. 5). Yet Allah, out of His infinite Mercy and Grace, has bestowed His revelation on man. How does it come about? Three ways are mentioned: (1) Wahyoun, Inspiration; (2) from behind a veil; and (3) by the sending of a Messenger: see the notes following.

Wahyoun, Inspiration, is interpreted to be of two kinds: (1) a suggestion thrown by Allah into the heart or mind of man, by which man understands the substance of the Message, whether it is a command or prohibition, or an explanation of a great truth; and (2) verbal or literal inspiration, by which the actual words of Allah are conveyed in human language.

⁴⁵⁹⁹. Behin a veil: not of course a material veil, but the veil of Light.

Muslim relates a tradition that the Prophet said: "His veil is Light: were He to withdraw it, then would the august splendours of His countenance surely consume everything that comes within His Sight."

⁴⁶⁰⁰. Messenger: Rasūl: the angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations were given to the holy Prophet.
Inspiration to thee:
Thou knewest not (before) What was Revelation, and What was Faith; but We Have made the (Qur-ān) A Light, wherewith We Guide such of Our servants As We will; and verily Thou dost guide (men) To the Straight Way,—

53. The Way of Allah, To Whom belongs Whatever is in the heavens And whatever is on earth. Behold (how) all affairs Tend towards Allah!

4601. Before the receipt of his mission in his fortieth year, the holy Prophet, though a man of steadfast virtue and purity and unflinching in his search for Truth, was yet unacquainted with Revelation in the highest sense of the term and with the certainty that comes from perfected Faith, or realised nearness to Allah. Rāḥ, which I have here translated Inspiration has also been understood by some Commentators to refer to the angel Gabriel, the vehicle of Revelation. The Light of the Qur-ān made all things clear to man, and to the world.

4602. The Qur-ān and the inspired Prophet who proclaimed it, are here identified. They were a Guide to men, showing the Straight Way. This Way is described in various ways: for example, see i. 6, and n. 22; xviii. 1-2, and notes 2326-27; and xc. 11-18.

4603. The most comprehensive description of the Straight Way is that it is the Way of Allah, the Way of the Universal Law.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Az-Zukhruf, 43.

This is the fourth Sūra of the Ḥā-Mīm series of seven Sūras. For their chronology and general theme see the Introduction to S. xl.

This Sūra deals with the contrasts between the real glory of Truth and Revelation and the false glitter of what people like to believe and worship. It cites the examples of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as exposing the False and holding up the Truth. The key-word (Zukhruf, Gold Adornments) occurs in verse 38, but the idea occurs all through the Sūra.

Summary.—The Book of Revelation makes things clear, even though the ignorant and foolish mock at it and ignore Allah’s Signs: it will last, while its rejecters will perish (xlii. 1-25).

Abraham exposed the falsehood of traditional worship: the glitter and adornments of this world will not last: what was the end of Pharaoh in his arrogant fight with Moses? (xliii. 26-56).

Jesus was a servant of Allah, but his sectarian followers raised false disputations about him: all is known to Allah, Whose Truth will shine, in spite of unfaith (xliii. 57-89).
Az-Zukhruf, or Gold Adornments.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. **Ha-Mim.**

2. By the Book that
Makes things clear,—

3. We have made it
A Qur-ān in Arabic,
That ye may be able
To understand.

4. And verily, it is
In the Mother of the Book,
With Us, high
(In dignity), full of wisdom.

5. Shall We then
Turn away the Reminder
From you altogether,
For that ye are a people
Transgressing beyond bounds?

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4604. Abbreviated Letters: see Introduction to S. xl.

4605. Cf. xlii. 7, n. 4533.

4606. Cf. iii. 7, n. 347: and xiii. 39, n. 1864. The Mother of the Book, the Foundation of Revelation, the Preserved Tablet (Laḥf Māḥfīz, lxxxv. 22), is the core or essence of revelation, the original principle or fountain-head of Allah’s Eternal and Universal Law. From this fountain-head are derived all streams of knowledge and wisdom, that flow through Time and feed the intelligence of created minds. The Mother of the Book is in Allah’s own Presence, and its dignity and wisdom are more than all we can think of.

4607. In vouchsafing Revelation, what an inestimable Mercy has Allah conferred on mankind! Yet so many deluded souls are ungrateful, and ignore or oppose its teaching. If it were not for His attributes of Forgiveness and Forbearing He would be justified in withdrawing that Light, but He continues to shed it, that all who will may come and be blessed by it.
6. But how many were the prophets We sent Amongst the peoples of old?

7. And never came there A prophet to them But they mocked him.

8. So We destroyed men— Stronger in power than these;— And (thus) has passed on The example of the peoples Of old.

9. If thou wert To question them, 'Who created The heavens and the earth?' They would be sure to reply, 'They were created by (Him), The Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge.'

10. (Yea, the same that) Has made for you

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4608. In spite of, or because of, man’s obstinate and rebellious nature, Allah sent prophet after prophet to the peoples of old, but there was among them always a party that ridiculed them and treated Allah’s Signs as naught.

4609. The result of rebellion was destruction. And the pagan Makkan generation contemporary with the Prophet are reminded that the peoples of old who were destroyed were, many of them, more powerful than they, and that they, in disobeying Allah’s Law, were inviting the same fate for themselves. The events of the past have become examples for the present and the future.

4610. Cf. xxix. 61 and n. 3493; and xxxi. 25 and n. 3613. This class of men acknowledge Allah’s Power and Allah’s Knowledge or Wisdom, but do not realise Allah’s infinite Mercy and care for His creatures.

4611. Note the beautiful rhetorical figure of speech here. The reply of the inconsistent men who do not follow Allah’s Law is turned against themselves. When they acknowledge Allah’s Power and Knowledge, their speech is interrupted, and the concomitant qualities of Allah’s Mercy and care of His creatures, with pointed reference to the inconsistent ones themselves, is set out in eloquent terms, as completing what they themselves had said, and the right course of conduct is pointed out to them (verses 10-14).

4612. See last note.
The earth
 Spread out, and has made
 For you roads (and channels)
 Therein, in order that ye
 May find guidance (on the way);

11. That sends down
 (From time to time)
 Rain from the sky
 In due measure;—
 And We raise to life
 Therewith a land that is
 Dead; even so will ye
 Be raised (from the dead);

12. That has created pairs
 In all things, and has made
 For you ships and cattle
 On which ye ride,

13. In order that ye may
 Sit firm and square
 On their backs, and when
 So seated, ye may

4613. Cf. xx. 53 and n. 2576. Mihâd, a carpet or bed spread out, implies not only freedom of movement but rest also. The ‘roads and channels’ carry out the idea of communications and include land routes, sea routes, and airways.

4614. In due measure: i.e., according to needs, as measured by local as well as universal considerations. This applies to normal rainfall: floods and droughts are abnormal conditions, and may be called unusual manifestations of His power, fulfilling some special purpose that we may or may not understand.

4615. The clause ‘And We raise...(from the dead)’ is parenthetical. Cf. xxxv. 9, n. 3881. Note the transition from the third to the first person, to mark the Resurrection as a special act of Allah as distinguished from the ordinary processes of nature ordained by Allah.

4616. Cf. n. 2578 to xx. 53. Also see xxxvi. 36, n. 3981.

4617. By analogy all means of transport, including horses, camels, ships, steamers, railways, aeroplanes, airships, etc. The domestication of animals as well as the invention of mechanical means of transport require a skill and ingenuity in man, which are referred to Allah as His gifts or endowments to man.
Remember the (kind) favour\textsuperscript{4618}
of your Lord, and say,
"Glory to Him Who
Has subjected these
To our (use), for we
Could never be able to do it.

14. "And to our Lord, surely,\textsuperscript{4619}
Must we turn back!"

15. Yet they attribute\textsuperscript{4620}
To some of His servants
A share with Him
Truly is man clearly
Unthankful.

SECTION 2.

16. What! Has He taken\textsuperscript{4621}
Daughter out of what He
Himself creates, and granted
To you sons for choice?

\textsuperscript{4618} See last note. People of understanding attribute all good to its true and original source \textit{viz.}: Allah.

\textsuperscript{4619} Men of understanding, every time they take a journey on earth, are reminded of that more momentous journey which they are taking on the back of Time to Eternity. Have they tamed Time to their lawful use, or do they allow Time to run away with them wildly to where they know not? Their goal is Allah, and their thoughts are ever with Allah.

\textsuperscript{4620} As a contrast to the men of true understanding are the ungrateful blasphemous creatures, who offer a share to others besides Allah! They imagine sons and daughters to Allah, and forget the true lesson of the whole of Creation, which points to the Unity of Allah. This theme is further developed in the following Section.

\textsuperscript{4621} To imagine goddesses (female gods) or mothers or daughters to Allah was particularly blasphemous in the mouths of people who held the female sex in contempt. Such were the pagan Arabs, and such (it is to be feared) are some of the moderns. They wince when a daughter is born to them and hanker after sons. With that mentality, how can they attribute daughters to Allah?
17. When news is brought
To one of them of (the birth
Of) what he sets up
As a likeness to (Allah)
Most Gracious, his face
Darkens, and he is filled
With inward grief!

18. Is then one brought up
Among trinkets, and unable
To give a clear account
In a dispute (to be
Associated with Allah)?

19. And they make into females
Angels who themselves serve Allah. Did they witness
Their creation? Their evidence
Will be recorded, and they
Will be called to account!

20 ("Ah!") they say, "If
It had been the Will
Of The Most Gracious,

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4622. Cf. xvi. 57-59 and notes. With scathing irony it is pointed out that what they hate and are ashamed of for themselves they attribute to Allah!

4623. The softer sex is usually brought up among trinkets and ornaments, and, on account of the retiring modesty which for the sex is a virtue, is unable to stand up boldly in a fight and give clear indications of the will to win. Is that sort of quality to be associated with Allah?

4624. Angels for grace and purity may be compared to the most graceful and the purest forms we know. But it is wrong to attribute sex to them. They are servants and messengers of Allah and so far from being rivals seeking worship, are always engaged in devotion and service. If any persons invent blasphemies about Allah, such blasphemies will form a big blot in their Book of Deeds, and they will be called to account for them.

4625. Worsted in argument they resort to a dishonest sarcasm. 'We worship these deities: if Allah does not wish us to do so, why does He not prevent us?' In throwing the responsibility on Allah, they ignore the limited free-will on which their whole life is based. They are really playing with truth. They are arguing against their own knowledge. They have no authority in any scripture, and indeed they are so slippery that they hold fast to no scripture at all.
We should not have
Worshipped such (deities)!
Of that they have
No knowledge! They
Do nothing but lie!\(^{4626}\)

21. What! have We given them
A Book before this,
To which they are
Holding fast?

22. Nay! they say: “We found\(^{4627}\)
Our fathers following
A certain religion,
And we do guide ourselves
By their footsteps.”

23. Just in the same way,
Whenever We sent a Warner
Before thee to any people,
The wealthy ones among them\(^{4628}\)
Said: “We found our fathers
Following a certain religion,
And we will certainly
Follow in their footsteps.”

24. He said: “What!\(^{4629}\)
Even if I brought you
Better guidance than that

\(^{4626}\). Cf. vi. 116.

\(^{4627}\). Then comes the argument about ancestral custom, which was repudiated by
Abraham (see verses 26-28 below). Indeed a good reply to ancestral custom in the case of
the Arabs was the example of Abraham, the True in Faith, for Abraham was the
common ancestor of the Arabs and the Israelites.

\(^{4628}\). It is some privileged position, and not ancestral custom, which is really at the
bottom of much falsehood and hypocrisy in the world. This has been again and again
in religious history.

\(^{4629}\). The Warner or messenger pointed out the merits and the truth of his teaching,
and how superior it was to what they called their ancestral customs. But they denied his
mission itself or the validity of any such mission. In other words they did not believe
in inspiration or revelation, and went on in their evil ways, with the inevitable result that
they brought themselves to destruction.
Which ye found
Your fathers following?”
They said: “For us,
We deny that which ye (prophets)
Are sent with”

25. So We exacted retribution
From them: now see
What was the end
Of those who rejected (Truth)!

SECTION 3.

26. Behold! Abraham said⁴⁶³⁰
To his father and his people:
“I do indeed clear myself
Of what ye worship:

27. “(I worship) only Him
Who originated me, and He
Will certainly guide me.”

28. And he left it
As a Word⁴⁶³¹
To endure among those
Who came after him,
That they may turn back
(To Allah).

⁴⁶³⁰ The plea of ancestral ways is refuted by the example of Abraham, in two ways:
(1) he gave up the ancestral cults followed by his father and people, and followed the true Way, even at some sacrifice to himself; and (2) he was an ancestor of the Arabs, and if the Arabs stood on ancestral ways, why should they not follow their good ancestor Abraham, rather than their bad ancestors who fell into evil? See n. 4627 above. The incident in Abraham’s story referred to here will be found in xxi. 51-70.

⁴⁶³¹ A Word: i.e., the Gospel of Unity, viz.,: “I worship only Him who originated me”, as in verse 27. This was his teaching, and this was his legacy to those who followed him. He hoped that they would keep it sacred, and uphold the standard of Unity. Cf. xxxvii. 108-111.
29. Yea, I have given the good things of this life to these (men) and their fathers, until the Truth has come to them, and a Messenger making things clear.

30. But when the Truth came to them, they said: "This is sorcery, and we do reject it."

31. Also, they say: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some leading man in either of the two (Chief) cities?"

32. Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of thy Lord?  

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4632. Note the first person singular, as showing Allah's personal solicitude and care for the descendants of Abraham in both branches. The context here refers to the prosperity enjoyed by Makkah and the Makkans until they rejected the truth of Islam when it was preached in their midst by a messenger whose Message was as clear as the light of the sun.

4633. When the pagan Makkans could not understand the wonderful power and authority with which the holy Prophet preached, they called his God given influence sorcery!

4634. The world judges by its own low standards. From a worldly point of view, the holy Prophet was poor and an orphan. Why, they thought, should he be so richly endowed in spiritual knowledge and power? If such a gift had to come to a man among them, it was the right (they foolishly said) of one of the chiefs in either the sacred city of Makkah, or the fertile garden-city of Taif!

4635. That is, spiritual gifts, those connected with Revelation. What audacity or folly in them to claim to divide or distribute them among themselves? They may think they are distributing the good things of this world among themselves. In a sense that may be true, even here, their own power and initiative are very limited. Even here it is Allah's Will on which all depends. In His wisdom Allah allows some to grow in power or riches, and command work from others, and various relative gradations are established. Men scramble for these good things of this world, but they are of no value compared to the spiritual gifts.
It is We Who portion out
Between them their livelihood
In the life of this world:
And We raise some of them
Above others in ranks,
So that some may command
Work from others.
But the Mercy of thy Lord
Is better than the (wealth)
Which they amass.

33. And were it not that
(All) men might become
One community
We would provide,
For everyone that blasphemes
Against The Most Gracious,
Silver roofs for their houses,
And (silver) stair-ways
On which to go up,
And (silver) doors
To their houses, and couches
(Of silver) on which
They could recline,
And also adornments
Of gold. But all this
Was nothing but enjoyment
Of the present life:

4636. So little value is attached in the spiritual world to silver or gold, or worldly ranks or adornments, that they would freely be at the disposal of everyone who denied or blasphemed Allah, were it not that in that case there would be too great temptation placed in the way of men, for they might all scramble to sell their spiritual life for wealth! They might have silver roofs and stair-ways, silver doors and thrones, and all kinds of adornments of gold. But Allah does not allow too great a temptation to be placed in the path of men. He distributes these things differently, some to unjust men, and some to just men, in various degrees, so that the possession of these is no test either of an unjust or a just life. His wisdom searches out motives far more subtle and delicate than any we are even aware of.

4637. Adornments of gold: the keyword to this Sūra. All false glitter and adornments of this world are as naught. They more often hinder than help.
The Hereafter, in the sight
Of thy Lord, is
For the Righteous.

SECTION 4.

36. If anyone withdraws himself\textsuperscript{4638}
From remembrance
Of The Most Gracious,
We appoint for him
A Satan, to be
An intimate companion to him.

37. Such (Satans) really
Hinder them from the Path,\textsuperscript{4639}
But they think that they
Are being guided aright!

38. At length, when (such a one)\textsuperscript{4640}
Comes to Us, he says
(To his evil companion):
"Would that between me
And thee were the distance

4638. If men deliberately put away the remembrance of Allah from their minds, the natural consequence, under Allah's decree, is that they join on with evil. Like consorts with like. We can generalise evil in the abstract, but it takes concrete shape in our life-companions.

4639. The downward course in evil is rapid. But the most tragic consequence is that evil persuades its victims to believe that they are pursuing good. They think evil to be their good. They go deeper and deeper into the mire, and become more and more callous. "Them" and "they" represent the generic plural of anyone who "withdraws himself from...Allah" (see last verse).

4640. If ever the presence of Allah is felt, or at the time of Judgment, a glimmering of truth comes to the deceived soul, and it cries to its evil companion in its agony, "Would that I had never come across thee! Would that we were separated poles apart!" But it cannot shake off evil. By deliberate choice it had put itself in its snare.
Of East and West! Ah!
Evil is the companion (indeed)!

39. When ye have done wrong,
It will avail you nothing,
That day, that ye shall be
Partners in punishment!

40. Canst thou then make
The deaf to hear, or give
Direction to the blind
Or to such as (wander)
In manifest error?

41. Even if We take thee
Away, We shall be sure
To exact retribution from them,

42. Or We shall show thee
That (accomplished) which We
Have promised them:
For verily We have power over
them.

4641. Distance of East and West: literally, 'distance of the two Easts'. Most Commentators understand in this sense, but some construe the phrase as meaning the distance of the extreme points of the rising of the sun, between the summer solstice and the winter solstice. Cf. n. 4034 to xxxvii. 5. A good equivalent idiom in English would be "poles apart", for they could never meet.

4642. All partners in evil will certainly share in the punishment, but that is no consolation to any individual soul. Evil desires the evil of others, but that does not diminish its own torment, or get rid of the personal responsibility of each individual soul.

4643. Cf. xxx. 52-53. The evil go headlong into sin, and sink deeper and deeper until their spiritual faculties are deadened, and no outside help can bring them back. Allah's grace they have rejected.

4644. There is hope for a person who wanders in quest of truth, and even for one who wanders through mistake or by weakness of will. But there is none for one who, by deliberate choice, plunges into "manifest error", i.e., error which any one can see.

4645. Cf. viii. 30: "how the Unbelievers plotted against thee, to keep thee in bonds, or slay thee, or get thee out (of thy home)". They were always plotting against the holy Prophet in his Makkan period. But even if their plots had succeeded against human beings, they could not defeat Allah's Plan, nor escape the just punishment of their deeds. Cf. also x. 46, and n. 1438.
43. So hold thou fast To the Revelation sent down To thee: verily thou Art on a Straight Way.

44. The (Qur-an) is indeed A Reminder for thee And for thy people; And soon shall ye (All) be brought to account.

45. And question thou our messengers Whom We sent before thee; Did We appoint any deities Other than The Most Gracious, To be worshipped?

SECTION 5.

46. We did send Moses Aforetime, with Our Signs, To Pharaoh and his Chiefs: He said, "I am a messenger Of the Lord of the Worlds."

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4646. Let the wicked rage, say what they like, or do their worst: the prophet of Allah is encouraged to go forward steadfastly in the Light given him, for he is on a Path that leads straight to Allah.

4647. **Zikrun**: Message, Remembrance, Cause of remembrance, Memorial. Title for remembrance to posterity. Thus two meanings emerge, not necessarily mutually exclusive. (1) The Qur-an brings a Message of Truth and Guidance to the Prophet, and his people; (2) the revelation of the Qur-an raises the rank of the Prophet, and the people among whom, and in whose language, it was promulgated, making them worthy of remembrance in the world's history for all time. But the honour also carried its responsibilities. All who hear it must give an account of how far they profit by it spiritually.

4648. That is, by examining their Message, and asking the learned among their real followers. It will be found that no Religion really teaches the worship of other than Allah.

4649. For the story of Moses in detail, see vii. 103-137, but especially vii. 104, 130-136.
47. But when he came to them With Our Signs, behold, They laughed at them.\footnote{4650}

48. We showed them Sign\footnote{4651} After Sign, each greater Than its fellow, and We Seized them with Punishment, In order that they Might turn (to Us).

49. And they said, "O thou\footnote{4652} Sorcerer! Invoke thy Lord For us according to His covenant with thee; For we shall truly Accept guidance."

50. But when We removed The Chastisement from them, Behold, they broke their word.

51. And Pharaoh proclaimed Among his people, saying: "O my people! Does not The dominion of Egypt Belong to me, (witness)\footnote{4653}

\footnote{4650. For the mockery of Moses and his Signs see xvii. 101; also below, xliii. 49, 52-53.}

\footnote{4651. Moses showed them nine Clear Signs: see n. 1091 to vii. 133; also xvii. 101. Each one of them in its own setting and circumstances was greater than any of its "sister" Signs. The object was if possible to reclaim as many Egyptians as possible from their defiance of Allah.}

\footnote{4652. This speech is half a mockery, and half a ruse. In spite of their unbelief, they had fear in their minds, and in order to stop the plagues, one after another, they promised to obey Allah, and when the particular plague was removed, they again became obdurate. See vii. 133-135.}

\footnote{4653. The \textit{wāw} here in Arabic is the \textit{Wāw hāliya}: the abundant streams from the Nile flowing beneath his palace being evidence of his power, prosperity, and sovereignty. The Nile made (and makes) Egypt, and the myth of the god Osiris was a compound of the myths of the Nile and the sun. The Pharaoh, therefore, as commanding the Nile, commanded the gods who personified Egypt. He boasted of water, and he perished in water,—a fitting punishment!}
These streams flowing
Underneath my (palace)? What!
See ye not then?

52. "Am I not better
Than this (Moses), who
Is a contemptible wretch\[4654]
And can scarcely
Express himself clearly?

53. "Then why are not\[4655]
Gold bracelets bestowed
On him, or (why)
Come (not) with him
Angels accompanying him
In procession?"

54. Thus did he make
Fools of his people,
And they obeyed him:
Truly were they a people
Rebellious (against Allah).

55. When at length they\[4656]
Provoked Us, We exacted
Retribution from them, and
We drowned them all.\[4657]

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4654. Being a despised Israelite in any case, and having further an impediment in his speech. See xx. 27, and notes 2552-53.

4655. Gold bracelets and gold chains were possibly among the insignia of royalty. In any case they betokened wealth, and the materialists judge a man's worth by his wealth and his following and equipage. So Pharaoh wanted to see Moses, if he had any position in the spiritual kingdom, invested with gold bracelets, and followed by a great train of angels as his Knight-companions! The same kind of proofs were demanded by the materialist Quraish of our holy Prophet. These were puerilities, but such puerilities go down with the crowd. Barring a few Egyptians who believed in Allah and in the Message of Moses, the rest of Pharaoh's entourage followed Pharaoh in his pursuit of revenge, and were drowned in the Red Sea.

4656. Allah is patient, and gives many and many opportunities to the most hardened sinners for repentance. But at length comes a time when His justice is provoked, and the inevitable punishment follows.

56. And We made them (A People) of the Past\textsuperscript{4658} And an Example To later ages.

SECTION 6.

57. When (Jesus) the son\textsuperscript{4659} Of Mary is held up As an example, behold Thy people raise a clamour Thereat (in ridicule)!

58. And they say, “Are Our gods best, or he?” This they set forth To thee, only by way Of disputation: yea, they Are a contentious people.

59. He was no more than A servant: We granted Our favour to him, And We made him An example to the Children\textsuperscript{4660} Of Israel.

\textsuperscript{4658} Pharaoh and his hosts were blotted out, and became as a tale of the past. Their story is an instructive warning and example to future generations.

\textsuperscript{4659} Jesus was a man, and a prophet to the Children of Israel, “though his own received him not.” Some of the churches that were founded after him worshipped him as “God” and as “the son of God”, as do the Trinitarian churches to the present day. The orthodox churches did so in the time of the holy Prophet. When the doctrine of Unity was renewed, and the false worship of others besides Allah was strictly prohibited, all false gods were condemned, \textit{e.g.}, at xxi. 98. The pagan Arabs looked upon Jesus as being in the same category as their false gods, and could not see why a foreign cult, or a foreign god, as they viewed him, should be considered better than their own gods or idols. There was no substance in this, but mere mockery, and verbal quibbling. Jesus was one of the greater prophets: he was not a god, nor was he responsible for the quibbling subtleties of the Athanasian Creed.

\textsuperscript{4660} A reference to the limited mission of the prophet Jesus, whose Gospel to the Jews only survives in uncertain fragmentary forms.
60. And if it were Our Will, We could make angels
From amongst you, succeeding
Each other on the earth.

61. And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming
Of) the Hour (Of Judgment):
Therefore have no doubt
About the (Hour), but
Follow ye Me: this
Is a Straight Way.

62. Let not Satan
Hinder you: for he is
To you an enemy avowed.

63. When Jesus came
With Clear Signs, he said:
"Now have I come
To you with Wisdom,
And in order to make
Clear to you some
Of the (points) on which
Ye dispute: therefore fear Allah
And obey me.

4661. If it were said that the birth of Jesus without a father sets him above other prophets, the creation of angels without either father or mother would set them still higher, especially as angels do not eat and drink and are not subject to physical laws. But angels are not higher.

4662. This is understood to refer to the second coming of Jesus in the Last Days before the Resurrection, when he will destroy the false doctrines that pass under his name, and prepare the way for the universal acceptance of Islam, the Gospel of Unity and Peace, the Straight Way of the Qur-ān.

4663. True wisdom consists in understanding the unity of the Divine purpose and the Unity of the Divine Personality. The man Jesus came to reconcile the jarring sects in Israel, and his true teaching was just the same as that which was expounded in a wider form by Islam. He did not claim to be God: why should not the Christians follow the doctrine of Unity rather than what has become their ancestral and traditional custom?
64. "For Allah, He is my Lord”
   And your Lord: so worship
   Ye Him: this is
   A Straight Way."

65. But sects from among
   Themselves fell into disagreement:
   Then woe to the wrong-doers,
   From the Chastisement
   Of a Grievous Day!

66. Do they only wait
   For the Hour— that it
   Should come on them
   All of a sudden,
   While they perceive not?

67. Friends on that Day
   Will be foes, one
   To another,— except
   The Righteous.

4664. In verses 26-28 an appeal is made to the pagan Arabs, that Islam is their own
   religion, the religion of Abraham their ancestor; in verses 46-54, an appeal is made to
   the Jews that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Moses, and that they should
   not allow their leaders to make fools of them; in verses 57-65 an appeal is made to the
   Christians that Islam is the same religion as was taught by Jesus, and that they should
   give up their sectarian attitude and follow the universal religion, which shows the Straight
   Way.

4665. Cf. xii. 107. What is there to wait for? The Hour of Judgment may come at
   any moment. It will come all of a sudden before they realise that it is on them. They
   should make up their minds to give up misleading disputations and come to the Straight
   Path.

4666. The hatred and spite, which are associated with evil, will be felt with peculiar
   intensity in that period of agony. That itself would be a punishment, from which the
   righteous will be free. The righteous will have passed all perils of falling into wrong
   frames of mind.
SECTION 7.

68. My devotees!4667
No fear shall be
On you today
Nor shall ye grieve.—

69. Those who have believed
In Our Signs and submitted (to Us).

70. Enter ye the Garden,4668
Ye and your wives,
In (beauty and) rejoicing.

71. To them will be passed4669
Round, dishes and goblets
Of gold: there will be
There all that the souls
Could desire, all that
The eyes could delight in:
And ye shall abide
Therein (for aye).

72. Such will be the Garden
Of which ye are made4670
Heirs for your (good) deeds
(In life).

4667. The devotion and service to Allah result in the soul being made free from all fear and sorrow, as regards the past, present, and future, if we may take an analogy from Time for a timeless state. Such devotion and service are shown by (1) believing in Allah’s Signs, which means understanding and accepting His Will, and (2) by merging our will completely in His universal Will, which means being in tune with the Infinite, and acting in all things to further His Kingdom.

4668. The Garden is the type of all that is beautiful to eye, mind, and soul, all that is restful and in tune, a complete state of bliss, such as we can scarcely conceive of in this troubled world. Several metaphors indicate how we can try to picture that bliss to ourselves in “this muddy vesture of decay.”

4669. We shall have all our near and dear ones (“wives”) with us: perfected Love will not be content with Self, but like a note of music will find its melody in communion with the others. The richest and most beautiful vessels will minister to our purified desires, and give complete and eternal satisfaction to our souls in every way.

4670. We shall be there, not as strangers, or temporary guests, but as heirs—made heirs in eternity because of the good lives we had led on earth.
73. Ye shall have therein
Abundance of fruit,\textsuperscript{4671} from which
Ye shall eat.\textsuperscript{4672}

74. The Sinners will be
In the Punishment of Hell,
To dwell therein (for aye):

75. Nowise will the (punishment)
Be lightened for them,
And in despair will they
Be there overwhelmed.

76. Nowise shall We\textsuperscript{4673}
Be unjust to them:
But it is they who
Have been unjust themselves.

77. They will cry: "O Malik!\textsuperscript{4674}
Would that thy Lord
Put an end to us!"
He will say, "Nay, but
Ye shall abide!"\textsuperscript{4675}

\textsuperscript{4671.} The “fruit” here links on with the last words in the last verse (72), “ye are
made heirs for your (good) deeds (in life)”.

\textsuperscript{4672.} “Shall eat”. But the word \textit{akala} is used in many places in the comprehensive
sense of “enjoy”, “have satisfaction”. For example, see n. 776 to v. 69. Cf. also vii. 19
and n. 1004.

\textsuperscript{4673.} The wrong-doers suffer not because Allah is unjust or cruel, nor as a deterrent
to others, for the probationary period will then have passed, but because their evil deeds
must bear their inevitable fruit. Allah’s Grace was ever ready to offer opportunities for
Repentance and Forgiveness. But they rejected them. They were unjust to themselves.
This is complementary to the doctrine of works and their fruits, as explained in n. 4671
above.

\textsuperscript{4674.} Malik: The name of the Angel in charge of Hell.

\textsuperscript{4675.} Cf. xx. 74. Annihilation is better than agony. But wrong-doers cannot destroy
the “fruits” of their actions, by asking for annihilation.
78. Verily We have brought\textsuperscript{4676} The Truth to you: But most of you Have a hatred for Truth.

79. What! Have they settled\textsuperscript{4677} Some Plan (among themselves)? But it is We Who Settle things.

80. Or do they think\textsuperscript{4678} That We hear not Their secrets and their Private counsels? Indeed (We do), and Our Messengers Are by them, to record.

81. Say: “If The Most Gracious Had a son, I would\textsuperscript{4679} Be the first to worship.”

82. Glory to the Lord Of the heavens and the earth, The Lord of the Throne\textsuperscript{4680} He is free from the things They attribute (to Him)!

\textsuperscript{4676} We come back now to the Present,—primarily to the time when Islam was being preached in Makkah, but by analogy the present time or any time. Truth is often bitter to the taste of those who live on Falsehoods, and Shams and profit by them. They hate the Truth, and plot against it. But will they succeed? See next verse and note.

\textsuperscript{4677} Men cannot settle the high affairs of the universe. If they plot against the Truth, the Truth will destroy them, just as, if they accept the Truth, the Truth will make them free. It is Allah Who disposes of affairs.

\textsuperscript{4678} However secretly men may plot, everything is known to Allah. His Recording Angels are by, at all times and in all places, to prepare a Record of their Deeds for their own conviction when the time comes for Judgment.

\textsuperscript{4679} The prophet of Allah does not object to true worship in any form. But it must be true: it must not superstitiously attribute derogatory things to Allah, or foster false ideas.

\textsuperscript{4680} Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1032. All Power, Authority, Knowledge, and Truth are with Allah. He neither begets nor is begotten. Glory to Him!
83. So leave them to babble
And play (with vanities)
Until they meet that Day\(^{4681}\)
Of theirs, which they
Have been promised.

84. It is He Who is God
In heaven and God on earth;
And He is Full
Of Wisdom and Knowledge.

85. And blessed is He\(^ {4682}\)
To Whom belongs the dominion
Of the heavens and the earth,
And all between them:
With Him is the knowledge
Of the Hour (of Judgment):
And to Him shall ye
Be brought back.

86. And those whom they invoke
Besides Allah have no power
Of intercession;--only he\(^ {4683}\)
Who bears witness to the Truth,
And with full knowledge.

87. If thou ask them, Who\(^ {4684}\)
Created them, they will
Certainly say, Allah: how
Then are they deluded
Away (from the Truth)?

\(^{4681}\) That Day of theirs: they had their Day on earth; they will have a different sort of Day in the Hereafter, according to the promise of Allah about the Resurrection and Judgment, or perhaps about Retribution in this very life! So leave them to play about with their fancies and vanities. Truth must eventually prevail!

\(^{4682}\) We glorify Allah, and we call His name blessed, because He has not only supreme power and authority, but because we shall return to Him and see “the Light of His Countenance” (xxx. 38).

\(^{4683}\) While idols and false gods have no power of intercession, persons like Jesus, who is falsely worshipped by his misguided followers, but who himself preached the Gospel of Unity with full understanding will have the power of intercession.

\(^{4684}\) Cf. xxxi. 25, and n. 3613; and xxxix. 38, and n. 4299.
88. (Allah has knowledge)\textsuperscript{4685}
   Of the (Prophet’s) cry,
   “O my Lord! Truly
   These are a people
   Who believe not!”\textsuperscript{4686}

89. But turn away from them,
   And say “Peace!”\textsuperscript{4687}
   But soon shall they know!

\textsuperscript{4685} Commentators are divided in opinion as to the construction. The best opinion
is that which I have adopted, referring back \textit{qilihi} as a genitive governed by \textit{ilm} in verse
85.

\textsuperscript{4686} The Prophet was much troubled in mind by the Unfaith of the Qurais: xviii.
6. He is here told to leave them alone for a time, for the Truth must soon prevail.

\textsuperscript{4687} Cf. xxv. 63, and n. 3123.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ad-Dukhān, 44.

For the chronology and the general theme of the Sūra of the Ḥā-Mīm series, of which this is the fifth, see the Introduction to S. xl.

The theme of this particular Sūra is how worldly pride and power are humbled in the dust if they resist spiritual forces, and how Evil and Good find their true setting in the Hereafter.

The title-word Dukhān occurs in verse 10. It means smoke or mist, and may refer to a drought or famine, as explained in the notes to that verse.

Summary.—Revelation explains clearly how worldly pride and arrogance may come to naught, even at long odds, against spiritual truths (xliv. 1-29).

A people may be given all blessings and may fail in its trust, as did Israel: will the Quraish learn the lesson of Good and Evil? (xliv. 30-59).
Ad-Dukhān, or Smoke (or Mist).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Hā Mim. 4688

2. By the Book that 4689
   Makes things clear;—

3. We sent it down
   During a blessed night: 4690
   For We (ever) wish
   To warn (against Evil).

4. In that (night) is made
   Distinct every affair
   Of wisdom, 4691

5. By command, from Us.
   For We (ever)
   Send (revelations),

6. As a Mercy
   From thy Lord;
   For He hears and knows 4692
   (All things);

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4688. These Abbreviated Letters are discussed in the Introduction to S. xl.

4689. The Qur-ān is its own evidence. In the last Sūra (xliii. 3) stress was laid on the fact that everyone could understand it. Here the stress is on the fact that it is a Message of Mercy from Allah in that it warns mankind against evil.

4690. Usually taken to be a night in the month of Ramadān, say the 23rd, 25th, or 27th night of that month. It is referred to as the Night of Power in xcvi. 1-2. See also ii. 185. But perhaps we need not fix it literally by the calendar. The night that a Message descends from Allah is indeed a blessed night like a day of rain for a parched land.

4691. Such an occasion is one on which divine Wisdom places before us through Revelation the solution of spiritual problems of the highest import to mankind.

4692. It is because Allah is the friend of the friendless and the help of the helpless that He hears all sincere prayers, and as His knowledge embraces all things, He grants to us whatever is best for us, not as we see it, but as He knows it in His perfect knowledge.
7. The Lord of the heavens
And the earth and all
Between them, if ye (but)
Have an assured faith. 4693

8. There is no god but He:
It is He Who gives life
And gives death,—
The Lord and Cherisher
To you and your earliest
Ancestors.

9. Yet they play about4694
In doubt.

10. Then watch thou
For the Day4695
That the sky will
Bring forth a kind
Of smoke (or mist)4696
Plainly visible.

4693. Cf. ii. 4. They cannot fully realise what a tremendous thing it is that Allah
is their own Lord and Cherisher (nex verse), as He is the Lord and Cherisher of the
whole Universe, until they firmly believe,—until their Faith amounts to a certainty, secure
and unshakable.

4694. The story is mainly about the Quraish. But there is a wider meaning behind
it, applicable to men generally, and at all times. As a body the Quraish, especially
in the earlier stages of the preaching of Islam, before they started persecution, received the
Message with more amusement than hatred. They played about with it, and expressed
doubts about it, whereas the Preacher was most earnest about it, with all his heart and
soul in it, as he loved his people and wished to save them from their wickedness and folly.

4695. What Day is this? It obviously refers to great calamity, and from the wording
it is to be a great calamity in the future, seen with the prophetic eye. The word yagshā
in verse 11 may be compared to gāshiya in lxxxviii. 1, which obviously refers to the final
Day of Judgment. But verse 15 below (“We shall remove the Penalty for a while”) shows
that it is not the final Judgment referred to here, but some calamity that was to happen
soon afterwards. Perhaps it was a famine, about which see the next note.

4696. The “smoke” or “mist” is interpreted on good authority to refer to a severe
famine in Makkah, in which men were so pinched with hunger that they saw mist before
their eyes when they looked at the sky. Ibn Kathīr in his Ta’rīkh mentions two famines
in Makkah, one in the 8th year of the Mission, say the fourth year before the Hijra, and
another about the 8th year after the Hijra. But as either or both of these famines lasted =
11. Enveloping the people:
   This will be a Chastisement Grievous.

12. (They will say:)
   “Our Lord! Remove
   The Chastisement from us,
   For we do really believe!”

13. How should they have
   The Reminder.\(^{4697}\)
   Seeing that a Messenger
   Explaining things clearly
   Has (already) come to them,—

14. Yet they turn away
   From him and say: “Tutored
   (By others), a man possessed!”\(^{4698}\)

15. We shall indeed remove\(^{4699}\)
   The Chastisement for a while,

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= as many as seven years, the dates are to be taken very roughly. It is even possible that
the two famines were continuous, of varying severity from year to year. Bukhārī mentions
only the post-Hijrāt famine, which was apparently so severe that men began to eat bones
and carrion. Abū Sufyān (about 8 A.H.) approached the holy Prophet to intercede and
pray for the removal of the famine, as the Pagans attributed it to the curse of the
Prophet. Sūra xxiii., which is also Makkān, but of later date than the present Sūra, also
refers to a famine: see xxiii. 75, and n. 2921. As Sūras were not all revealed entire, but
many came piecemeal, it is possible that particular verses in a given Sūra may be of
different dates from the Sūra as a whole.

4697. The Quraish had before them a prophet whose purity of life was openly known
to them; they themselves called him al-Amin (worthy of all trust); he preached in their
own language in words of burning eloquence and transparent clearness; yet they turned
away from him and called him a madman, or one whose Message was not inspired by
Allah, but written by some hidden hand (see next note)\(^1\) How will the teaching of spiritual
Truth make way among such unreasonable people?

4698. Tutored: see xvi. 103, and n. 2143.
   Possessed: see xv. 6, and n. 1940.

4699. Allah gives every chance to all His creatures, however rebellious. He gives
them a little trial, perhaps personal, perhaps economic, to see if that would bring them
to their bearings, and train their will in the right direction. Some are thus reclaimed, and
some do not learn. Perhaps, for the latter, he gives them a chance by removing the trial;
16. The day We shall seize You with a mighty onslaught: We will indeed (then) Exact Retribution!

17. We did, before them, Try the people of Pharaoh. There came to them A messenger most honourable,

18. Saying: “Restore to me The servants of Allah: I am to you a messenger Worthy of all trust;

some are reclaimed, and some still remain obdurate. And so, in His wisdom, He allows His grace to work, again and again, until, at the last, Judgment must seize the last and irreclaimable remnant “with a mighty onslaught”.

Such working of Allah’s Providence is clearly visible in the story of the Quraish. It is a pity that the economic conditions of Makkah have not been studied in detail in any of the standard biographies of the Prophet. The so-called biographies by non-Muslims, e.g., Muir’s Life, do not even mention any Makkan famine or its reactions on the Quraish mind!

4700. This reference is to the pride of Pharaoh and his Egyptians, and their fall, rather than to the story of Moses himself; just as in xliv. 30-33 the reference is to the blessings bestowed on Israel, contrasted with their pride, unbelief, and fall; and in xliv. 37, to the ancient Himyar kingdom in Yaman, which similarly fell for its sins.

4701. Most honourable: this epithet is specially applied to Moses here, as expressing the truth, in contrast to the Pharaoh’s false characterisation of him as “a contemptible wretch”. (xliii. 52).

4702. The argument of Moses and his “authority manifest” will be found at vii. 104-108, 120-126, 130-137. Notice how fully he assumes the authority of his office here. He claims all “servants of Allah”, i.e., true worshippers, as under his protection, for his mission was both to the Egyptians and the Israelites; he asks that they should be restored to him; and he boldly denounces the Pharaoh’s arrogance “as against Allah”.

4703. “Worthy of all trust”: Amin, a title applied to prophets in S. xxvi.: e.g., see xxvi. 107. As the holy Prophet had historically earned that title among his own people, the reminiscences of the story of Moses apply to him in his relations with the arrogant Quraish.
19. "And be not arrogant
As against Allah:
For I come to you
With authority manifest.

20. "For me, I have sought\textsuperscript{4704}
Safety with my Lord
And your Lord, against
Your injuring me.\textsuperscript{4705}

21. "If ye believe me not,\textsuperscript{4706}
At least keep yourselves
Away from me."

22. (But they were aggressive:))\textsuperscript{4707}
Then he cried
To his Lord:
"These are indeed
A people given to sin."

23. (The reply came:)
"March forth with my servants
By night: for ye are
Sure to be pursued.

\textsuperscript{4704.} It is no use their plotting his death or his vilification; for his safety is in Allah. As he truly says, "Allah is not only my Lord, but your Lord also; your responsibility arises apart from my preaching, but I preach in order to remind you of it."

\textsuperscript{4705.} "Injuring me": literally "stoning me". "Stoning" may be here symbolical of any injury or vilification.

\textsuperscript{4706.} If you do not believe me, at least go your ways: do not add to your sins by trying to suppress me and the Message of Truth which I bring: keep out of my way.

\textsuperscript{4707.} They would not even leave him alone to do his duty. So he cried to Allah, not indeed to destroy them, for a Prophet does not judge, but only Allah judges; he justified himself in prayer, that he had done his best, but they were obdurate in sin, and they were trying to oppress and injure the believers. Then came the order to march. They were to march under the cover of night, because the enemy was sure to pursue. They were to march with all believers, presumably believing Egyptians (such as were not martyred) as well as Israelites, for some Egyptians had believed: vii. 121.
24. “And leave the sea
   As a furrow (divided): For they are a host
   (Destined) to be drowned.”

25. How many were the gardens
   And springs they left behind,
26. And corn-fields
   And noble buildings,
27. And pleasant things
   Wherein they
   Had taken such delight!
28. Thus (was their end)!
   And We made other people
   Inherit (those things)!
29. And neither heaven
   Nor earth shed a tear
   Over them: nor were
   They given a respite (again).
   
SECTION 2.

30. We did deliver aforetime
   The Children of Israel
   From humiliating Punishment,

4708. For the passage of Moses and his following, the sea had divided: they were to pass through the gap or furrow and leave it alone, to lure on the Egyptian host, on which the sea afterwards closed in, totally destroying them.

4709. There follows a word-picture of all the fine and enjoyable things which the ruling caste had monopolised. Now these proud monopolists were drowned in the sea, and the inheritance went to other hands.

4710. They died, “unwept, unhonoured, and unsung”. They were too inordinate to be given another chance. Pharaoh had claimed to be their supreme god; and they had followed him!

4711. The Israelites were held in bondage prior to the Exodus. Their hard taskmaster placed every indignity on them, and by Pharaoh’s decree their male children were to be killed, and their females were to be kept alive for the Egyptians.
31. Inflicted by Pharaoh, for he Was arrogant (even) among Inordinate transgressors.

32. And We chose them aforetime Above the nations, knowingly,\footnote{4712}

33. And granted them Signs\footnote{4713} In which there was A manifest trial.

34. As to these (Quraish),\footnote{4714} They say forsooth:

35. “There is nothing beyond Our first death, And we shall not Be raised again.

36. “Then bring (back) Our forefathers, if what Ye say is true!”

\footnote{4712} From degrading servitude, Israel was delivered, and taken, in spite of many rebellions and backslidings on the way, to “a land flowing with milk and honey”, where later they established the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. This was not merely fortuitous. In Allah’s decree it was to be a link in furthering His Plan. But their being chosen did not mean that they could do what they liked. In that sense there is no “chosen race” before Allah. But Allah gives every race and every individual a chance, and when the race or individual fails to live up to it, he or it must fall and give place to others.

\footnote{4713} Among the “Signs” given to Israel were their own Revelation under Moses, their prosperous land of Canaan, their flourishing Kingdom under David and Solomon, their prophets and teachers of Truth, and the advent of Jesus to reclaim the lost ones among them. All these were trials. When they failed in the trials, they were left to wander desolate and suffer.

\footnote{4714} The cases of the Egyptians and the Israelites having been cited as great nations which fell through inordinate vanity and wrong-doing, the case is now pressed home against the Quraish leaders in their arrogance to the holy Prophet himself. They deny Revelation; they deny a future life, as the Sadducees did among the Jews before them; they persecute the prophet of Allah, and those who believe in him: and they mockingly demand that their ancestors should be brought back to life, if it is true that there is a future life. They are reminded that better men than they lived in their own country of Arabia, men who had knowledge of Allah’s revelation under the earliest Dispensation. See next note. They perished because of their unbelief and wrong-doing. What chance have they unless they turn and repent?
37. What! are they better
Than the people of Tubba? Subsequent
And those who were
Before them? We destroyed
Them because they were
Guilty of sin. 4716

38. We created not
The heavens, the earth,
And all between them,
Merely in (idle) sport: 4717

39. We created them not
Except for just ends:
But most of them
Do not know.

40. Verily the Day of 4718
Sorting Out is the time
Appointed for all of them,—

4715. Tubba' is understood to be a title or family name of Himyaric kings in Yaman, of the tribe of Hamdân. The Himyar were an ancient race. At one time they seem to have extended their hegemony over all Arabia and perhaps beyond, to the East African Coast. Their earliest religion seems to have been Sabianism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies. They seem at different times, later on, to have professed the Jewish and the Christian religion. Among the Embassies sent by the holy Prophet in A.H. 9-10 was one to the Himyar of Yaman, which led to their coming into Islam. This was of course much later than the date of this Sûra.

4716. In prehistoric times the Himyar and Yaman seem to have played a large part in Arabia and even beyond: see last note. But when they were intoxicated with power, they fell into sin, and gradually they ceased to count, not only in Arabia but even in Yaman.

4717. Cf. xxiii. 16, and n. 2676. All creation is for a wise and just purpose. But men usually do not realise or understand it, because they are steeped in their own ignorance, folly, or passions.

4718. Day of Sorting Out, or the Day of Decision. Cf. xxxvii. 21, and n. 4047. Ignorance, prejudice, passion, spite, and selfishness, seem sometimes to flourish in this probationary life. In any case they are mixed up with knowledge, justice, commonsense, love and regard for others. But the good and the evil will be sorted out and separated at the Day of Judgment. There is a time appointed for it. In Allah's good time all will come right.
41. The Day when no protector\(^{4719}\)
   Can avail his client
   In aught, and no help
   Can they receive,

42. Except such as receive\(^{4720}\)
   Allah’s Mercy: for He is
   Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 3.

43. Verily the tree\(^{4721}\)
    Of Zaqqûm\(^{4722}\)

44. Will be the food
    Of the Sinful,—

45. Like molten brass;
    It will boil
    In their insides,

46. Like the boiling
    Of scalding water.

47. (A voice will cry:)
    “Seize ye him
    And drag him
    Into the midst
    Of the Blazing Fire!

48. “Then pour over his head
    The Chastisement of Boiling Water

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4719. When that Day comes, the strictest justice will prevail. No man, however prominently he may have walked on the world's stage, can help another. He himself will need help, not the sort of log-rolling help which high and low render to each other in this life, but which in the conditions of reality will be of no avail. The only things which will help will be the Mercy of Allah.

4720. Allah's Mercy will be the only thing of any efficacy, for He is both able to help (“Exalted in Might”) and willing to forgive (“Most Merciful”).

4721. Now follows a word-picture of the horrors to which Evil must lead us. What human language and what figures of speech can adequately describe them?

4722. The opposite of “delicious Fruits” is the terrible tree of Zaqqûm, which is further described in xxxvii. 62-68, where see n. 4073. Also see xvii. 60, n. 2250.
49. “Taste thou (this)!
   Truly thou art
   Mighty, full of honour!”

50. “Truly this is what
   Ye used to doubt!”

51. As to the Righteous
   (They will be) in
   A position of Security,

52. Among Gardens and Springs;

53. Dressed in fine silk
   And in rich brocade,
   They will face each other;

54. So; and We shall
   Wed them to maidens
   With beautiful, big,
   And lustrous eyes.

55. There can they call
   For every kind of fruit
   In peace and security;

4723. In this particular Sūra the besetting sin we are considering is the arrogance
born of place or power, wealth or honour, as understood in this world. The punishment
of ignominy looks back to the kind of sin which is to be punished.

4724. When the Punishment becomes a realised fact, how foolish will those look who
doubted whether there would be a Hereafter?

4725. There will be no uncertainty, as on this earth; no danger of discontinuance:
no possibility of their satisfaction being terminated.

4726. Cf. xviii: 31, and n. 2373.

4727. Everything will be open and in social companionship: for all the petty feelings
of jealousy or exclusiveness will have passed away.

4728. The Maidens, like the scene, the dress, the outlook, and the fruit, will be
beautiful. There will be life, but free from all earthly grossness. The women as well as
the men of this life will attain to this indescribable bliss.

4729. Ḥūr implies the following ideas: (1) purity, (2) beauty, especially of eyes,
where the intense white of the eye-balls stands out against the intense black of the pupil,
thus giving the appearance of lustre, and intense feeling, as opposed to dullness or want
of expression; and (3) truth and goodwill.

4730. The signification is explained in n. 4671 to xliii. 73.
56. Nor will they there
   Taste Death, except the first\textsuperscript{4731}
   Death; and He will preserve
   Them from the Chastisement
   Of the Blazing Fire,\textsuperscript{4732}

57. As a Bounty from thy Lord!
   That will be
   The supreme achievement!\textsuperscript{4733}

58. Verily, We have made
   This (Qur-ān) easy,\textsuperscript{4734}
   In thy tongue,
   In order that they
   May give heed.

59. So wait thou and watch;
   For they (too) are waiting.

\textsuperscript{4731} First Death: the ordinary natural death from this life, which brought them to the Garden of Felicity: there will be no further death after that. Cf. xxxvii. 59, and n. 4071.

\textsuperscript{4732} In Islam we are taught that salvation is not possible by our unaided efforts. Certainly, striving on our part is an indispensable condition: but it is the Mercy of Allah which comes to our help and keeps us from the Fire of final Punishment. This is mentioned last as the foundation on which is built our eternal felicity and our positive spiritual joys.

\textsuperscript{4733} This is our idea of Salvation: the negative avoidance of all the consequences of evil, and the positive attainment of all--and more than all--that our hearts could possibly desire. For Allah's Bounty outstrips anything that our eyes have seen, or our ears have heard of, or our imagination can conceive.

\textsuperscript{4734} Easy: not only to understand, being in the Arabic tongue; but mellifluous, whose rhythm carries off our spirits to a higher spiritual plane. In another sense, it is difficult; for to get to its deepest meaning, we shall have to strive hard, as the contents of this Sūra alone will show.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Al-Jâthîya, 45.

This is the sixth Sûra of the Ḥa-Mîm series: for their general theme and chronology, see the Introduction to S. xl.

Summary.—The title, “Bowing the knee”, taken from verse 28, expresses the leading idea in the Sûra. In this life, in spite of the Signs of Allah, and the evidences of His goodness all around, men go about in Unfaith, and mocking at Faith; but the End will bring them all to their knees.
Al-Jāthiya, or Bowing the Knee.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Hä-Mim.\(^{4735}\)

2. The revelation\(^{4736}\)
   Of the Book
   Is from Allah
   The Exalted in Power,
   Full of Wisdom.

3. Verily in the heavens\(^{4737}\)
   And the earth, are Signs
   For those who believe.

4. And in the creation\(^{4738}\)
   Of yourselves and the fact
   That animals are scattered
   (Through the earth), are Signs
   For those of assured Faith.

5. And in the alternation\(^{4739}\)
   Of Night and Day,
   And the fact that Allah

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\(^{4735}\). See Introduction to S. xl.

\(^{4736}\). This verse is the same as xl. 2, except that “wisdom” is here substituted in the last line for “knowledge”. This is appropriate, as in this Sūra we are dealing with the folly of those who reject Allah and His Signs, while S. xl. dealt with the individual soul’s witness to Faith and Virtue.

\(^{4737}\). Verses 3-5 deal with some of the points in the noble argument in ii. 164, but again there are differences on account of the different context. Note that here the argument is divided into three parts, one in each verse. (1) In verse 3 we are dealing with big Signs external to ourselves, some of which are far beyond our personal experiences: for them we require Faith: they are Signs “for those who believe.” For the other two see the next two notes.

\(^{4738}\). (2) These Signs are in our own nature and in the animals we meet with every day; here we have certainty within human limits: these are “for those of assured Faith”.

\(^{4739}\). (3) These are our daily experiences from external things, but they affect us and our lives intimately: here are questions of deductions “for those that are wise.”
Sends down Sustenance\textsuperscript{4740} from The sky, and revives therewith The earth after its death, And in the change Of the winds,—are Signs For those that are wise.

6. Such are the Signs\textsuperscript{4741} Of Allah, which We rehearse to thee In truth: then in what Exposition will they believe After Allah And His Signs?

7. Woe to each sinful Imposter.\textsuperscript{4742}

8. He hears the Signs Of Allah rehearsed to him, Yet is obstinate and lofty, As if he had not Heard them: then announce To him a Chastisement Grievous!

9. And when he learns Something of Our Signs, He takes them in jest:

\textsuperscript{4740} “Sustenance” is almost equivalent here to “rain”. And “rain” itself, and its revival of a dead earth, refer symbolically to Revelation and its putting new life into a dead soul. Similarly the alternation of Night and Day, and the change of the winds, besides being Signs as wonderful phenomena of Nature, refer to spiritual ignorance and knowledge, rest and activity, and the constant beneficent changes that are going on in the world, making for the spread of the blessing of Allah's Revelation.

\textsuperscript{4741} If there are any to whom the Signs from Nature, from within their own heart and conscience, and from the voice of Revelation, are not enough to convince them, what possible kind of exposition will they accept?

\textsuperscript{4742} A soul so dead, as described in the last note, is indeed wretched. It will resort to falsehoods, in worship, in conduct, and in its attitude towards Allah. It will be obstinate, and pretend to be ‘above such things’. It will hear the most beautiful Message but not profit by it. The loss or punishment is its own, and grievous it is!
For such there will be
A humiliating Chastisement.\footnote{4743}

10. In front of them is
Hell: and of no profit
To them is anything
They may have earned,
Nor any protectors they
May have taken to themselves
Besides Allah: for them
Is a tremendous Chastisement.\footnote{4744}

11. This is (true) Guidance:
And for those who reject
The Signs of their Lord,
Is a grievous Chastisement
Of abomination.\footnote{4745}

SECTION 2.

12. It is Allah Who has
Subjected the sea to you,\footnote{4746}

\footnote{4743. Note that in each of the verses 8-11 the Penalty is characterised by a certain description, which accords with the crime. (1) In verse 8, the man is arrogant about the Signs of Allah's love and care all around him, and his Penalty is "grievous". (2) In verse 9, he ridicules Allah's Signs, and his Penalty is "humiliating": he makes himself a ridiculous fool, (3) and (4) are described in the two following notes.

4744. (3) In verse 10 the sinner has piled up the good things of this life, and thinks he has got plenty of helpers and protectors, but all these things are of no use. On the contrary, his Penalty will be "tremendous", to correspond with the great pains which he has taken to multiply the gods of his worship.

4745. (4) In verse 11, he has flouted and rejected the specific guidance that came to him from the Word of Allah, or from the admonition of a prophet of Allah. His Penalty is a penalty of abomination: he earns unspeakable horror and abomination from all the Righteous, and is an unclean object in the Kingdom of Heaven.

4746. Cf. xvi. 14 and notes thereon, especially n. 2037. The one encircling ocean of our globe is one of the most significant facts in our physical geography. Its salt water is an agent of global sanitation. The salubrious effects of sea-air, with its ozone, are well known to everyone who has recouped his health by its means. Thanks to ships, the sea unites rather than divides: communications are, and have always been, more active between sea-coast towns than further inland. They thus further human intercourse, and =}
That ships may sail
Through it by His command,
That ye may seek
Of His Bounty, and that
Ye may be grateful.

13. And He has subjected
To you, as from Him,
All that is in the heavens
And on earth: behold,
In that are Signs indeed
For those who reflect.

14. Tell those who believe,
To forgive those who
Do not hope
For the Days of Allah;
It is for Him to recompense
(For good or ill) each People
According to what
They have earned.

15. If any one does
A righteous deed,
It is to his
Own benefit;

= help us to seek the “Bounty of Allah”, not only in a commercial but in an intellectual and spiritual sense. All this is through “Allah’s command” i.e., by His beneficent ordering of the universe, and we should be grateful.

4747. Cf. xxxi. 20, and n. 3605. The sea was only one example of Allah’s cherishing care in making all things in nature available for the use of man, through the genius and faculties which He has given to man. Man should never forget that it is all “as from Him”, i.e., from Allah.

4748. Cf. xiv: 5.

4749. Allah will give due recompense for good or evil according to His own full Knowledge and righteous Plan, and in His own good time.

4750. “People” here may be taken to be a group of common characteristics, e.g., the righteous in contrast with the unrighteous, the oppressed in contrast with the oppressors, and so on.

4751. Ordinarily good and evil come to their own even in this world; but in any case there is the final Judgment before Allah.
If he does evil,
It works against
(His own soul).
In the end will ye
(All) be brought back
To your Lord.

16. We did aforetime
Grant to the Children\(^{4752}\)
Of Israel the Book,
The Power of Command,
And Prophethood; We gave
Them, for Sustenance, things\(^{4753}\)
Good and pure; and We
Favoured them above the nations.

17. And We granted them
Clear Signs in affairs
(Of Religion): it was only\(^{4754}\)
After knowledge had been
Granted to them that they
Fell into schisms, through
Insolent envy\(^{4755}\) among themselves
Verily thy Lord will judge
Between them on the Day
Of Judgment as to those
Matters in which they
Set up differences.

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4752. The argument here is similar to that in xliv. 32-33 but; it is more particularised here. Israel had the Revelation given through Moses, the power of judgment and command through the Kingdom of David and Solomon, and numerous prophetic warnings through such men as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

4753. "Sustenance". The Mosaic Law laid down rules of diet, excluding things unclean, and it laid down rules for a pure and honourable life. In this way Israel became the standard-bearer of Allah’s law, thus “favoured above the nations”.

4754. Cf. x. 93. The Jews were the more to blame that they fell from Grace after all the divine favours which they had enjoyed. Their schisms and differences arose from mutual envy, which was rebellious insolence against Allah. As the next verse shows, some of them (not all) rejected the mission of the holy Prophet, also through envy that a Prophet had come among the Arabians.

4755. Cf. ii. 90, and that whole passage, with its notes.
18. Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow Thou that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not.

19. They will be of no use to thee in the sight of Allah: it is only Wrong-doers (that stand as) Protectors, one to another: But Allah is the Protector of the Righteous.

20. These are clear evidences To men, and a Guidance And Mercy to those Of assured Faith.

21. What! do those who do evil deeds Think that We shall make them as equal with Those who believe and do righteous deeds,—that

4756. *Sharrat* is best translated the “right Way of Religion”, which is wider than the mere formal rites and legal provisions, which mostly came in the Madinah period, long after this Makkah verse had been revealed.

4757. That is, in the service of Allah. Ignorant and contentious men are of no use or service to any Cause. The more you seek their help, the more do their ignorance and their contentiousness increase their own importance in their own eyes. Evil protects (or thinks it protects) evil: it has really no power of protection at all, for itself or for others. The righteous seek the protection of Allah, Who can and will protect them.

4758. The evidences of Allah’s Signs should be clear to all men: to men of Faith, who accept Allah’s Grace, they are a Guide and a Mercy.

4759. Three meanings can be deduced. (1) The evil ones are not in Allah’s sight like the righteous ones; neither in life nor in death are they equal; in life the righteous are guided by Allah and receive His Grace, and after death His Mercy, while the others reject His Grace, and after death receive condemnation. (2) Neither are the two the same in this life and in the after-life; if the wicked flourish here, they will be condemned in the =

- 1536 -
Equal will be their Life and their death? Ill is the judgment That they make.

SECTION 3.

22. Allah created the heavens
And the earth for Just ends, and in order That each soul may find The recompense of what It has earned, and none Of them shall be wronged.

23. Then seest thou such
A one as takes As his god his own Vain desire? Allah has, Knowing (him as such), Left him astray, and sealed His hearing and his heart (And understanding), and put A cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him

= Hereafter; if the good are in suffering or sorrow here, they will receive comfort and consolation in the Hereafter. (3) The real life of the righteous is not like the nominal life of the wicked, which is really death; nor is the physical death of the righteous, which will bring them into eternal life, like the terrible death of the wicked which will bring them to eternal misery.

4760. Cf. xlv. 38-39, and n. 4717. The government of the world is so ordered that each soul gets every chance for its full development, and it reaps the fruit of all its activities. If it breaks away from Allah's Grace, it suffers, but no injustice is done to anyone: on the contrary Allah's Bounty is always beyond man's deserts.

4761. If a man follows, not the laws of Allah, which are also the laws of his own pure nature as made by Allah, but the desires of his own distorted self, as shaped by the rebellion of his will, the inevitable consequence will be the withdrawal of Allah's grace and guidance. All his faculties will then be debased, and there will be nothing to guide him, unless he turns in repentance again to Allah.

4762. Cf. ii. 7 and notes.
After Allah (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will ye not Then receive admonition?

24. And they say: "What is There but our life In this world? We shall die and we live, And nothing but Time Can destroy us." But Of that they have no Knowledge: they merely conjecture:

25. And when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, Their argument is nothing But this: they say, "Bring (Back) our forefathers, if What ye say is true!"

26. Say: "It is Allah Who Gives you life, then Gives you death; then He will gather you together For the Day of Judgment About which there is No doubt": but most Men do not know.

4763. Cf. xxiii. 37, and n. 2896. The additional touch here, "And nothing but Time can destroy us", suggests the materialist philosophy that Matter and Time are eternal backwards and forwards; and possibly also that though each individual perishes, the race lasts till Time destroys it. This is not knowledge but conjecture. Why not accept light from Him Who knows all.

4764. Cf. xlv. 36. It is no argument to say, "If there is a future life, bring back our forefathers and let us see them here and now!" It is not for a man to raise the dead when and where he pleases. It is for Allah to command. And His promise is about the general Resurrection for the Day of Judgment. In His hands are the keys of life and death.
SECTION 4.

27. To Allah belongs
   The dominion of the heavens
   And the earth, and
   The Day that the Hour
   Of Judgment is established,—
   That Day will the followers^4765
   Of Falsehood perish!

28. And thou wilt see
   Every nation bowing the knee:^4766
   Every nation will be called
   To its Record: “This Day
   Shall ye be recompensed
   For all that ye did!”

29. “This Our Record speaks
   About you with truth:
   For We were wont^4767
   To put on record
   All that ye did.”

30. Then, as to those who
   Believed and did righteous
   Deeds, their Lord will

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4765. These vain wranglers about the future life and deniers of the Truth may have a run in this fleeting world; but the moment the world of Reality is established, they will see what they now deny. The facts will destroy their fancies, and they themselves will find themselves humiliated and lost, for having deliberately ignored Allah's Signs and acted on opposition to His holy Will.

4766. Bowing the knee: the key-phrase of the Sūra, and its title. Cf. xix. 72. Whatever the arrogance of the wicked may be in this life, whatever exclusive sects and divisions they may form, in this life, the time will come when they will humbly submit and bow the knee to the Truth. Before Allah, when their Record is produced, they must necessarily be dumb.

4767. Cf. xliii. 80. Nothing misses the Recording Angel, and whatever is said in the Record is true.
Admit them to His Mercy:
That will be the manifest triumph. 4768

31. But as to those who
Rejected Allah, (to them
Will be said): “Were not
Our Signs rehearsed to you?
But ye were arrogant,
And were a people
Given to sin!

32. “And when it was said
That the promise of Allah
Was true, and that the Hour—
There was no doubt
About its (coming), ye
Used to say, ‘We
Know not what is’ 4769
The Hour: we only think
It a conjecture, and we
Have no firm assurance.’ ”

33. Then will appear to them
The evil (fruits) of what
They did, and they will be 4770
Completely encircled by that
Which they used to mock at!

4768. The attainment and satisfaction of all hopes and desires; the reaching of the final goal of Bliss. Cf. xliv. 57, and n. 4733.

4769. There is arrogance as well as untruth in this pretence. The coming of Judgment has been proclaimed times out of number by every prophet of Allah. They cannot dismiss it as a mere idea or superstition. Their object is merely an ostentatious and lofty rejection of Faith.

4770. Cf. xi. 8. Their mockery will be turned against themselves, for they will be hemmed in by the very Realities which they had ignored or doubted or laughed at.
34. It will also be said:
   "This Day We will forget YOU as ye forgot
   The meeting of this Day
   Of yours! And your
   Abode is the Fire, and
   No helpers have ye!

35. "This, because ye used
   To take the Signs of Allah
   In jest, and the life
   Of the world deceived you:"
   (From) that Day, therefore,
   They shall not be taken out
   Thence, nor can they
   Make amends.

36. Then Praise be to Allah,
   Lord of the heavens
   And Lord of the earth,
   Lord and Cherisher
   Of all the worlds!

37. And unto Him (alone)
   Belongeth Majesty in the heavens
   And the earth: and He
   Is Exalted in Power,
   Full of Wisdom!

4771. Cf. vii. 51 and n. 1029. "Forget" is of course metaphorical for "deliberately to ignore".

4772. It is implied that 'you deliberately allowed yourselves to be deceived by the vanities of this world', or 'that you put yourselves into a position where you were deceived, for you were expressly warned against Evil.'

4773. The argument having been completed about the fruits of this life being reaped in the Ma'ād, or the Hereafter, when perfect balance will be restored and perfect Justice will reign supreme, the Sūra closes with praise and glory to Allah, Who is not only Omnipotent but is full of Wisdom, and cherishes and cares for all His creation. We began with the remembrance of His Revelation and Mercy, and we close with the celebration of His goodness, power, and wisdom. Note how the argument is rounded off by the reminiscence of the last clause of the second verse of this Sūra.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT AL-AHQAF, 46.

This is the seventh and last Sūra of the Ḥā Mim series. For the general theme and chronological place of these Sūras see the Introduction to S. xl.

The Al-haqf (mentioned in verse 21) are the long and winding crooked tracts of sand-hills, characteristic of the country of the ‘Ād people, adjoining Ḥadhramaut and Ṭayy: see vii. 65, n. 1040. These people had, at that time, probably a fertile irrigated country, but their sins brought on the calamity mentioned in xlvi. 24-25. The lesson of this Sūra is that if the Truth is challenged, the challenge will be duly answered, and Truth vindicated.

Summary.—All Creation has a Purpose behind it: Truth and Revelation will be vindicated, and those who question it will be undone by the very means by which they set such store: the righteous should wait in patience and constancy (xlvi. 1-35).
Al-Ahqaf, or Winding Sand-tracts.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. *Hā-Mim.*

2. The revelation
   Of the Book
   Is from Allah
   The Exalted in Power,
   Full of Wisdom.

3. We created not
   The heavens and the earth
   And all between them
   But for just ends, and
   For a term appointed:
   But those who reject Faith
   Turn away from that
   Whereof they are warned.

4. Say: “Do ye see”
   What it is ye invoke
   Besides Allah? Show me
   What it is they
   Have created on earth,

4774. See Introduction to S. xi.

4775. This verse is the same as the second verse of the last Sūra, but the theme is worked out differently in the two Sūras. In S. xlv. was shown how deniers of Revelation will at last be humbled until they can no longer deny its truth and power. In this Sūra is shown how Truth and Revelation will be vindicated by patience and constancy (xlvi. 35).

4776. Cf. xlv. 22. Many things may appear to us in the present world as strange and inexplicable. But everything made by Allah has a just purpose which must be fulfilled. Nothing in this world is permanent: everything is for an appointed term. The Word of Allah alone abides. All else will pass away after it has fulfilled its purpose. But Unbelievers refuse to face the danger of which they are warned.

4777. Some people may rush thoughtlessly into false worship, because it is the fashion or an ancestral custom, etc. They are asked to pause and see for themselves. Have the false gods or falsehood created anything? (They destroy much). Or have they any share or lot in the things we associate with the heavens,—spiritual well-being, etc.
Or have they a share
In the heavens?
Bring me a Book (Revealed) before this,
Or any remnant of knowledge (Ye may have), if ye
Are telling the truth!

5. And who is more astray
Than one who invokes,
Besides Allah, such as will
Not answer him to the Day
Of Judgment, and who
(In fact) are unconscious
Of their call (to them)?

6. And when mankind
Are gathered together
(At the Resurrection),
They will be hostile
To them and deny
That (men) had worshipped them.

7. When Our Clear Signs
Are rehearsed to them,
The Unbelievers say,
Of the Truth
When it comes to them: "This is evident sorcery!"

4778. ‘Or is there any warrant for you from any earlier revelation, assuming that you
do not believe in this Revelation? Or can you point to the least scrap or remnant of real
knowledge on which you can base what We condemn as your false life?’ No, you cannot.

4779. As there is no argument at all in favour of your sham worship, what sense
is there in it? Either your false gods are senseless stocks and stones which will never
answer you to the end of Time, being themselves devoid of understanding, or they are
real objects which will disown you at the last. If you worshipped Self, your own misused
faculties will witness against you at the last (xli. 20-23). If you worshipped good men or
prophets, like Jesus, they will disown you (v. 119). Similarly, if you worshipped angels,
they will disown you (xxxiv. 40-41).

4780. When the truth is actually brought to their doors, they call it sorcery! Cf.
xxxvii. 12-15, and n. 4042.
8. Or do they say, "He has forged it"? Say: "Had I forged it, then ye have no power to help Against Allah. He knows best Of that whereof ye talk (So glibly)! Enough is He For a witness between me And you! And He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

9. Say "I am not an innovation Among the messengers, nor Do I know what will Be done with me or With you. I follow But that which is revealed To me by inspiration; I am but a Warner Open and clear."

4781. 'If I forged a message from myself as one purporting to come from Allah, you would not be able to see me enjoy any of the blessings from Allah which I enjoy: you would not see me calm and relying on Allah, nor would you see me bear the reputation of being a trustworthy man. A liar comes to an evil end. But what about those who talk so glibly and freely about things which they knows not? Allah knows all and He is my witness! According to Ibn Kathir, the verse means that if the Prophet's claim to be Allah's messenger would have been a false one, he would have been stricken by a severe punishment from Allah and none had the power to avert that punishment.

4782. 'What is there to forge? All prophets have taught the Unity of Allah and our duty to mankind. I bring no new fangled doctrine, but eternal truths that have been known to good men through the ages. It is to reclaim you that I have come. I do not know what will be your fate for all this callousness, nor what you will do to me. But this I know, that I am preaching truth and righteousness as inspired by Allah. My duty is only to proclaim aloud and clearly the Message entrusted to me by Allah. The rest I leave to Allah.'
10. Say: "See ye? If (this teaching) be From Allah, and ye reject it, And a witness from among The Children of Israel testifies To its similarity (With earlier scripture), And has believed While ye are arrogant, (How unjust ye are!) Truly, Allah guides not A people unjust."

SECTION 2.

11. The Unbelievers say Of those who believe: "If (this Message) were A good thing, (such men) Would not have gone To it first, before us!"

4783. Another side of the argument is now presented. 'You pagan Arabs! You are puffed up with pride, though you are an ignorant nation. Among Israel there are men who understand the previous scriptures, and who find in the Qur'ān and its Preacher a true confirmation of the previous scriptures. They accept Islam as a fulfilment of the revelation of Moses himself! (See Deut. xviii. 18-19). And yet you hold back, though the Qur'ān has come in your own language, in order to help you to understand. How unjust and how shameful! In that case, with what face can you seek guidance from Allah?'

4784. There were learned Jews (and Christians) who saw in the holy Prophet the Messenger of Allah foreshadowed in previous Revelations, and accepted Islam. As this is a Makkān Sūra we need not construe this as a reference to 'Abdullāh ibn Salām, whose conversion was in Madinah only two years before the Prophet's death, unless we accept this particular verse to be so late in date. The sincere Jews were in a position to understand how this Revelation fitted in with all they had learnt about Revelation.

4785. A great many of the early Muslims were in humble positions, and were despised by the Qurāsh leaders. 'If such men could see any good in Islam, they said, 'there could be no good in it: if there had been any good in it, we should have been the first to see it!' The spiritually blind have such a good conceit of themselves! As they reject it, and as the Revelation is proved to have historic foundations, they can only call it "an old, old falsehood"!
And seeing that they
Guide not themselves thereby,
They will say, “This is
An (old,) old falsehood!”

12. And before this, was\textsuperscript{4786}
The Book of Moses
As a guide and a mercy:
And this Book confirms (it)
In the Arabic tongue;
To admonish the unjust,
And as Glad Tidings
To those who do right.

13. Verily those who say,\textsuperscript{4787}
“Our Lord is Allah”,
And remain firm
(On that Path),
On them shall be no fear,\textsuperscript{4788}
Nor shall they grieve.

14. Such shall be Companions
Of the Garden, dwelling
Therein (for aye): a recompense
For their (good) deeds.

\textsuperscript{4786.} The last revealed Book which was a Code of Life (\textit{Shari‘at}) was the Book of
Moses: for that of Jesus was not such a Code, but merely moral precepts to sweep away
the corruptions that had crept in. The Qur-\text{"an} has the same attitude to it as the teaching
of Jesus had to the Law. Jesus said (Matt. v. 17): “Think not that I am come to destroy
the Law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” But the corruptions
took new forms in Christian Churches: an entirely new \textit{Shari‘at} became necessary, and
this was provided in Islam.

\textsuperscript{4787.} To say, “Our Lord is Allah” is to acknowledge that we owe no service to any
creature, and shall render none: Allah shall have our exclusive devotion. “To remain firm
on that Path” is shown by our conduct: we prove that we love Allah and all His creatures,
and will unflinchingly do our duty in all circumstances.

\textsuperscript{4788.} Cf. ii. 38. The phrase occurs in numerous other places, with a new application
on each occasion. Here, if our claim is true that ‘our Lord is Allah’, what fear can
possibly come on us, or what calamity can there be to cause us grief? For our Lord is
our Cherisher, Defender, and Helper, our Hope and our Comfort, which can never fail.
15. We have enjoined on man:\footnote{4789}
Kindness to his parents:
In pain did his mother
Bear him, and in pain
Did she give him birth.
The carrying of the (child)
To his weaning is
(A period of) thirty months.\footnote{4790}
At length, when he reaches
The age of full strength\footnote{4791}
And attains forty years,
He says, "O my Lord!
Grant me that I may be
Grateful for Thy favour
Which Thou hast bestowed
Upon me, and upon both
My parents, and that I
May work righteousness
Such as Thou mayest approve;

\footnote{4789. Cf. xxix. 8 and xxxi. 14.}

\footnote{4790. In xxxi. 14 the time of weaning was stated to be at the age of two years, \textit{i.e.}, 24 months. See also ii. 233. That leaves six months as the \textit{minimum} period of human gestation after which the child is known to be viable. This is in accordance with the latest ascertained scientific facts. The \textit{average} period is 280 days, or ten times the intermenstrual period, and of course the average period of weaning is much less than 24 months.

The maximum period of breast-feeding (2 years) is again in accordance with the time that the first dentition is ordinarily completed in a human child. The lower milk incisors in the centre come out between the 6th and 9th months; then come out the milk teeth at intervals, until the canines appear. The second molars come out at about 24 months, and with them the child has a complete apparatus of milk teeth. Nature now expects him to chew and masticate and be independent of his mother's milk completely. On the other hand it hurts the mother to feed from the breast after the child has a complete set of milk teeth. The permanent teeth begin at the sixth year, and the second molars come at 12 years. The third molars are the wisdom teeth, which may appear at 18 to 20 years, or not at all.

\footnote{4791. The age of full strength (\textit{ashudd}) is held to be between 18 and 30 or 32. Between 30 and 40 the man is in his best manhood. After that he begins to look to his growing issue, and rightly commends the new generation to Allah. Perhaps his spiritual faculties also gain the upper hand after 40.}
And be gracious to me
In my issue. Truly
Have I turned to Thee
And truly do I submit
(To Thee) in Islâm.”

16. Such are they from whom
We shall accept the best\(^{4792}\)
Of their deeds and pass by
Their ill deeds: (they shall
Be) among the Companions
Of the Garden: a promise
Of truth, which was
Made to them
(In this life).

17. But (there is one)\(^{4793}\)
Who says to his parents,
“Fie on you! Do ye
Hold out the promise
To me that I
Shall be raised up,
Even though generations
Have passed before me
(Without rising again)?”
And they two seek
Allah’s aid, (and rebuke
The son): “Woe to thee!
Have Faith! For the promise
Of Allah is true.”

\(^{4792}\). Cf. xxix. 7 and n. 3429.

\(^{4793}\). A godly man often has an ungodly son, who flouts all that the father held sacred, and looks upon his father himself as old-fashioned and unworthy of respect or regard. The contrast in an individual family may be matched by the contrast in the passing and the rising generations of mankind. All this happens as a passing phase in the normal evolution of mankind, and there is nothing in this to be despondent about. What we have to do is for the mature generations to bring up their successors in godly ways, and for the younger generations to realise that age and experience count for something, especially in the understanding of spiritual matters and other matters of the highest moment to man.
But he says, "This is Nothing but tales Of the ancients!"

18. Such are they against whom
The word proved true
Among the previous generations
Of Jinns and men, that have Passed away; for they will Be (utterly) lost.

19. And to all
Are (assigned) degrees
According to the deeds Which they (have done),
And in order that (Allah) May recompense their deeds; And no injustice will be done To them.

20. And on the Day that The Unbelievers will be Placed before the Fire, (It will be said to them): “Ye squandered your good things In the life of the world,

4794. Cf. xli. 25 and n. 4494. Each individual, each generation, and each people is responsible for its own good deeds or misdeeds. The law of actions and their fruits applies: you cannot blame one for another. The only remedy lies in seeking for Allah’s Grace and Mercy, not only for ourselves but for others in brotherly or fatherly love.

This verse is in balanced contrast to verse 16 above.

4795. There is fine grading in the Hereafter. Every deed, good or bad, is judged and weighed to the minutest degree, with its motives, intentions, results, and relevant circumstances. It is not a mere rough classification. The fruits of evil will be exactly according to the degree of evil. But, as stated in other passages (e.g., xxviii. 84), the reward of good deeds will be far beyond their merits, on account of the Mercy and unbounded Bounty of Allah.

4796. “Squandered your good things” implies (in Arabic) grabbing at them, being greedy of them, seeking them as fleeting pleasures rather than the more serious things of life, sacrificing the spiritual for the material.
And ye took your pleasure
Out of them: but to-day
Shall ye be recompensed\textsuperscript{4797}
With a Chastisement of humiliation:
For that ye were arrogant
On earth without just cause,
And that ye (ever) transgressed."

SECTION 3.

21. Mention (Hūd)
One of ‘Ād’s (own) brethren:\textsuperscript{4798}
Behold, he warned his people
Beside the winding Sand-tracts:\textsuperscript{4799}
But there have been Warners
Before him and after him:
“Worship ye none other
Than Allah: truly I fear
For you the Chastisement
Of a Mighty Day.”

22. They said: “Hast thou come\textsuperscript{4800}
In order to turn us aside
From our gods? Then bring

\textsuperscript{4797}. They will be told: ‘You took your choice, and you must pay the price. You did wrong in a rebellious spirit, and prided yourselves on your wrong-doing, not occasionally, but of set purpose and constantly. Now you will be humbled in the dust, as a fitting punishment.’

\textsuperscript{4798}. Cf. vii. 65. and note 1040. The point is that the Warner who was raised among the ‘Ād people—as among other peoples—was not a stranger, but one of their own brethren, even as the holy Prophet began his preaching with a call to his own brethren the Quraish.

\textsuperscript{4799}. Winding Sand-tracts: \textit{Ahqāf}: see Introduction to this Sūra. The very things, which, under irrigation and with Allah’s Grace, gave them prosperity and power, were to be their undoing when they broke Allah’s Law and defied His Grace. See verses 24-26 below.

\textsuperscript{4800}. They were too much wedded to their evil ways—to the false gods that they worshipped—to appreciate the sincere advice of the prophet of Allah. They defied him and defied Allah Who had sent him. Mockingly they challenged him to bring on the threatened punishment! For they did not believe a word of what he said.
8.46, A.22-24

Upon us the (calamity)
With which thou dost
Threaten us, if thou
Art telling the truth!"

23. He said: "The Knowledge\(^{4801}\)
(Of when it will come)
Is only with Allah: I
Proclaim to you the mission
On which I have been sent:
But I see that ye
Are a people in ignorance!"

24. Then, when they saw\(^{4802}\)
A cloud advancing towards
Their valleys,
They said, "This cloud
Will give us rain!"
"Nay, it is the (calamity)
Ye were asking to be
Hastened!—a wind
Wherein is a Grievous Chastisement!

\(^{4801}\) The coming of the Punishment for evil was (and is always) certain. At what particular time it would come he could not tell. It is not for the prophet, but for Allah, to bring on the Penalty. But he saw that it was useless to appeal to them on account of the ignorance in which they were content to dwell.

\(^{4802}\) The Punishment came suddenly, and when they least expected it. They wanted rain, and they saw a cloud and rejoiced. Behold, it was coming towards their own tracts, winding through the hills. Their irrigation channels would be full, their fields would be green, and their season would be fruitful. But no! What is this? It is a tremendous hurricane, carrying destruction on its wings! A violent blast, with dust and sand! Its fury destroys everything in its wake! Lives lost! Fields covered with sand-hills! The morning dawns on a scene of desolation! Where were the men who boasted and defied their Lord! There are only the ruins of their houses to witness to the past!
25. "Everything will it destroy
By the command of its Lord!"
Then by the morning they—
Nothing was to be seen
But (the ruins of) their houses!
Thus do We recompense
Those given to sin!

26. And We had firmly established
Them in a (prosperity and) power
Which We have not given
To you (ye Quraish!)
And We had endowed them
With (faculties of)
Hearing, seeing, heart and intellect:
But of no profit to them
Were their (faculties of)
Hearing, sight, and heart
And intellect, when they
Went on rejecting the Signs
Of Allah: and they were
(Completely) encircled

4803. Here is the figure of speech known in rhetoric as aposiopesis, to heighten the effect of the suddenness and completeness of the calamity. In the Arabic text, the verb asbahū, in the third person plural, leads us to expect that we shall be told what they were doing in the morning. But no! They had been wiped out, and any small remnant had fled (see n. 1040 to vii. 65). Nothing was to be seen but the ruins of their houses.

4804. The ‘Ad and their successors the Thamūd were more richly endowed with the faculties of the arts, sciences, and culture than ever were the Quraish before Islam. "Hearing and seeing" refer to the experimental faculties; the word "heart" in Arabic includes intellect, or the rational faculties, as well as the instruments of feeling and emotion, the aesthetic faculties. The Second ‘Ad, or Thamūd, have left interesting traces of their architecture in the country round the Hijr: see n. 1043 to vii. 73, and notes 2002-2003 to xv. 80-82.

4805. The highest talents and faculties of this world are useless in the next world if we reject the laws of Allah and thus become outlaws in the Hereafter.

4806. See n. 4770 to xlv. 33. They used to mock at Allah’s Signs, but those were the very things which hemmed them in, and showed that they had more power and effectiveness than anything else.
27. We destroyed aforetime
    Towns round about you; 4807
    And We have shown
    The Signs in various ways,
    That they may turn (to Us).

28. Why then was no help
    Forthcoming to them from those
    Whom they worshipped as gods,
    Besides Allah, as a means
    Of access (to Allah)? Nay,
    They left them in the lurch:
    But that was their
    Falsehood and their invention. 4808

29. Behold, We turned
    Towards thee a company 4809
    Of Jinns (quietly) listening
    To the Qur-an: when they
    Stood in the presence
    Thereof, they said, “Listen
    In silence!” When the (reading)
    Was finished, they returned
    To their people, to warn them.

30. They said, “O our people!
    We have heard a Book
    Revealed after Moses,

4807. In Arabian history and tradition alone, to say nothing of Allah’s Signs
elsewhere, sin inevitably suffered its Punishment, and in various ways. Would not the later
people take warning?

4808. The false things that they worshipped were figments of their imagination. If
they had had any existence in fact, it was not of the kind they imagined.

4809. A company of Jinns. Nafar (company) may mean a group of from three to ten
persons. For Jinns, see n. 929 to vi. 100. They listened to the reading of the Qur-an with
great respect. The next verse shows that they had heard of the Jewish religion, but they
were impressed with the Message of Islam, and they seem to have gone back to their
people to share the Good News with them.
Confirming what came
Before it: it guides
To the Truth and
To a Straight Path.

31. "O our people, hearken
To the one who invites (You) to Allah, and believe
In him: He will forgive
You your faults,
And deliver you from
A Chastisement Grievous.

32. "If any does not hearken
To the one who invites (Us) to Allah, he cannot
Escape in the earth,
And no protectors can he have
Besides Allah: such
Are in manifest error."

33. See they not that
Allah, Who created the heavens
And the earth, and never
Wearied with their creation,
Is able to give life
To the dead? Yea, verily
He has power over all things.

4810. The one who invites all to Allah is the holy Prophet. He invites us to Allah:
if we believe in Allah and His Prophet, Allah will forgive us our sins on our repentance and amendment of our lives, and save us the Penalty of the future life.

4811. If a person refuses to believe the Truth, or opposes it, it has not the least effect on Allah’s holy Plan, which will go on to its completion; but it will deprive him of Grace and of any protection whatever; he will wander about as an outlaw in manifest helplessness.

4812. Cf. ii. 255 (Verse of the Throne): “His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them.” He Whose power is constant and unwearied in creating and preserving all things in heaven and earth can surely give life to the dead at the Resurrection.
34. And on the Day that\textsuperscript{4813} The Unbelievers will be Placed before the Fire, (They will be asked,) "Is this not the Truth?" They will say, "Yea, By our Lord" (He will say:) "Then taste ye\textsuperscript{4814} The Chastisement, for that ye Were wont to deny (Truth)!!"

35. Therefore patiently persevere, As did (all) messengers Of firm resolution; And be in no haste About the (Unbelievers). On the Day That they see the (Punishment)\textsuperscript{4815} Promised them, (it will be) As if they had not Tarried more than an hour In a single day. (Thine

\textsuperscript{4813} Cf. xlvi. 20, where the argument was closed about the undutiful son of a good father. After that the example of the 'Ad and of the believing Jinns was cited, and now is closed that argument in similar terms.

\textsuperscript{4814} The Truth which they denied is now all too clear to them. They are out of the Light of Truth, out of the Light of Allah's Countenance. And that in itself is a terrible Penalty.

\textsuperscript{4815} All good work proceeds in its own good time. We should never be impatient either about its success or about the punishment which is bound to come for those who oppose it or wish to suppress it. The inevitable punishment is spoken of as the \textit{Punishment promised}. It will come so soon and so suddenly that it will appear as if there was not the delay of a single hour in a single day! Time is a great factor in our affairs in this world, but it hardly counts in the next world.
4816. The Preacher's duty is to proclaim the Message in unmistakable terms. If any human beings come in the way, it will be to their own destruction; but none but rebellious transgressor will be punished. There is always hope and forgiveness for repentance and amendment.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Muḥammad*, 47.

We have examined and followed the current arrangement of the Sūras according to subject-matter and independently of chronology, and we have found that a logical thread runs through them. We have now finished more than five-sixths of the Qur-ān. The remaining sixth consists of short Sūras, but these are again grouped according to subject-matter.

We begin the first of such groups with a group of three Sūras (xlvii, to xlxi.), which deal with the organisation of the Muslim Ummah or community both for external defence and in internal relations. The present Sūra deals with the necessity of defence against external foes by courage and strenuous fighting, and dates from about the first year of the Hijra, when the Muslims were under threat of extinction by invasion from Makkah.

*Summary.*—Aggressive hostility to Faith and Truth should be fought firmly, and Allah will guide (xlvii. 1-19).

Faint-heartedness condemned; those who strive and those who turn away will be sorted out (xlvii. 20-38).
**Muhammad** (the Prophet).

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. Those who reject Allah And hinder (men) from The Path of Allah,— Their deeds will Allah Bring to naught. 4817

2. But those who believe And work deeds of Righteousness, and believe In the (Revelation) sent down To Muhammad—for it is The Truth from their Lord,— He will remove from them Their ills and improve Their condition. 4818

3. This because those who Reject Allah follow falsehood. While those who believe follow The Truth from their Lord: Thus does Allah set forth 4819 For men their lessons By similitudes.

4817. Whatever they do will miss its mark, because Allah is the source of all energy and life. If the wicked try to persecute men or seduce them from the Truth, the result will be the opposite of what they intend.

4818. *Bāl* means state or condition, whether external, or of the heart and mind. Both meanings apply here. The more the wicked rage, the better will be the position of the righteous, and Allah will make it easier and easier for the righteous to love and follow the Truth.

4819. We learn the greatest moral lessons by parables and similitudes from things that happen in the outer world. If a man goes after a mirage or a thing that has no real existence, he can never reach his goal, while the man that follows the kindly Light from Allah that leads him on must be happier in mind, sounder in heart, and firmer in life, generally for every moment that he lives.
4. Therefore, when ye meet\textsuperscript{4820} The Unbelievers (in fight), Smite at their necks; At length, when ye have Thoroughly subdued them, Bind (the captives)\textsuperscript{4821} Firmly: therefore (Is the time for) either Generosity or ransom: \textsuperscript{4822} Until the war lays down Its burdens. Thus (are ye Commanded): but if it Had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted Retribution from them (Himself); But (He lets you fight) In order to test you, \textsuperscript{4823} Some with others. But those who are slain\textsuperscript{4824} In the way of Allah,— He will never let Their deeds be lost.

\textsuperscript{4820}. When once the fight (Jihād) is entered upon, carry it out with the utmost vigour, and strike home your blows at the most vital points (smite at their necks), both literally and figuratively. You cannot wage war with kid gloves.

\textsuperscript{4821}. In the first onset there must necessarily be great loss of life; “after the enemy's numbers are fairly thinned down, prisoners may be taken”. With this passage may be compared viii. 67, and n. 1234.

\textsuperscript{4822}. When once the enemy is brought under control, generosity (i.e., the release of prisoners without ransom) or ransom is recommended.

\textsuperscript{4823}. The Believers are tested in Faith by the extent to which they are willing to make sacrifices, even to the laying down of their lives; and the enemies are tested as to whether they would repent and let the righteous live in freedom and security.

\textsuperscript{4824}. There are two alternative readings, (1) qātalū, “those who fight”, and (2) qullū, “those who are slain”. The meaning under the first reading is wider, and includes that under the second. I have translated on the basis of the second reading, which is in accordance with the text of the Royal Egyptian edition.
5. Soon will He guide them\(^{4825}\) 
   And improve their condition,

6. And admit them to 
   The Garden which He\(^{4826}\) 
   Has made known to them.

7. O ye who believe! 
   If ye will help 
   (The cause of) Allah, 
   He will help you, 
   And plant your feet firmly.

8. But those who reject (Allah),— 
   For them is destruction, 
   And (Allah) will bring 
   Their deeds to naught.\(^{4827}\)

9. That is because they 
   Hate the Revelation of Allah; 
   So He has made 
   Their deeds fruitless.\(^{4828}\)

10. Do they not travel\(^{4829}\) 
    Through the earth, and see 
    What was the End 
    Of those before them 
    (Who did evil)? 
    Allah brought utter destruction 
    On them, and similar 
    (Fates await) those who 
    Reject Allah.

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4825. If we read “who are slain” in the last clause but one of verse 4, (see last note), “guide” would mean “guide them in their journey after death”.

4826. “The Garden which He has made known to them”: Cf. ii. 25.

4827. See above, xlvii. 1 and n. 4817.

4828. Their deeds are “fruitless” in the sense that they are vain; they do not produce the results intended by their doers. But they will not be exempt from producing the natural consequences of evil, viz., further degradation and misery for the soul.

4829. The end of evil is evil. All past history and tradition shows that. Will not men of every generation learn that lesson? Allah helps His servants, but those who rebel against Allah have no one to help them.
11. That is because Allah
Is the Protector of those
Who believe, but
Those who reject Allah
Have no protector.

SECTION 2.

12. Verily Allah will admit
Those who believe and do
Righteous deeds, to Gardens
Beneath which rivers flow;
While those who reject Allah
Will enjoy (this world)\textsuperscript{4830}
And eat as cattle eat;
And the Fire will
Be their abode.

13. And how many cities,
With more power than
Thy city which has
Driven thee out,\textsuperscript{4831}
Have We destroyed
(For their sins)?
And there was none
To aid them.

14. Is then one who is
On a clear\textsuperscript{4832} (Path)
From his Lord,

\textsuperscript{4830}. An apt simile. Beasts of the field eat their fill, but have no higher interests. Men who worship the world exclusively are no better: their pleasures and enjoyments rise no higher than those of the beasts of the field. They have no inklings of spiritual happiness. On the contrary, as they were endowed with spiritual faculties which they misused, they will not escape the Fire of Punishment, the Penalty of Sin.

\textsuperscript{4831}. A reference to Pagan Makkah, which drove out the holy Prophet because of his righteousness and because he preached Repentance. The date of this Sûra must therefore be after the Hijrat.

\textsuperscript{4832}. Clear, or enlightened; a Path on which shines the Light of Allah.
No better than one
To whom the evil
Of his conduct seems pleasing,
And such as follow
Their own lusts?

15. (Here is) the description
Of the Garden which
The righteous are promised:
In it are rivers
Of water unstaling;\(^{4833}\)
Rivers of milk
Of which the taste
Never changes; rivers
Of wine, a joy
To those who drink;
And rivers of honey
Pure and clear. In it
There are for them
All kinds of fruits;\(^{4834}\)
And Forgiveness from their Lord,\(^{4835}\)
(Can those in such Bliss)
Be compared to such as
Shall dwell for ever
In the Fire, and be given,

\(^{4833}\) In this description there are four kinds of drinks and all kinds of fruits; and the summing up of all delights in the “Forgiveness from their Lord”. The four kinds of drinks are: (1) delicious, cool, pure water, not like earthly water, for it never suffers corruption; (2) milk which never turns sour, whose taste is like that of fresh warm milk drawn from the udder; (3) wine, not like any wine on earth, for it leaves no headaches behind, and causes no intoxication, which is a kind of madness or poison, but is ever a joy to drink; and (4) honey, pure and clear, with no admixture of wax or any foreign substance. These drinks, will cool the spirit, feed the heart, warm the affections, and sweeten life.

\(^{4834}\) See n. 4671 to xliii. 73.

\(^{4835}\) Forgiveness from their Lord: that is the covering up or blotting out of sin and all that was sad or unsatisfactory in the lower life; the pure Light from the Countenance of Allah Most High: xcii. 20.
To drink, boiling water,
So that it cuts up\textsuperscript{4836}
Their bowels (to pieces)?

16. And among them are men
Who listen to thee,
Till when they
Go out from thee,\textsuperscript{4837}
They say to those who
Have received Knowledge,
“What is it he said
Just then?” Such are
Men whose hearts Allah
Has sealed, and who
Follow their own lusts.

17. But to those who receive\textsuperscript{4838}
Guidance, He increases
Their Guidance,
And bestows on them
Their Piety and Restraint
(From evil).

18. Do they then only wait\textsuperscript{4839}
For the Hour,—that it
Should come on them

\textsuperscript{4836} Cf. xxxvii. 66-67, and n. 4074. Just as the Bliss of the Blessed will penetrate their being through and through, so the agony of the condemned ones will penetrate their being through and through.

\textsuperscript{4837} Cf. x. 42, and n. 1434; also vi. 25, 36, and n. 857. The case here referred to is that of the Hypocrites who came to the assemblies of Islam in Madinah and pretended to listen to the Prophet’s teaching and preaching. But their heart and mind were not in learning righteousness, but in carping at things they saw and heard. When they got out, they knew nothing of the teaching, but on the contrary asked foolish and ignorant questions, such as might raise doubts.

\textsuperscript{4838} Spiritual advancement is progressive: each step makes the next ones easier and more complete.

\textsuperscript{4839} Cf. xliii. 66, and n. 4665.
Of a sudden? But already
Have come some tokens\textsuperscript{4840}
Thereof,
And when it comes to them,
How shall they have
Their Reminder?

19. Know, therefore, that
There is no god
But Allah, and ask
Forgiveness for thy fault,\textsuperscript{4841}
And for the men
And women who believe:
For Allah knows how ye\textsuperscript{4842}
Move about and how
Ye dwell in your homes.

\textbf{SECTION 3.}

20. Those who believe say,\textsuperscript{4843}
"Why is not a Sûra
Sent down (for us)AGAIN?"

\textsuperscript{4840.} The sands of time are always running, and when a wrong is done, the time for its punishment is approaching every moment. No one should therefore wait. The time for repentance is Now at any given time. When the punishment comes, it is too late for repentance, and all admonition would be useless.

Looking to the particular time when this Sûra was revealed, viz., about a year after the Hijrat, already there were Signs that the plans of the Pagans to crush Islam were crumbling to pieces. The Hijrat showed how much good-will there was in Madinah for the holy Prophet of Allah, and how many people from Makkah adhered to him. The battle of Badr showed that they could hold their own against odds of three to one.

\textsuperscript{4841.} Cf. xl. 55, and n. 4428.

\textsuperscript{4842.} The time and manner of our conducting ourselves at home and when we move about on our business are all material to the judgment of our conduct, and for every nuance in our moral and spiritual progress, we must seek Allah's help and guidance.

\textsuperscript{4843.} The men of faith and loyalty are eager and anxious to get a command to serve the Cause even if it be at the sacrifice of their lives. Not so the Hypocrites, "those in whose hearts is a disease". They are mortally afraid as mentioned below.
4844. Cf. iii. 7, and n. 347. The defence of truth and righteousness at all sacrifice, when a definite and categorical command issues from the ruler of an Islamic state is a fundamental condition of enlistment in the cause of Allah. It is true that Punishment and Judgment belong to Allah alone; but our mettle and fidelity have to be tested, (see verse 4 above), and Allah uses human agency in human affairs.

4845. Cf. ii. 10. The disease is hypocrisy, disloyalty to the Cause, want of courage and of the spirit of self-sacrifice, want of true understanding.

4846. The resolution is not taken except under guidance from Allah. Those, therefore, who fail to implement it by their own effort and sacrifice, are not true to Allah. And such disloyalty or cowardice is not even good for them from a worldly point of view. With what face can they meet their friends after their disgraceful conduct?

4847. It is no use to say, as the Quraish said, that it is not seemly to fight against kith and kin. From one point of view the stand against sin brings "not peace, but a sword". It is a case of either subduing evil or being subdued by evil. If evil gets the upper hand, it is not likely to respect ties of kith and kin. It did not in the case of the holy Prophet and his adherents, and had to be suppressed, to bring about the conditions necessary for peace.

But when a Sūra
Of decisive Meaning is revealed,
And fighting is mentioned
Therein, thou wilt see those
In whose hearts is a disease Looking at thee with a look
Of one in swoon at
The approach of death.
But more fitting for them--

21. Were it to obey
And say what is just,
And when a matter Is resolved on, it were
Best for them if they Were true to Allah.

22. Then, is it To be expected of you,
If ye were put in authority,
That ye will do mischief
In the land, and break
Your ties of kith and kin?
23. Such are the men
Whom Allah has cursed\footnote{Cursed: i.e., deprived of His Grace: left them straying, because they deliberately rejected His guidance. The result is that what they hear is as if they had not heard, and what they see is as if they had not seen. They have no desire to understand Allah’s Will or Allah’s Revelation;—or is it that they have themselves locked and bolted their hearts and minds, so that nothing can penetrate them?}
For He has made them
Deaf and blinded their sight.

24. Do they not then
Earnestly seek to understand
The Qur-an, or is that there are
Locks upon their hearts?

25. Those who turn back\footnote{Such men are entirely in the hands of Satan. They follow his suggestions, and their hopes are built on his deceptions.}
As apostates after Guidance
Was clearly shown to them,—
Satan has instigated
Them and buoyed them up
With false hopes.

26. This, because they said\footnote{They have become so impervious to facts and truths, because, without the courage to oppose Allah’s Cause openly, they secretly intrigue with Allah’s enemies, and say that they will follow them part of the way, and by remaining partly in the other camp, they will be far more useful as spies and half-hearted doubters than by going over altogether. If they think that this game will be successful, they are mistaken. All the inner secrets and motives of their hearts are known to Allah. Cf. lix. 11.}
To those who hate what
Allah has revealed, “We
Will obey you in part
Of (this) matter”; but Allah
Knows their (inner) secrets.

27. But how (will it be)\footnote{It is all very well for them to practise hypocrisy in this life. How will they feel at death, when they find that the angels know all, and touch the very spots they had taken such care to conceal?}
When the angels take
Their souls at death,
And smite their faces\textsuperscript{4852} 
And their backs?

28. This because they followed 
That which displeased 
Allah, and 
They hated Allah’s good pleasure; 
So He made their deeds 
Of no effect.

SECTION 4.

29. Or do those in whose\textsuperscript{4853} 
Hearts is a disease, think 
That Allah will not bring 
To light all their rancour?

30. Had We so willed, 
We could have shown them 
Up to thee, and thou 
Shouldst have known them\textsuperscript{4854} 
By their marks: but surely 
Thou wilt know them 
By the tone of their speech! 
And Allah knows 
All that ye do.

---

\textsuperscript{4852} Their faces and their backs: there is a subtle metaphor. The face is what looks to the front, the side you present to the outer world; the back is what is not shown, what is hidden from the world. The hypocrites will be hit at both points. Or, the face is what they boast of, what they are proud of; the back is the skeleton in the cupboard, the things they dare not utter, but which yet haunt them. The hypocrites are hit on every side. \textit{Cf.} viii. 50.

\textsuperscript{4853} \textit{Cf.} verse 20 above, and n. 4845. Being diseased at the very core of their being, they do not understand the simplest facts of spiritual life.

\textsuperscript{4854} Evil is not always necessarily branded in this life with a distinguishing mark or brand. But the discerning ones know. Evil is betrayed by its speech and behaviour.
31. And We shall try you Until We test those Among you who strive Their utmost and persevere In patience; and We shall Try your reported (mettle).  

32. Those who disbelieve, Hinder (men) from The Path of Allah, and resist The Messenger, after Guidance Has been clearly shown to them, Will not harm Allah In the least, but He Will make their deeds Of no effect.  

33. O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey The Messenger, and make Not vain your deeds!  

34. Those who disbelieve, And hinder (men) from the Path Of Allah, then die disbelieving, Allah will not forgive them.  

4855. Cf. xxxiv. 21, and n. 3821. The test and trial is for our own psychological development, to help in the exercise of such choice as has been given to us in our free-will. Cf. also iii. 154, and n. 467.  

4856. Akhbar: the things reported of you; reputation for courage and constancy, which has to be brought to the test of facts and experience. In an epigram of Tacitus we are told of a Roman Emperor that he would have been considered in every way to have been worthy of being a ruler if only he had never ruled! So in life people may think us courageous, true, noble, and self-sacrificing; and we may consider ourselves as possessing all such virtues; but it is actual experience that will bring them to the test.  

4857. Cf. verse 25 above, and verse 34 below: in verse 25 was shown the source of the evil. viz., yielding to the deceptions of Satan; in this verse are shown the proximate consequences of such yielding to evil, viz., failure of all we do; and in verse 34 below are shown the eternal consequences, viz., our deprivation of Allah’s Grace and Mercy.  

4858. See last note.
35. Be not weary and
Faint-hearted, crying for peace,
When ye are. 4859
The Uppermost: for Allah is
With you, and will never
Put you in loss
For your (good) deeds.

36. The life of this world
Is but play and amusement: 4860
And if ye believe
And guard against evil,
He will grant you
Your recompense, and will not
Ask you (to give up)
Your possessions. 4861

37. If He were to ask you
For all of them, and
Press you, ye would
Covetously withhold, and He
would 4862

4859. To those who are trying to root out evil, and have authority to do so, the question is not of peace or conflict, but of whether Good or Evil is to prevail. They must remember that Good must ultimately prevail, and Allah's help is with those who, as far as men can, are trying to further the universal Plan. Cf. n. 4847 to verse 22 above.

4860. Cf. vi. 32, and n. 855; and xxix. 64, and n. 3497. Amusement and play are not bad things in themselves. As preparations for the more serious life, they have their value. But if we concentrate on them, and neglect the business of life, we cannot prosper. So we must use our life in this world as a preparation for the next life.

4861. Complete self-sacrifice, if voluntarily offered, has a meaning: it means that the person's devotion is exclusively and completely for the Cause. But no law or rule can demand it. And a mere offer to kill yourself has no meaning. You should be ready to take risks to your life in fighting for the Cause, but you should aim at life, not death. If you live, you should be ready to place your substance and your acquisitions at the disposal of the Cause. But it is not reasonable to pauperise yourself and become a hanger-on for the Cause. Moreover, the inborn tendency to self-preservation in an average man would lead to concealment and niggardliness if all were asked for the Cause, by Law, and there would further be a feeling of bitterness and rebellion.

4862. Cf. iii. 180.
38. Behold, ye are those
Invited to spend
(Of your substance)
In the Way of Allah:
But among you are some
That are niggardly. But any
Who are niggardly are so
At the expense of
Their own souls.
But Allah is free
Of all wants,
And it is ye that are needy.
If ye turn back
(From the Path), He will
Substitute in your stead
Another people; then they
Would not be like you!

4863. Cf. above, verse 29. Rancour or ill-feeling, or any desire but that of devotion, should never be given a handle in a wise Law.

4864. Here the case of the special devotee and of the average man with his human foibles are distinguished. Stinginess is not a virtue: it hurts more the finer-nature of the individual practising it that it hurts the Cause. Allah is free of all wants and independent of any need that we can meet. His Cause is similarly independent of human aid. But it uses human agency for our own human advancement. The need to be able to serve Allah's cause is ours. We are the needy beggars who should claim the privilege before the Lord of Bounties unbounded.

4865. If we desert the Cause, the Cause will not fail. Better men than we will uphold the flag. But we should fall, and others will take our place, who are not so timid, half-hearted, or stingy. In Wordsworth's words, "High Heaven rejects the lore of nicely calculated less or more."
INTRODUCTION TO SURAT Al-Fat-h, 48.

1. This is the second of the group of three Madinah Sūras described in the Introduction to S. xlvi. Its date is fixed by the mention of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah, Ṣul-qa’dā A.H. 6=Feb. 628 (see n. 1261 to ix. 13).

2. Ḥudaibiyah is a plain, a short day’s march to the north of Makkah, a little to the west of the Madinah-Makkah road, as used in the Prophet’s time. Six years had passed since the Prophet had left his beloved City, and it had been in the hands of the Pagan autocracy. But Islam had grown during these six years. Its Qibla was towards the Ka’ba. The Pagans had tried to attack Islam at various times and had been foiled. By Arab custom every Arab was entitled to visit the Sacred Enclosure unarmed, and fighting of any kind was prohibited during the Sacred Months (see n. 209 to ii. 194), which included the month of Ṣul-qa’dā. In Ṣul-qa’dā A.H. 6, therefore, the Prophet desired to perform the ‘Umra or lesser pilgrimage (n. 212 to ii. 196), unarmed, but accompanied with his followers. A large following joined him, to the number of fourteen to fifteen hundred.

3. This was not to the liking of the Pagan autocracy at Makkah, which took alarm, and in breach of all Arab tradition and usage, prepared to prevent the peaceful party from performing the rites of pilgrimage. They marched out to fight the unarmed party. The Prophet turned a little to the west of the road, and encamped at Ḥudaibiyah, where negotiations took place. On the one hand the Prophet was unwilling to give the Quraish any pretended excuse for violence in the Sacred Territory; on the other, the Quraish had learnt, by six years’ bitter experience, that their power was crumbling on all sides, and Islam was growing with its moral and spiritual forces, which were also reflected in its powers of organisation and resistance. The enthusiasm with which the Covenant of Fealty was entered into under a tree in Ḥudaibiyah (xlvi. 18) by that great multitude united in devotion to their great leader, was evidence of the great power which he commanded even in a worldly sense if the Quraish had chosen to try conclusions with him.

4. A peaceful Treaty was therefore concluded, known as the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. It stipulated: (1) that there was to be peace between the parties for ten years; (2) that any tribe or person was free to join either party to make an alliance with it; (3) that if a Quraish person from Makkah, under guardianship, should join the Prophet without the guardian’s permission, he (or she) should be sent back to the guardian, but in the contrary case, they should not be sent back; and (4) that the Prophet and his party were not to enter Makkah that year, but that they could enter unarmed the following year.
5. Item 3, not being reciprocal, was objected to in the Muslim camp, but it really was of little importance. Muslims under guardianship, sent back to Makkah, were not likely to renounce the blessings of Islam; on the other hand Muslims going to Makkah would be centres of influence for Islam, and it was more important that they should be allowed to remain there than that they should be sent back to Madinah. It was impossible to think that there would be apostates or renegades to Paganism! “Look on this picture, and on that!”

6. The Muslims faithfully observed the terms of the Treaty. The following year (A.H. 7) they performed the lesser Pilgrimage in great state for three days. It is true that the Makkans later on broke the Peace in the attack which one of their allied tribes (the Banū Bakr) made on Banū Khuzā'a (who were in alliance with the Prophet), but this led to the conquest of Makkah and the sweeping away of the autocracy. Meanwhile Ḥudaibiya was a great victory, moral and social, as well as political, and its lessons are expounded in this Sūra, as the lessons of Badr were expounded in viii. 42-48, and of Uhud in iii. 121-129, 149-180.

**Summary.**—Victory comes from cool courage, devotion, faith, and patience, as shown at Ḥudaibiya; therefore remember Allah, and follow His Prophet (xlviii. 1-29).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Verily We have granted Thee a manifest Victory:4866
2. That Allah may forgive thee Thy faults of the past And those to follow; Fulfil His favour to thee; And guide thee On the Straight Way;
3. And that Allah may help Thee with powerful help.
4. It is He Who sent Down Tranquillity4869 Into the hearts of The Believers, that they may

4866. This is best referred to the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya, for which see the Introduction to this Sūra. By this Treaty the Makkan Quraish, after many years of unrelenting conflict with Islam, at length recognised Islam as (what they thought) an equal power with themselves. In reality the door was then opened for the free spread of Islam throughout Arabia and thence through the world.

4867. See n. 4428 to xl. 55, and Cf. xlvi. 19. Any mistakes of the past were now rectified, and any future ones prevented by the free scope now offered, by the act of the Quraish Pagans themselves, to the recognition and free promulgation of Islam.

4868. Three objects or results of the Treaty are mentioned: (1) forgiveness, which is equivalent to Mercy, (2) fulfilment of the dignity of Prophethood with the dignity of an effective and recognised position in Arabia; (3) opening up a straight way leading to Islam, by access to Makkah from next year, Makkah being the symbolic centre of Islam. These three are summed up in the comprehensive phrase “powerful (or effective) help”.

4869. The results were achieved by tranquillity, calmness, and cool courage among the 1400 to 1500 unarmed men who accompanied the Prophet to Ḥudaibiya and who were threatened with violence by the excited Quraish leaders of Makkah.
Add Faith to their Faith;—
For to Allah belong
The Forces of the heavens
And the earth; and Allah is
Full of Knowledge and Wisdom;—

5. That He may admit
The men and women
Who believe, to Gardens
Beneath which rivers flow,
To dwell therein for aye,
And remove their sins
From them;—and that is,
In the sight of Allah,
The grand triumph,

6. And that He may punish
The Hypocrites, men and
Women, and the Polytheists,
Men and women, who think
An evil thought of Allah.
On them is a round
Of Evil: the Wrath of Allah
Is on them: He has cursed

4870. It is a casuistical question to ask. Are there degrees in Faith? The plain meaning is that Believers will see one Sign of Allah after another, and with each their Faith is confirmed. During all the long years of persecution and conflict they had Faith, but when they see their old enemies actually coming out to negotiate with them, their Faith is justified, fulfilled, and confirmed: and they turn in gratitude to Allah.

4871. There are visible forces which you see in the physical world. Men fight with armed forces, and the Muslims had to defend themselves with arms also, and not without success.

4872. This clause is co-ordinated to the previous clause, “That they may add Faith to their Faith”. The intervening words, “For to Allah ... and Wisdom” are parenthetical. The third co-ordinate clause comes in the next verse, “And that He may punish...”. The skeleton construction will be, “Allah sends down calm courage to Believers in order that they may be confirmed in their Faith; that they may qualify for the Bliss of Heaven; and that the evil ones may receive the punishment they deserve.”

4873. They will be encircled (or hemmed in) by Evil.

4874. That is, deprived them of His Grace, on account of their continued rejection of it.
Them and got Hell ready
For them: and evil
Is it for a destination.

7. For to Allah belong
The Forces of the heavens
And the earth; and Allah is
Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom.

8. We have truly sent thee
As a witness, as a
Bringer of Glad Tidings,
And as a Warner:

9. In order that ye
(O men) may believe
In Allah and His Messenger,
That ye may assist
And honour him,
And celebrate His praises
Morning and evening.

10. Verily those who plight
Their fealty to thee plight
Their fealty in truth to Allah:

4875. These words are repeated (with a slight change) from the parenthetical clause in verse 4. to emphasize the assertion as a substantive proposition, that fighting and visible forces in the physical world are not the only forces with which Allah works out His Plan. The invisible forces are more important as they were at Ḥudaibiya. The slight difference is instructive; in the parenthetical clause, Allah's Knowledge was emphasized, and in the substantive clause it is Allah's Power. Knowledge plans, and Power executes.

4876. The Prophet came in order to establish Faith in Allah and true worship. We can view him in three capacities: (1) as a witness to help the weak if they were oppressed and check the strong if they did wrong; (2) as a giver of the Glad Tidings of Allah's Grace and Mercy to those who repented and lived good lives; and (3) as one who warned sinners of the consequences of their sin.

4876-A. The words "assist and honour" refer to the Prophet (peace be on him) whereas in the phrase "celebrating praise" clearly the reference is to Allah.

4877. In the Ḥudaibiya negotiations, when it was uncertain whether the Quraish would treat well or ill the Prophet's delegate to Makkah, there was a great wave of feeling in the Muslim camp of 1400 to 1500 men. They came with great enthusiasm and swore
The Hand of Allah is Over their hands: 
Then any one who violates His oath, does so To the harm of his own Soul, and any one who Fulfils what he has Covenanted with Allah,— Allah will soon grant him A great Reward.

SECTION 2.

11. The desert Arabs who Lagged behind will Say to thee: “We were engaged in (Looking after) our flocks And herds, and our families: Do thou then ask Forgiveness for us.” They say with their tongues What is not in their hearts.

= their fealty to the Prophet, by placing hand on hand according to the Arab custom: see paragraph 3 of the Introduction to this Sūra. This in itself was a wonderful demonstration of moral and material strength, a true Victory: it is called Bat'at ur Riddwān (Fealty of Allah’s Good Pleasure) in Islamic History. They placed their hands on the Prophet’s hand, but the Hand of Allah was above them, and He accepted their Fealty.

‘Alaihu is an archaic form for ‘Alaihi.

4878. When the Prophet started from Madinah on the Makkah journey which ended in Ḥudaybiyya, he asked all Muslims to join him in the pious undertaking, and he had a splendid response. But some of the desert tribes hung back and made excuses. Their faith was but lukewarm, and they did not want to share in any trouble which the Makkah might give to the unarmed Muslims on pilgrimage. Their excuse that they were engaged in looking after their flocks and herds and their families was an after-thought, and in any case made after the return of the Prophet and his party with enhanced prestige to Madinah.

4879. They said this with their tongues, but no thought of piety was in their hearts.
Say: “Who then has Any power at all (To intervene) on your behalf With Allah, if His Will Is to give you some loss\(^{4880}\) Or to give you some profit? But Allah is well acquainted With all that ye do.

12. ‘Nay ye thought that The Messenger and the Believers Would never return to Their families; this seemed Pleasing in your hearts,\(^{4881}\) and Ye conceived an evil thought, For ye are a people Doomed to perish.”

13. And if any believe not In Allah and His Messenger, We have prepared, For those who reject Allah, A Blazing Fire!

14. To Allah belongs the dominion Of the heavens and the earth: He forgives whom He wills,\(^{4882}\)

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4880. Their false excuse was based on a calculation of worldly profit and loss. But what about the spiritual loss in detaching themselves from the holy Prophet or spiritual profit in joining in the splendidly loyal feelings of service and obedience which were demonstrated at Ḥudaybiyya? And in any case they need not think that all their real and secret motives were not known to Allah.

4881. Their faith was so shaky that they thought the worst would happen, and that the Makkān Quraysh would destroy the unarmed band. In their heart of hearts they would not have been sorry, because they were steeped in wickedness and rejoiced in the sufferings of others. But such persons will burn in the fire of their own disappointment.

4882. Evil must inevitably have its punishment, but there is one way of escape, viz., through repentance and the Mercy of Allah. Allah’s Justice will punish, but Allah’s Mercy will forgive; and the Mercy is the predominant feature in Allah’s universe: “He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”
And He punishes whom He
Wills: but Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

15. Those who lagged behind\(^{4883}\)
(Will say), when ye
Set forth to acquire
Booty (in war): “Permit us
To follow you.” They wish
To change Allah’s word:
Say: “Not thus\(^{4884}\)
Will ye follow us:
Allah has already declared
(This) beforehand”: then they
Will say, “But ye are\(^{4886}\)
Jealous of us.” Nay,
But little do they understand
(Such things).

16. Say to the desert Arabs\(^{4887}\)
Who lagged behind: “Ye
Shall be summoned (to fight)
Against a people given to

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\(^{4883}\) Now comes out another motive behind the minds of the laggards. The journey for pilgrimage had no promise of war booty. If at any future time there should be a promise of booty they would come! But that is to reverse Allah’s law and decree. Jihād is not for personal gain or booty: see S. viii. and Introduction to S. viii., paragraph 2. On the contrary Jihād is hard striving, in war and peace, in the Cause of Allah.

\(^{4884}\) Not thus: i.e., not on those terms; not if your object is only to gain booty.

\(^{4885}\) See viii. 1, and n. 1179.

\(^{4886}\) The desert Arabs loved fighting and plunder and understood such motives for war. The higher motives seemed to be beyond them. Like ignorant men they attributed petty motives or motives of jealousy if they were kept out of the vulgar circle of fighting for plunder. But they had to be schooled, and they were schooled to higher ideas of discipline, self-sacrifice, and striving hard for a Cause.

\(^{4887}\) While they are reproached for their supineness in the march which led to Hudaibiyah, where there was danger but no prospect of booty, they are promised, if they learn discipline, to be allowed to follow the Banner of Islam where (as happened later in the Persian and Byzantine Wars) there was real fighting with formidable and well-organised armies.

\(^{4888}\) Cf. xxvii. 33.
Vehement war: then shall ye Fight, or they shall submit.\(^{4889}\)
Then if ye show obedience, Allah will grant you A goodly reward, but if Ye turn back as ye Did before, He will punish You with a grievous Chastisement."

17. No blame is there On the blind, nor is There blame on the lame, Nor on one ill (if he Joins not the war): But he that obeys Allah\(^ {4890}\) And His Messenger,-(Allah) Will admit him to Gardens Beneath which rivers flow; And he who turns back, (Allah) will punish him With a grievous Chastisement.

SECTION 3.

18. Allah's Good Pleasure\(^ {4891}\) Was on the Believers When they swore Fealty To thee under the Tree.\(^ {4892}\)

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\(^{4889}\). That is, you shall go forth to war if you learn discipline, not for booty, but for a great and noble Cause. For if your opponents submit to the Cause, there will be no fighting and no booty.

\(^{4890}\). There may be neither fighting nor booty. But all who obey the call to Jihad with perfect discipline will get the Rewards of the Hereafter. The blind, the maimed, and the infirm will of course be exempted from active compliance with the Call, but they can render such services as are within their power, and then they will not be excluded from the reward.

\(^{4891}\). The noun from the verb radhiya is Ridhwān (Good Pleasure); hence the name of this Bai'at, Bai'at ur Ridhwān, the Fealty of Allah's Good Pleasure: see n. 4877 to xlviii. 10.

\(^{4892}\). The great ceremony of the Fealty of Allah's Good Pleasure took place while the holy Prophet sat under a tree in the plain of Ḥudaibiya.
He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory.

19. And many gains will they acquire (besides): and Allah is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom.

20. Allah has promised you many gains that you shall acquire, and He has given you these beforehand; and He has restrained the hands of men from you; that it may be a Sign for the Believers, and that He may guide you to a Straight Path;

4893. Or tested: see n. 4855 to xlvii. 31.

4894. Sakina=Peace, calm, sense of security and confidence, tranquillity. Cf. above xlviii. 4, and n. 4869. The same word is used in connection with the battle of Ḥunain in ix. 26, and in connection with the Cave of Thaur at an early stage in the Hijrat: ix. 40.

4895. The Treaty of Hudaibiya itself was a “speedy Victory”: it followed immediately after the Bai‘at.

4896. The gains so far seen from the Bai‘at and their calm and disciplined behaviour were certainly great: in the rapid spread of Islam, in the clearance from the Sacred House of the idolatrous autocracy, and in the universal acceptance of the Message of Allah in Arabia.

4897. The first fruits of the Bai‘at were the victory or treaty of Ḥudaibiya, the cessation for the time being of the hostility of the Makkani Quraish, and the opening out of the way to Makkah. These things are implied in the phrase, “He has restrained the hands of men from you.”

4898. Ḥudaibiya (in both the Bai‘at and the Treaty) was truly a sign-post for the Believers: it showed the solidarity of Islam, and the position which the Muslims had won in the Arab world.
21. And other gains (there are),
Which are not within\(^\text{4899}\)
Your power, but which
Allah has compassed: and Allah
Has power over all things.

22. If the Unbelievers
Should fight you, they would\(^\text{4900}\)
Certainly turn their backs;
Then would they find
Neither protector nor helper.

23. (Such has been) the practice\(^\text{4901}\)
Of Allah already
In the past: no change
Wilt thou find in
The practice of Allah.

24. And it is He Who
Has restrained their hands
From you and your hands
From them in the valley\(^\text{4902}\)
Of Makkah, after that He
Gave you the victory
Over them. And Allah sees
Well all that ye do.

\(^\text{4899}\) Other gains: these are usually referred to the later victories of Islam, but we must view them not merely in their political or material aspect, but chiefly in the rise of Islam as a world power morally and spiritually.

\(^\text{4900}\) Their morale was now truly broken.

\(^\text{4901}\) Cf. xxxiii. 62.

\(^\text{4902}\) Little incidents had taken place that might have plunged the Quraish and the Muslims from Madinah into a fight. On the one hand, the Quraish were determined to keep out the Muslims, which they had no right to do: and on the other hand, the Muslims, though unarmed, had sworn to stand together, and if they had counter-attacked they could have forced their entrance to the Ka'ba, the centre of Makkah. But Allah restrained both sides from anything that would have violated the Peace of the Sanctuary, and after the Treaty was signed, all danger was past.
25. They are the ones who
Disbelieved and hindered you
From the Sacred Mosque
And the sacrificial animals, 4903
Detained from reaching their
Place of sacrifice. Had there
Not been believing men
And believing women whom
Ye did not know that 4904
Ye were trampling down
And on whose account
A guilt would have accrued
To you without (your) knowledge,
(Allah would have allowed you
To force your way, but
He held back your hands)
That He may admit
To His Mercy whom He will. 4905
If they had been 4906
Apart, We should
Certainly have punished

4903. The Muslims from Madinah had brought the animals for sacrifice with them, and had put on the Ihram or pilgrim’s garb (see n. 217 to ii. 197), but they were not only prevented from entering Makkah, but were also prevented from sending the sacrificial animals to the place of sacrifice in Makkah, as they could have done under ii. 196. The sacrifice was therefore actually offered at Hudaiyba.

4904. There were at the time in Makkah believing Muslims, men and women, and the faith of some of them was unknown to their brethren from Madinah. Had a fight taken place in Makkah, even though the Muslims had been successful, they would unwittingly have killed some of these unknown Muslims, and thus would unwittingly have been guilty of shedding Muslim blood. This was prevented by the Treaty.

4905. Allah works according to His wise and holy Will and Plan, and not according to what seems to us, in the excitement of human life, to be the obvious course of things. By preventing a fight He saved many valuable lives, not only of Muslims but also of some who became Muslims afterwards and served Islam. He grants His Mercy on far higher standards than man in his limited horizon can see.

4906. If the party from Madinah could have distinguished Muslims from non-Muslims among the Makkans, they might have been allowed to enter and punish the pagan Quraish for their inordinate vanity and gross breach of the unwritten law of the land. But in the actual circumstances the best solution was the Treaty of Hudaiyba.
The Unbelievers among them
With a grievous punishment.

While the Unbelievers
Got up in their hearts
Heat and can't—the heat
And can't of Ignorance,—
Allah sent down His Tranquillity
To his Messenger and to
The Believers, and made them
Stick close to the command
Of self-restraint; and well
Were they entitled to it
And worthy of it.
And Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

SECTION 4.

Truly did Allah fulfil
The vision for His Messenger:
Ye shall enter the Sacred
Mosque, if Allah wills,
With minds secure, heads shaved,

4907. While the Unbelievers were blustering and excited, and meticulously objected to introductory words such as "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful (they did not like the titles), the Prophet remained calm and collected, and got the substance of their demands embodied in the Treaty without worrying about words. Even though the terms of the Treaty appeared to the companions, at first, to be unfair to Muslims, they remained faithful to their Leader and showed trust in his better judgment, a trust that was vindicated by the events that followed.

4908. Cf. above xlviii. 18, and n. 4894.

4909. It=Tranquillity. Their calmness amid much provocation was a gift of Allah; they had earned a right to it by their obedience and discipline, and showed themselves well worthy of it.

4910. The Prophet had had a dream that he had entered the Sacred Mosque at Makkah, just before he decided on the journey which resulted in the Treaty of Hudaibiya. By it he and his people could enter next year without the least molestation and in the full customary garb, with head shaved or hair cut short, and all the customary minor rites of pilgrimage.
Hair cut short, and without fear.
For He knew what ye
Knew not, and He granted,
Besides this, a speedy victory.\textsuperscript{4911}

28. It is He Who has sent
His Messenger with Guidance
And the Religion of Truth,
To make it prevail over
All religion: and enough
Is Allah for a Witness.\textsuperscript{4912}

29. Muhammad is the Messenger
Of Allah; and those who are
With him are strong
Against Unbelievers, (but)
Compassionate amongst each
other.\textsuperscript{4913}

Thou wilt see them bow
And prostrate themselves
(In prayer), seeking Grace
From Allah and (His) Good
Pleasure.\textsuperscript{4914}

On their faces are their
Marks, (being) the traces\textsuperscript{4915}

\textsuperscript{4911} See above, xlviii. 18, and n. 4895.

\textsuperscript{4912} The divine disposition of events in the coming of Islam and its promulgation by the holy Prophet are themselves evidence of the truth of Islam and its all-reaching character; for there is nothing which it has not influenced. See also lixi. 9, n. 5442.

\textsuperscript{4913} Cf. ix. 128. The devotees of Allah wage unceasing war against evil, for themselves, and for others; but to their own brethren in faith—especially the weaker ones—they are mild and compassionate: they seek out every opportunity to sympathise with them and help them.

\textsuperscript{4914} Their humility is before Allah and His Apostle and all who have authority from Allah, but they yield no power or pomp, nor do they worship worldly show or glitter. Nor is their humility before Allah a mere show for men.

\textsuperscript{4915} The traces of their earnestness and humility are engraved on their faces, i.e., penetrate their inmost being, the face being the outward sign of the inner man. If we take it in its literal sense, the traces might mean the marks left by repeated prostration on their foreheads. Moreover, a good man's face alone shows in him the grace and light =
Of their prostration.
This is their similitude
In the Taurât; 4916
And their similitude
In the Gospel is: 4917
Like a seed which sends
Forth its blade, then
Makes it strong; it then
Becomes thick, and it stands
On its own stem, (filling)
The sowers with wonder
And delight. As a result, 4918
It fills the Unbelievers
With rage at them.
Allah has promised those
Among them who believe
And do righteous deeds
Forgiveness,
And a great Reward.

= of Allah; he is gentle, kind and forbearing, ever helpful, relying on Allah and possessing a blessed Peace and Calmness (Sakina, xlviii. 26) that can come from no other source.

4916. In the Book of Moses, which is now found in a corrupt form in the Pentateuch, the posture of humility in prayer is indicated by prostration: e.g., Moses and Aaron “fell upon their faces”, Num. xvi. 22.

4917. The similitude in the Gospel is about how the good seed is sown and grows gradually, even beyond the expectation of the sower: “the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear”: Mark. iv. 27-28. Thus Islam was preached by the holy Prophet; the seed seemed to human eyes lost in the ground; but it put forth its shoot, and grew, and became strong, until it was able to stand on its own legs, and its worst enemies recognised its existence and its right to live. Note how much more complete the parable is in the Qur-an. The mentality of the sowers of the seed is expressed in beautiful terms: its growth and strength filled them “with wonder and delight.”

4918. I construe the particle “li” as expressing not the object, but the result. The result of the wonderful growth of Islam in numbers and strength was that its enemies were confounded, and raged furiously within their own minds, a contrast to the satisfaction, wonder, and delight of the Prophet and his Companions. The pronoun in “rage at them” of course refers to the Prophet and his Companions, and goes back to the earlier-words, “on their faces” etc.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Al-Ḥajurât, 49.

This is the third of the group of three Madinah Sûras, which began with S. xlvi. See the Introduction to that Sûra.

Its subject-matter is the manners to be observed by the members of the rapidly-growing Muslim community, among themselves and towards its Leader. The key-word “Ḥajurât” (Inner Apartments) occurs in verse 4.

Its date is referred to the Year of Deputations, A.H. 9, when a large number of deputations of all kinds visited Madinah to offer their allegiance to Islam.

Summary.—A community must show its respect to its Leader in all forms of behaviour; quarrels are unseemly and should be composed; manners spring from morals; and mutual respect and confidence are a duty and a privilege in Islam (xliv. 1-18).
Al-Hujurat, or the Inner Apartments.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O ye who believe!
   Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger;
   But fear Allah: for Allah is He Who hears
   And knows all things.

2. O ye who believe!
   Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet,
   Nor speak aloud to him in talk, as ye may speak aloud to one another,
   Lest your deeds become vain and ye perceive not.

3. Those that lower their voice in the Presence of Allah's Messenger,—their hearts has Allah tested for piety:

4919. Several shades of meaning are implied: (1) do not make yourselves conspicuous in word or deed when in the presence of Allah (e.g. in a Mosque, or at Prayers or religious assemblies); (2) do not anticipate in word or deed what your Leader (Allah’s Messenger) may say or do; (3) do not be impatient, trying to hasten things before the time is ripe, of which the best Judge is Allah, Who speaks through His Messenger. Be reverent in all things, as in the presence of Allah: for He hears and sees all things. (4) Look to the Qur-an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be on him) for guidance and let nothing else take precedence of them.

4920. It is bad manners to talk loudly before your Leader. Some ill-mannered people so raise their voices as to drown the voice of their Leader, in conversation or in Council.

4921. Such rudeness may even destroy the value of such services as they may otherwise have been able to render, and all this without their even realising the harm they were doing to the Cause.

4922. The essence of good manners arises from the heart. The man who really and sincerely respects his Leader has true piety in his heart, just as the man who does the opposite may undo the work of years by weakening the Leader’s authority.
For them is Forgiveness
And a great Reward.

4. Those who shout out\(^{4923}\)
To thee from without
The Inner Apartments—
Most of them lack understanding.

5. If only they had patience
Until thou couldst
Come out to them,
It would be best
For them: but Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6. O ye who believe!
If a sinner comes\(^{4924}\)
To you with any news,
Ascertain the truth, lest
Ye harm people unwittingly,
And afterwards become
Full of repentance for
What ye have done.

7. And know that among you\(^{4925}\)
Is Allah's Messenger: were he,
In many matters, to follow

---

4923. To shout aloud to your Leader from outside his Apartments shows disrespect both for his person, his time, and his engagements. Only ignorant fools would be guilty of such unseemly behaviour. It is more seemly for them to wait and bide their time until he is free to come out and attend to them. But, with the Messenger of Allah, much is forgiven that is due to lack of knowledge and understanding. In an earthly Court, ignorance of the Law excuseth no man. If a man behaved in that way to the General of an army or the Governor of a Province, not to speak of an earthly King, he would be laid hands on by the Guard, and could never gain the access he desires.

4924. All tittle-tattle or reports—especially if emanating from persons you do not know—are to be tested, and the truth ascertained. If they were believed and passed on, much harm may be done, of which you may have cause afterwards to repent heartily. Scandal or slander of all kinds is here condemned.

4925. The messenger of Allah, if he consults his friends and associates, should not be expected to follow their advice in all matters. The judgment and responsibility are his: he sees farther than the rest, and he is not swayed by personal feeling as others may be.
4926. Fortunate indeed was the generation among whom the Prophet of Allah walked in his daily life. His example was inspiring. Their inner Faith was dear to them; it was a thing to be proud of in their innermost hearts; and they loved discipline, obedience, and righteousness. No wonder all their other disadvantages were neutralised, and they went from strength to strength. Nothing but the Grace of Allah could have brought about such a result.

4927. Individual quarrels are easier to compose than group quarrels, or, in the modern world, national quarrels. But the collective community of Islam should be supreme over groups or nations. It would be expected to act justly and try to compose the quarrel, for peace is better than fighting. But if one party is determined to be the aggressor, the whole force of the community is brought to bear on it. The essential condition of course is that there should be perfect fairness and justice and respect for the highest principles; for Islam takes account of every just and legitimate interest without separating spiritual from temporal matters. The League of Nations failed because these essentials were absent and today the United Nations fails for the same reason.
But if it complies, then
Make peace between them
With justice, and be fair:
For Allah loves those
Who are fair (and just).

10. The Believers are but
A single Brotherhood:
So make peace and
Reconciliation between your
Two (contending) brothers;
And fear Allah, that ye
May receive Mercy.

SECTION 2.

11. O ye who believe!
Let not some men
Among you laugh at others:
It may be that
The (latter) are better
Than the (former):
Nor let some women
Laugh at others:
It may be that
The (latter) are better
Than the (former):
Nor defame nor be
Sarcastic to each other,

4928. The enforcement of the Muslim Brotherhood is the greatest social ideal of Islam. On it was based the Prophet's Sermon at his last pilgrimage, and Islam cannot be completely realised until this ideal is achieved.

4929. Mutual ridicule ceases to be fun when there is arrogance or selfishness or malice behind it. We may laugh with people, to share in the happiness of life: we must never laugh at people in contempt or ridicule. In many things they may be better than ourselves!

4930. Defamation may consist in speaking ill of others by the spoken or written word, or in acting in such a way as to suggest a charge against some person whom we are not in a position to judge. A cutting, biting remark or taunt of sarcasm is included in the word lamaza. An offensive nickname may amount to defamation, but in any case there =
Nor call each other
By (offensive) nicknames:
Ill-seeming is a name
Connoting wickedness,
(To be used of one)
After he has believed:
And those who
Do not desist are
(Indeed) doing wrong.

12. O ye who believe!
Avoid suspicion as much:\textsuperscript{4931}
(As possible): for suspicion
In some cases is a sin:
And spy not on each other,
Nor speak ill of each other
Behind their backs. Would any
Of you like to eat
The flesh of his dead:\textsuperscript{4932}
Brother? Nay, ye would
Abhor it... But fear Allah:
For Allah is Oft-Returning,
Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{4931} is no point in using offensive nicknames, or names that suggest some real or fancied defect. They ill accord with the serious purpose which Muslims should have in life. For example, even if a man is lame, it is wrong to address him as "O lame one!" It causes him pain, and it is bad manners. So in the case of the rude remark, "the black man".

\textsuperscript{4932} Most kinds of suspicion are baseless and to be avoided, and some are crimes in themselves: for they do cruel injustice to innocent men and women. Spying, or enquiring too curiously into other people's affairs, means either idle curiosity, and is therefore futile, or suspicion carried a stage further, which almost amounts to sin. Back-biting also is a brood of the same genus. It may be either futile but all the same mischievous, or it may be poisoned with malice, in which case it is a sin added to sin.

\textsuperscript{4932} No one would like even to think of such an abomination as eating the flesh of his brother. But when the brother is dead, and the flesh is carrion, abomination is added to abomination. In the same way we are asked to refrain from hurting people's feelings when they are present; how much worse is it when we say things, true or false, when they are absent!
13. O mankind! We created\(^{4933}\)
   You from a single (pair)
   Of a male and a female,
   And made you into
   Nations and tribes, that
   Ye may know each other
   (Not that ye may despise
   (Each other). Verily
   The most honoured of you
   In the sight of Allah
   Is (he who is) the most
   Righteous of you.
   And Allah has full knowledge
   And is well acquainted
   (With all things).

14. The desert Arabs say,\(^{4934}\)
   "We believe." Say, "Ye
   Have no faith; but ye
   (Only) say, 'We have submitted\(^{4935}\)
   Our wills to Allah,'
   For not yet has Faith
   Entered your hearts.
   But if ye obey Allah
   And His Messenger, He
   Will not belittle aught
   Of your deeds: for Allah
   Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

\(^{4933}\) This is addressed to all mankind and not only to the Muslim brotherhood, though it is understood that in a perfected world the two would be synonymous. As it is, mankind is descended from one pair of parents. Their tribes, races, and nations are convenient labels by which we may know certain differing characteristics. Before Allah they are all one, and he gets most honour who is most righteous.

\(^{4934}\) The desert Arabs were somewhat shaky in their faith. Their hearts and minds were petty, and they thought of petty things, while Islam requires the complete submission of one's being to Allah. See next verse. Some of the failings of the desert Arabs are described in xlviii. 11-15. But the reference here is said to be to the Banu Asad, who came to profess Islam in order to get charity during a famine.

\(^{4935}\) 'This is what ye ought to prove if your faith has any meaning, but ye only say it with your tongues.'
15. Only those are Believers
Who have believed in Allah
And His Messenger, and have
Never since doubted, but
Have striven with their
Belongings and their persons
In the Cause of Allah:
Such are the sincere ones.

16. Say: "What! Will ye\textsuperscript{4936}
Tell Allah about your
Religion? But Allah knows
All that is in the heavens
And on earth: He has
Full knowledge of all things.

17. They impress on thee\textsuperscript{4937}
As a favour that they
Have embraced Islam.
Say, "Count not your Islam
As a favour upon me:
Nay, Allah has conferred
A favour upon you
That He has guided you
To the Faith, if ye
Be true and sincere.

\textsuperscript{4936} 'You say (or perhaps even think) that you are Muslims, but where are the fruits of your Faith? Allah knows the innermost motives and secrets of your heart, and you cannot deceive Him by attaching a certain label to yourselves'. Alas! that this answer to the desert Arabs is true of so many others in our own times!

\textsuperscript{4937} Islam in itself is a precious privilege. By accepting it we confer no favour on its preacher or on any community. If the acceptance is from the heart, it is a great favour done to those who accept, that the Light of Allah has entered their hearts and they have received guidance.
18. "Verily Allah Knows\textsuperscript{4938}
   The Unseen of the heavens
   And the earth: and Allah
   Sees well all
   That ye do."

\textsuperscript{4938} This does not mean that we should seek petty motives in newcomers into the House of Islam. That would indeed be harbouing suspicions or allowing curiosity to spy out motives, which would be a crime under xlix. 12. We should be true, sincere, and devoted ourselves, and leave the case of others to Allah, from Whose eyes nothing is hidden.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Qaf, 50.

We now come to a group of seven Makkān Sūras (I-lvi), dealing with Allah's revelation through nature, through history, and through the mouths of the Prophets, and pointing to the Hereafter. We saw that the last group of three (xlvi.-xlxi.) dealt with the external and internal relations of the Ummat when formed. In the present group our attention is more particularly directed to aspects eschatological,—the Future before us when this life is done.

This particular Sūra belongs to the early Makkān period. After an appeal to nature and to the fate of wicked peoples in history, it removes as it were the veil (verse 22) from the Future after death.

Summary.—Sceptics can look up to the heavens above and to Nature around them, as well as to the fate of sin in the history of the past: will they doubt Allah's Revelation when the veil is lifted? (l. 1-29).

A vision of the Day of Recompense and the Day of Reality (l. 30-45).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Qāf: By the Glorious Qur-ān (Thou art Allah’s Messenger).

2. But they wonder that There has come to them A Warner from among Themselves. So the Unbelievers say: “This is a wonderful thing!

3. “What! When we die And become dust, (shall we Live again?) That is A (sort of) Return Far (from our understanding).”

4. We already know How much of them The earth takes away: With Us is a Record Guarding (the full account).

4939. This is an Abbreviated Letter. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I. This particular Abbreviated Letter Qāf occurs only here as a single letter, and in combination at the beginning of S. xlii.

4940. Majīd (translated “Glorious”) is one of the beautiful appellations of the Qur-ān. Its glory is that of the rising sun: the more it rises on your mental and spiritual horizon, the more you are lost in admiration of its glory. Its meanings are manifest and inexhaustible. The greater your experience, the more light is your spiritual eye able to bear. And in that glory is a beauty that none can tell who has not experienced it in his soul. It is in itself the proof of the mission of the holy Prophet.

4941. In a sense their wonder is natural: do we wonder at the glorious sun? In another sense it is unnatural: what should we say of a man who fails to see in broad daylight?

4942. Cf. xxxvii. 16.

4943. The earth only corrupts and takes away the body when they are dead; it has no power over the soul. The full account of the soul’s doings is in Allah’s Record.
5. But they deny the truth
   When it comes to them:
   So they are in
   A confused state. 4944

6. Do they not look
   At the sky above them?—
   How We have made it 4945
   And adorned it,
   And there are no
   Flaws in it?

7. And the earth—
   We have spread it out, 4946
   And set thereon mountains
   Standing firm, and produced
   Therein every kind of
   Beautiful growth (in pairs)— 4947

8. For an insight
   And Reminder
   To every servant. 4948
   Turning (to Allah).

4944. If they deny what has been made clear to them, their minds must necessarily
get into confusion. All nature declares the glory and goodness of Allah. Revelation
explains the inequalities of this life and how they will be redressed in the Hereafter. If
they do not accept this, they are not in a logical position. They cannot reconcile the
known with the unknown.

4945. The greatest philosophers have found a difficulty in understanding the sceptical
position when they contemplate the wonder and mystery of the skies with all the countless
beautiful stars and planets and light in them, and laws of order, motion, and symmetry,
that respond to the highest mathematical abstractions without a flaw. Can blind Chance
give rise to such conditions?

4946. Cf. xiii. 3; and xv. 19 and n. 1955. The earth is round, and yet it appears
stretched out as a vast expanse, like a carpet kept steady with the weight of the
mountains.

4947. Cf. xxii. 5, and n. 2777. Sex in plants may be hinted at: see n. 1804 to xiii. 3.

4948. For all these things go into his very heart and soul. He loves to contemplate
them, to remember them for himself as evidence of Allah's goodness and glory, and to
mention and proclaim them.
9. And We send down
   From the sky Rain
   Charged with blessing,
   And We produce therewith
   Gardens and Grain for harvests;

10. And tall (and stately)\textsuperscript{4949}
    Palm-trees, with shoots
    Of fruit-stalks, piled
    One over another;--

11. As sustenance for
    (Allah's) Servants;--
    And We give (new) life
    Therewith to land that is
    Dead: thus will be
    The Resurrection.

12. Before them was denied
    (The Hereafter) by the People\textsuperscript{4950}
    Of Noah, the Companions
    Of the Rass, the Thamūd,

13. The 'Ād, Pharaoh,
    The Brethren of Lūṭ,

14. The Companions of the Wood,
    And the People of Tubba';
    Each one (of them) rejected
    The messengers, and My warning
    Was duly fulfilled (in them).

\textsuperscript{4949} A beautiful nature passage. How graphic and unforgettable to any one who has seen a spring and summer in an Arabian oasis!

\textsuperscript{4950} Just the names of the peoples of Arabian tradition who were punished for their sins are mentioned; their stories will be found elsewhere. For the People of Noah, see xi. 25-48 and other passages. For the Companions of the Rass, see xxv. 38 and n. 3094; for the 'Ād and the Thamūd, see xxvi. 123-158, and other passages; for Pharaoh and his People, see ii. 49-50 and other passages; for the Brethren of Lūṭ, see vii. 80-84, and other passages; for the Companions of the Wood, see xv. 78-79, and n. 2000; and for the People of Tubba', see xlii. 37 and n. 4715.
15. Were We then weary
   With the first Creation,
   That they should be
   In confused doubt
   About a new Creation?

SECTION 2.

16. It was We Who
   Created man, and We know
   What suggestions his soul
   Makes to him: for We
   Are nearer to him
   Than (his) jugular vein.

17. Behold, two (guardian angels)
   Appointed to learn (his doings)
   Learn (and note them),
   One sitting on the right
   And one on the left.

18. Not a word does he
   Utter but there is
   A vigilant Guardian.

4951. Cf. xlvi. 33, and n. 4912.

4952. Allah created man, and gave him his limited free-will. Allah knows the inmost desires and motives of man even better than man does himself. He is nearer to a man than the man’s own jugular vein. The jugular vein is the big trunk vein, one on each side of the neck, which brings the blood back from the head to the heart. The two jugular veins correspond to the two carotid arteries which carry the blood from the heart to the head. As the blood-stream is the vehicle of life and consciousness, the phrase “nearer than the jugular vein” implies that Allah knows more truly the innermost state of our feeling and consciousness than does our own ego.

4953. Two angels are constantly by him to note his thoughts, words, and actions. One sits on the right side and notes his good deeds and the other on the left, to note his bad deeds; corresponding to the Companions of the Right and the Companions of the Left mentioned in lvi. 27 and 41.

4954. Then each “word” spoken is taken down by a guardian (raqib). This has been construed to mean that the guardian only records words, not thoughts which are not uttered. Thoughts may be forgiven if not uttered, and still more if they do not issue in action. At the stage at which we clothe a thought in words, we have already done an
19. And the stupor of death⁴⁹⁵⁵
Comes in truth.
"This was
The thing which thou
Wast trying to escape!"

20. And the Trumpet⁴⁹⁵⁶
Shall be blown:
That will be the Day
Whereof Warning (had been given).

21. And there will come forth
Every soul: with each
Will be an (angel) to drive,⁴⁹⁵⁷
And an (angel) to
Bear witness.

22. (It will be said:)
"Thou wast heedless
Of this; now have We
Removed thy veil,

= action. The Recorders mentioned in the last verse make a complete Record, in order to supply motives and springs of action, which will affect the degrees or status in the Hereafter. The three together, individuals or kinds, make the honourable Recorders, *Kirāmān Kātībīn*, (plural, not dual number) mentioned in lxxii. 11.

⁴⁹⁵⁵. What is stupor or unconsciousness to this probationary life will be the opening of the eyes to the next world: for Death is the Gateway between the two. Once through that Gateway man will realise how the things which he neglected or looked upon as remote are the intimate Realities, and the things which seemed to loom large in his eyes in this world were shadows that have fled. The things he wanted to avoid are the things that have really come to pass. Both Good and Evil will realise the Truth now in its intensity.

⁴⁹⁵⁶. The next stage will be the Judgment, heralded with the blowing of the Trumpet. Every soul will then come forth.

⁴⁹⁵⁷. Several interpretations are possible, leading to the same truth, that the Judgment will be set up; the Record will be produced; the good and bad deeds will speak for and against; and complete justice will be done, each act leading to its own due fruit. (1) The (angel) to drive and the (angel) to bear witness may be the Recording Angels of the left and the right (verse 17); or (2) it may not be angels, but the evil deeds will drive like task-masters, and the good deeds will bear witness for the soul on trial; or (3) his misused limbs and faculties will drive him to his doom, while his well-used limbs and faculties will witness for him.
24. (The sentence will be:)  
"Throw, both of you, into Hell Every contumacious Rejecter (Of Allah)!—

25. "Who forbade what was good, Transgressed all bounds, Cast doubts and suspicions;

26. "Who set up another god Beside Allah: throw him Into a severe Chastisement."

27. His Companion will say:  
"Our Lord! I did not

4958. The clearness of vision will now be even greater: see n. 4955 above.

4959. Qarin: Companion. If we take No. 1 of the constructions suggested in n. 4957, the Companion will be one of the Recording Angels mentioned above, in verse 21, perhaps the one that drives; or perhaps the third one mentioned in verse 18, for he has the Record ready with him. If we take any of the other constructions mentioned in n. 4957, it will be the evil deeds or the misused faculties. In any case it will be the factors on whose testimony his conviction will be based.

4960. The original for "throw", here and in verse 26 below, is in the dual number, which some Commentators explain by saying that the dual form is used for emphasis, as if the verb ("throw, throw") were twice repeated. Examples of this are found in Arabic. But is it possible that the dual refers to the two angels mentioned in verses 17 and 21? In that case the Companion in verse 27 will be the third one mentioned in verses 18 and 23. In any case the third one will be the one on whose Record the sentence will be passed.

4961. See last note. But some people understand by "Companion" here an evil associate in the world, an evil one who misled.

4962. Our Lord. One man speaks: "I did not", etc. Yet he uses the plural pronoun in saying, "Our Lord". This is beautifully appropriate, as he is speaking so as to include the person to be judged: as if he were to say. "Thou art my Lord, or the Lord of us angels or of all Creation, but Thou art his Lord also, for Thou didst cherish him and warn him, and he owed duties to Thee."
Make him transgress,4963
But he was (himself)
Far astray.”

28. He will say: “Dispute not4964
With each other
In My Presence:
I had already in advance
Sent you4965 Warning.

29. “The Word changes not
With Me, and I do not
The least injustice
To My Servants”4966

SECTION 3.

30. The Day We will
Ask Hell, “Art thou
Filled to the full?”4967
It will say, “Are there
Any more (to come)?”

4963. Neither the Recording Angels nor the misused limbs and faculties, nor anything else whatever was responsible for the Evil: it was the personal responsibility of the Doer himself, with his free-will.

4964. It is suggested that sinners whose Record is black, driven into a corner, accuse others of misleading them: the others may be the Recorders, or their faculties or opportunities or surroundings or their associates in the world, or anything but themselves. Such recriminations are not allowed in the Court of Judgment.

4965. Besides, personal responsibility had already been clearly preached to them in Allah’s Message, and they had been warned of the consequences. “You” is in the plural number: ‘all of you who are before the Judgment-Seat had clear warning of the consequences of your conduct.’

4966. ‘Abd” has two plurals: (1) ‘Abid, as here, means all Servants of Allah, i.e., all his creatures; (2) ’ibad has the further connotation of Servants of Allah, devoted to his service; I have translated it in many cases by the word “devotees”. The Sentence before the Judgment-Seat is pronounced with perfect justice; it does not change, and requires no change; the inevitable consequences of sin must follow; the time for Mercy is past.

4967. As the capacity of Reward is unlimited, so is the capacity of Punishment—unlimited. Hell is personified and asked, “Art thou sated to the full?” It replies, “If there are more to come, let them come.” It is not satisfied.
31. And the Garden

Will be brought nigh
To the Righteous,—no more
A thing distant.

32. (A voice will say:)

“This is what was
Promised for you,—
For every penitent
Heedful one,

33. “Who feared
The Most Gracious unseen,
And brought a heart
Turned in devotion (to Him):

34. “Enter ye therein
In Peace and Security;
This is a Day
Of Eternal Life!”

35. There will be for them
Therein all that they wish,—
And there is more
With us.

4968. In this life, the ideas of the spirit, the accomplishment of the things in our hearts and our hopes, seem to be ever so far, seem even to recede as we think we come nearer. Not so in the Hereafter. The fruits of righteousness will no longer be in the distance. They will be realised. They will seem themselves to approach the Righteous.

4969. The description of the Righteous is given in four masterly clauses: (1) those who turned away from Evil in sincere repentance; (2) those whose new life was good and righteous; (3) those who in their innermost hearts and in their most secret doings were actuated by Allah-fearing love, the fear that is akin to love in remembering Allah under His title of “Most Gracious”; and (4) who gave up their whole heart and being to Him.

4970. Cf. xxxvi. 11 and n. 3952; and xxxv. 18, and n. 3902.

4971. The true meaning of Islam: peace, security, salutation, and accord with Allah’s Plan in all Eternity.

4972. To get all that our purified wishes and desires comprehend may seem to sum up final Bliss; but there is something still wanting, which is supplied by the sight of Allah, the Light of His Countenance.
36. But how many
Generations before them
Did We destroy (for their
Sins),—stronger in power
Than they? Then did they
Wander through the land:
Was there any place
Of escape (for them)?

37. Verily in this
Is a Message
For any that has
A heart and understanding
Or who gives ear and
Is a witness.

38. We created the heavens
And the earth and all
Between them in Six Days,
Nor did any sense
Of weariness touch Us.

4973. While virtue and righteousness will accomplish their final goal, what will be the End of Sin? Let the past tell its story. Many powerful and arrogant generations were swept away, to stray in the paths of misery, without any way of escape from the consequences of their sin. This was already seen in the life of this world. In the world to come, it will be worse, as already stated in verses 24-26 above.

4974. As Christ said (Matt. xi. 15), “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear”. These are matters of high moment. Many spiritual lessons can be learnt from these things by any one who has the heart and understanding to apply to Allah’s teaching and can give genuine thought to what he sees, as a witness does who has to swear to the facts on his oath.

4975. Allah’s creation of the heavens and the earth in long stages or periods of time, as we count time, shows how things evolve in their own good time. We must therefore be patient if Good does not seem to come to its own according to our ideas. Our will should merge itself in Allah’s Will, and we should praise Him, realising that He is All-Good, and that all adjustments will be in the Hereafter.

4976. Cf. vii. 54, n. 1031; and xli. 12. n. 4477.

4977. Cf. xxxv. 35.
39. Bear, then, with patience,
All that they say,
And celebrate the praises
Of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun
And before (its) setting,

40. And during part
Of the night, (also,)
Celebrate His praises,
And (so likewise)
After the prostration.

41. And listen the Day
When the Caller will call
Out from a place
Quite near,—

4978. Allah should be remembered at all times. But the best time for individual adoration is early in the morning before sunrise, late in the day before sunset, and a portion of the night, when there is stillness in the air, and man's spirit loves to commune with things spiritual. Those who would connect this with the five canonical prayers, instituted at a later stage in Madinah, would take the Fajr for the prayer before sunrise, the Zuhr and the 'Asr for the afternoon prayers before sunset and the Magrib and the 'Ishā for the night prayers.

4979. The general meaning of "after the prostration" would be the contemplation and remembrance of Allah after prayers. Those who would connect this passage with the five canonical prayers understand these further prayers "following the sujūd or prostration to mean the extra or supernumerary prayers known as nafl.

4980. The Day of Resurrection, when the Call to the souls to arise and come to the Judgment-Seat will be immediately answered, and they will all arise and come forth. Cf. xxxvi. 49-53, and notes 3997 and 3999.

4981. In the life of this world it seemed all so remote. In the new life at the Resurrection it will all be so near; for there will be neither time nor space as we know them here.
42. The Day when they will Hear a (mighty) Blast\textsuperscript{4982} In (very) truth: that Will be the Day Of Resurrection.

43. Verily it is We Who Give Life and Death; And to Us is The Final Return–

44. The Day when The Earth will be\textsuperscript{4983} Rent asunder, letting them Hurrying out: that will be A gathering together,– Quite easy for Us.\textsuperscript{4984}

45. We know best what they\textsuperscript{4985} Say; and thou art not One to compel them By force. So admonish With the Qur-an such As fear My Warning!

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\textsuperscript{4982} The word "\textit{saihatun}" (mighty Blast) is used for the Resurrection (as here) or for the sudden punishment of the guilty on this earth, as in xi. 67, where see further references.

\textsuperscript{4983} Men will hurry out from all corners of the earth to answer the call, and the earth itself will be rent asunder. In xxv. 25 the imagery used was the heaven being rent asunder, and angels coming out in ranks: see n. 3082. \textit{Cf.} also lxxxiv. 1-4.

\textsuperscript{4984} It may seem to our material imaginations a difficult task to collect together the souls of all sorts of men, who died in all sorts of conditions at different times, but it will be a different kind of world and creation altogether, and to Allah all things are not only possible but easy.

\textsuperscript{4985} People may throw all sorts of doubts about the Judgment and the Hereafter. The Prophet’s task is not to force them to accept anything. His task is to deliver the Message of the Qur-\r{a}n, and admonish those who are spiritually fit and ready to receive admonition and to prepare themselves for the new and higher life destined for man.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ḍ-Zāriyāt, 51.

This is an early Makkān Sūra, the second of the seven Sūras forming a group dealing with Revelation and the Hereafter. See Introduction to S. 1. This Sūra deals with the varying ways in which Truth prevails irresistibly even against all human probabilities.

Summary.—The winds may blow and scatter, lift and rush, or divide in all directions; but the Truth and Promise of Allah are sure and stable, whereof you may see Signs both around and within you (li. 1-23).

Past events and what you see before you point to the unfailing consequences of all you do: Allah, of His Grace, sends you a Reminder: the loss is your own if you reject and deny (li. 24-60).
Az-Zariyat, or the Winds That Scatter.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the (Winds)\(^{4986}\)
   That scatter broadcast;\(^{4987}\)
2. And those that\(^{4988}\)
   Lift and bear away
   Heavy weights;
3. And those that\(^{4989}\)
   Flow with ease
   And gentleness;

4986. Four things are mentioned in verses 1 to 4 as evidences or types of the certainty and unity of a Truth described in verses 5-6. What these things are is described by certain adjectival participles, the noun understood being usually taken to be “Winds”: the word for Wind (Riḥ) being feminine in Arabic. Some Commentators however understand other nouns as being implied. e.g., angels in all four verses, or different things in each of the four verses. Whatever these things are, their different modes of working are evidence of the power and goodness of Allah, the Unity of His Plan, and the certainty of Good and Evil reaching their own destined ends, when Judgment and Justice will have given each one his due.

4987. Winds may blow strong, and scatter particles of dust far and wide; but they do not diminish by one jot the substance of Allah’s material creation; on the contrary they help to readjust things. They reshape the configuration of the earth; in the vegetable kingdom they carry seeds about and plant new seeds in old soils; in the region of air they produce mighty changes in temperature and pressure that affect animal and vegetable life; they carry the moisture of equatorial Africa to the parched plains of India; and so on. Yet they are just one little agency showing Allah’s working in the material world. So in the spiritual world. Revelation works mighty changes; it may be resisted, but the resistance will be swept away; it ever points to the one Great Final Event, “to which the whole Creation moves”.

4988. The things that lift and bear away heavy weights may be the Winds that carry the heavy rain-clouds or that sweep off every resistance from their path, or it may be the heavy moisture-laden clouds themselves. So works Revelation: it lifts and sweeps away the burdens of custom, superstition, or man’s inertia, and ever leads onwards to the destined End.

4989. These may be Winds that fill the sails of ships with gentle and favourable breezes, that carry men and merchandise to their destinations. Or they may be the ships themselves, whose smooth motion through the waters is described in many places, by the verb jard, “to flow”, e.g., cf. ii. 164.
4. And those that Distribute the affair;—
5. Verily that which ye Are promised is true;
6. And verily Judgment And Justice will surely Come to pass.
7. By the Sky With (its) numerous Paths,
8. Truly ye are of Varying opinion.

4990. These may be Winds (or other agencies) that distribute and apportion moisture or rain or atmospheric pressure or other blessings of Allah, —not haphazard but by fixed laws, i.e., according to the Command of their Lord. So with Revelation. Its blessings are distributed all round, and it produces its marvellous effects sometimes in the most unlikely places and ways.

4991. That which ye are promised: the Promise of Allah about Mercy and Forgiveness to the Penitent, and Justice and Penalty to the Rebellious, the promise of the Hereafter: the promise that all does not end here, but that there is a truer and more lasting world to come, for which this is but a preparation.

4992. *Din* = the giving to each person his precise and just due; this is implied in Judgment and Justice. All the inequalities of this Life are to be redressed.

4993. The study of the numerous regular orbits of the planets and irregularly regular orbits of comets, and the various motions, visible or invisible, of the fixed stars or revolving stars, form in themselves a network of knowledge or science, of a highly technical nature; the highest astronomy or mathematics can only barely reach its fringe. But these have all a fixed Plan and Purpose under Allah’s Dispensation. In them variety leads to Unity. In contrast look at the confused medley of doctrines, views, and dicta put forward by the Sceptics, as described in the next verse.

4994. *Qaul* = saying, word, theory, doctrine. *Mukhtalif* = differing, various, inconsistent with itself, discordant. No theory or doctrine based on a denial of a Hereafter can be consistent with spiritual facts as we know them, or with Allah’s Goodness, Justice, and Mercy.
9. Through which are deluded (away From the Truth) such As would be deluded. 4995

10. Cursed be the conjecturers.

11. Those who (flounder) heedless 4996 In a flood of confusion:

12. They ask, "When will be The Day of Judgment And Justice?"

13. (It will be) a Day When they will be tried (And tested) over the Fire!

14. "Taste ye your trial! This is what ye used To ask to be hastened!" 4997

15. As to the Righteous, They will be in the midst Of Gardens and Springs, 4998

16. Taking joy in the things Which their Lord gives them, Because, before then, they Have done good deeds.

4995. Some Commentators draw from this a rigid doctrine of Calvinistic Predestination or Determinism, which I do not think is fairly deducible from the words. "Ufka" should I think be translated "will be or would be deluded", meaning "have the wish or desire to be", and not "must necessarily be deluded by eternal predestination". The word occurs in many places in the Qur-an: e.g. Cf. v. 78, or ix. 30.

4996. They are in great spiritual danger: yet they care not.

4997. They used to say scoffingly, "if there is to be punishment for our sins, let it come at once!" When it comes, they will know what a terrible thing it is! Cf. xxvi. 204, n. 3230.

4998. Gardens and Springs are the two most frequent examples for the highest satisfaction and bliss.
17. They were in the habit of sleeping but little
   By night,

18. And in the hours
   Of early dawn,
   They (were found) praying
   For Forgiveness;

19. And in their wealth
   There is a due share
   For the beggar
   And the deprived.

20. On the earth
   Are Signs for those
   Of assured Faith,

21. As also in your own
   Selves: will yet not
   Then see?

4999. They were engaged most of the night in worship and in the planning of good deeds. They preferred activity to idleness, the service of Allah and His creatures to the indulgence of Self.

5000. They were up early before dawn, ready for their devotions. The praying for Forgiveness and Mercy does not necessarily imply that they had committed fresh sins. Indeed they began the day with such devotions, showing their great humility before Allah and their anxious care for others, for whom they prayed as much as for themselves. See the last sentence of n. 21 to i. 5.

5001. True charity remembers not only those in need who ask, but also those who are prevented by some reason from asking. The man of true charity seeks out the latter. There may be various reasons which prevent a man from asking for help: (1) he may be ashamed to ask, or his sense of honour may prevent him from asking; (2) he may be so engrossed in some great ideal that he may not think of asking; (3) he may even not know that he is in need, (4) he may not know that you possess the things that can supply his needs; and (5) he may be a dumb and helpless creature, whether a human being or a dumb animal, or any creature within your ken or power. Charity in the higher sense includes all help, from one better endowed to one less well endowed. Cf. n. 179 to ii. 177; also ii. 273-274, and notes 322 and 323.

5002. The Signs and Evidence of Allah are in all nature and within the body and soul of man, if man has but the spiritual eyes to see. Cf. xli. 53.
22. And in heaven is your sustenance, as (also) that which ye are promised.

23. Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth, as much as the fact that ye can speak intelligently to each other.

SECTION 2.

24. Has the story reached thee, of the honoured guests of Abraham?

25. Behold, they entered his presence, and said: "Peace!" He said, "Peace!" (And thought, "These seem unknown people.

5003. "Sustenance", here as elsewhere, includes physical sustenance, as well as spiritual sustenance. Similarly heaven or sky has both the physical and the spiritual meaning. The physical sustenance grows from rain from the sky; the spiritual sustenance comes from divine aid, grace, and mercy, and includes the Good News and the Warning which come from Revelation about the Hereafter.

5004. Attention having been called to the Signs or Evidences of Allah's working on the earth, within ourselves, and in the heavens, in verses 20-22, an appeal is made to our own inner conscience, in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth, to acknowledge and act up to the truth of Revelation, and turn to the spiritual Realities. For they are as real as our own conscious and self-intelligent existence, on which is based all our knowledge. As a philosopher (Descartes) has said: "I think; therefore I am."

5005. Cf. xi. 69-73 and notes, where further details of the story will be found. Cf. also xv. 51-56.

5006. They were angels, who appeared suddenly before him at his tent-door in the guise of men, and saluted him with the salutation of peace. He returned the salutation, but felt, from their appearance and their manner, that they were unusual, not ordinary, strangers.

5007. Munkar: unknown, uncommon, unusual, not customary, (hence by derived meaning, not applicable here, not fair or just); opposite in both primary and secondary meanings to ma'raf, well-known, usual, customary, just. Cf. xv. 62.
26. Then he turned quickly\(^{5008}\)  
To his household, brought  
Out a fatted calf,  
27. And placed it before them...  
He said, “Will ye not  
Eat?”  
28. (When they did not eat),  
He conceived a fear of them.  
They said, “Fear not,”  
And they gave him  
Glad tidings of a son  
Endowed with knowledge.  
29. But his wife came forward\(^{5009}\)  
Clamouring: she smote  
Her forehead and said:  
“A barren old woman!”  
30. They said, “Even so\(^{5010}\)  
Has thy Lord spoken:  
And He is full  
Of Wisdom and Knowledge.”

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5008. They seemed unusual strangers, but he said nothing and quietly proceeded to perform the rites of hospitality. He brought a roast fatted calf and placed it before them to eat. But the strangers did not eat (xi. 70). This disconcerted him. According to the laws of hospitality, a stranger under your roof is under your protection, but if he refuses to eat, he refuses your hospitality and keeps himself free from any ties of guest and host. “What were their designs?” thought Abraham, and he felt some distrust. But they were angels and could not eat. They declared themselves, and announced the birth to Abraham of a son endowed with wisdom,—in other words that Abraham was to be the head of a long line of Prophets! (xv. 53).

5009. Abraham’s wife Sarah was old and barren. This news seemed to her too good to be true. She came forward, clamoured (xi. 71), struck her forehead with her hands, indicative of her amusement and incredulity as “a barren old woman”: xi. 72.

5010. The angels said: “What may sound improbable to human beings will yet come to pass if Allah commands. And Allah thy Lord has spoken. So shall it be. For all His promises are full of wisdom and knowledge.” So the angels on that occasion. But the application is for all time and to all human affairs. Never despair. However much Truth may be in the shade, it will shine with full splendour. And the Judgment will come, when good will come to its own!
31. (Abraham) said: “And what, O ye Messengers, Is your errand (now)?

32. They said, “We have Been sent to a people (Deep) in sin;—

33. “To bring on, on them, (A shower of) stones Of clay (brimstone),

34. “Marked as from thy Lord For those who trespass Beyond bounds.”

35. Then We evacuated Those of the Believers Who were there,

36. But We found not there Any except One Muslim household.

5011. Cf. xi. 82, and n. 1052 to vii. 84. The angels’ errand of mercy to Abraham (to announce the succession of godly men in his line) was coupled with their errand of justice and punishment to the people of Lūṭ, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who were deep in the most abominable and unnatural sins. So Allah’s Mercy and Justice go hand in hand in all human affairs. Faith has nothing to fear, and wickedness has only to turn and repent, to obtain Allah’s Mercy.

5012. Cf. xi. 83, and n. 1580. Every crime has its due punishment as marked out in the decrees of Allah.

5013. The only just or righteous persons found in Sodom and Gomorrah (Cities of the Plain by the Dead Sea) were in the house of Lūṭ, who was the Prophet sent to call them to repentance. He and his believing family and adherents were told to leave in due time, and the wicked were destroyed in a shower of brimstone.

5014. That was the house of Lūṭ; and even there, his wife had no faith: she disobeyed the Command and perished: xi. 81, n. 1577.
37. And We left there  
A Sign for such as  
Fear the Grievous Chastisement.  

38. And in Moses  
(Was another Sign): 
Behold, We sent him  
To Pharaoh, with authority  
Manifest.  

39. But (Pharaoh) turned back  
On account of his might, and said,  
“A sorcerer, or  
One possessed!”  

40. So We took him  
And his forces, and  
Threw them into the sea:  
And his was the blame.  

41. And in the ‘Ad (people)  
(Was another Sign):  
Behold, We sent against them  
The devastating Wind:  

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5015. The Grievous Chastisement: that is, the Final Judgment. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in this life is taken as the type of the Final Judgment. The vestiges can be seen—as a Sign and a Warning—in the sulphury plain round the Dead Sea: Cf. xv. 79.  

5016. Cf. xlv. 17-31. The story of Moses and Pharaoh is here just referred to. The points emphasized here are: (1) that Moses had manifest authority, yet Pharaoh doubted: (2) that Pharaoh’s reliance was on his Chiefs and his forces, but they could not help when his doom came; and (3) that in the most extraordinary and incredible ways (judged by ordinary human standards), his arrogance and his reliance on his Chiefs and forces was his undoing.  

5017. The ungodly Egyptians were all destroyed, but the chief blame lay on Pharaoh for misleading them. Pharaoh’s punishment was just. He could not blame anyone else. And certainly no one can blame the course of Allah’s Justice, for Allah was patient, and gave him many chances to repent.  

5018. Cf. xlvii. 21-26. The point here is that the ‘Ad were a gifted people: Allah had given them talents and material wealth: but when they defied Allah, they and all their belongings were destroyed in a night, by a hurricane which they thought was bringing them the rain to which they were looking forward. How marvellously Allah’s Providence works, to help the good and destroy the wicked!
42. It left nothing whatever
    That it came up against,
    But reduced it to ruin
    And rottenness.

43. And in the Thamūd\textsuperscript{5019}
    (Was another Sign):
    Behold, they were told,
    "Enjoy (your brief day)\textsuperscript{5020}
    For a little while!"

44. But they insolently defied\textsuperscript{5021}
    The Command of their Lord:
    So the thunderbolt\textsuperscript{5022} seized
    Them, even while they
    Were looking on.

45. Then they could not
    Even stand (on their feet),\textsuperscript{5023}
    Nor could they help themselves.

46. So were the People\textsuperscript{5024}
    Of Noah before them:
    For they wickedly transgressed.

\textsuperscript{5019} See the story of the Thamūd and their prophet Śāliḥ in vii. 73-79. Here the point is the suddenness of their punishment and its unexpected nature.

\textsuperscript{5020} Śāliḥ their prophet gave them three days’ clear warning for repentance (xi. 65). But they heeded him not. On the contrary they flouted him and continued in their evil courses.

\textsuperscript{5021} They had already defied the order to preserve the She-camel, which was a sign from Allah. See xi. 64-65 and n. 1560. They continued to flout the warnings of the prophet until the earthquake came on them with a stunning noise and buried them where they were: vii. 78; and xi. 67.

\textsuperscript{5022} \textit{Ṣā'iqat}: a stunning sound like that of thunder and lightning (ii. 55); such a sound often accompanies an earthquake (see xlii. 17, n. 4485, and vii. 78 and n. 1047).

\textsuperscript{5023} They were swept off in the earthquake.

\textsuperscript{5024} The generation of Noah was swept away in the Flood for their sins: vii. 59-64. The point is that such a Flood seemed so unlikely to them that they thought Noah was "wandering in his mind" when he delivered Allah’s Message: vii. 60.
SECTION 3.

47. We have built
   The Firmament with might:
   And We indeed
   Have vast power.

48. And We have spread out
   The (spacious) earth:
   How excellently
   We do spread out!

49. And of every thing
   We have created pairs:
   That ye may reflect.

50. Therefore flee
    Unto Allah: I am from Him
    A Warner to you,
    Clear and open!

5025. If you do not wish to go back to the wonderful things in the past, which show the power and goodness of Allah, and His justice supreme over all wrong-doing, look at the wonderful things unfolding themselves before your very eyes! (1) The space in the heavens above! Who can comprehend it but He Who made it and sustains it? (2) The globe of the earth under your feet! How great its expanse seems over sea and land, and spread out for you like a wonderful carpet or bed of rest! (3) All things are in twos: sex in plants and animals, by which one individual is complementary to another; in the subtle forces of nature, Day and Night, positive and negative electricity, forces of attraction and repulsion: and numerous other opposites, each fulfilling its purpose, and contributing to the working of Allah's Universe: and in the moral and spiritual world, Love and Aversion, Mercy and Justice, Striving and Rest, and so on—all fulfilling their functions according to the Artistry and wonderful Purpose of Allah. Everything has its counterpart, or pair, or complement. Allah alone is One, with none like Him, or needed to complement Him. These are noble things to contemplate. And they lead us to a true understanding of Allah's Purpose and Message.

5026. See (3) in the last note. Cf. xxxvi. 36, n. 3981.

5027. If you understand Nature and yourselves aright, you will know that Allah is the Truth, and you will fly at once to Him. This is the teaching which the Prophet of Allah has come to give you, in clear terms and openly to all.
51. And make not another 5028
    An object of worship
    With Allah:
    I am from Him
    A Warner to you,
    Clear and open!

52. Similarly, no messenger came
    To the Peoples before them,
    But they said (of him)
    In like manner,
    "A sorcerer, or
    One possessed"5029

53. Is this the legacy 5030
    They have transmitted,
    One to another?
    Nay, they are themselves
    A people transgressing
    Beyond bounds!

54. So turn away 5031
    From them: not thine
    Is the blame.

5028. Verses 50 and 51, ending with the same clause to emphasize the connection between the two, should be read together. The Prophet’s mission was (and is): (1) to show us the urgent need for repentance; and (2) to wean us from the precipice of false worship. The one convinces us of sin and opens the door to the Mercy of Allah; the other cures us of the madness of paying court to idle or worthless objects of desire; for in the worship of Allah, the One True God is included the best service to ourselves and our fellow-creatures. If fully understood, this sums up the whole duty of man: for it leads us by the right Path to the love of Allah and the love of man and of all creatures.

5029. They said this of Moses: li. 39. And they said this of the holy Prophet: xxxviii. 4; xlv. 14.

5030. There is a tradition of Evil as there is a tradition of Good. The ways of Evil in dealing with the teachers of Truth are similar in all ages. But such evil traditions would have no effect, were it not that the generation following them is itself ungodly, “transgressing beyond bounds.”

5031. When the Prophet freely proclaims his Message, it is not his fault if obstinate wickedness refuses to listen. He can leave them alone, but he should continue to teach for the benefit of those who have Faith.
But remind:
For reminding benefits
The Believers.

I have only created
Jinns and men, that
They may serve Me.

No Sustenance do I require
Of them, nor do I
Require that they should
Feed Me.

For Allah is He Who
Gives (all) Sustenance,—
Lord of Power,—
Steadfast (for ever).

For the wrong-doers,
Their portion is like
Unto the portion of their
Fellows (of earlier generations):
Then let them not ask Me
To hasten (that portion)!

5032. Creation is not for idle sport or play: xxi. 16. Allah has a serious Purpose
behind it, which, in our imperfect state, we can only express by saying that each creature
is given the chance of development and progress towards the Goal, which is Allah. Allah
is the source and centre of all power and all goodness, and our progress depends upon
our putting ourselves into accord with His Will. This is His service. It is not of any benefit
to Him: see the next two verses: it is for our own benefit.

5033. Sustenance: in both the literal and the figurative sense; so also “Freed Me” at
the end of the verse. Allah is independent of all needs. It is therefore absurd to suppose
that He should require any Sustenance, and still more absurd to suppose that we can feed
Him! The gifts, the Sustenance, the goodness, all come from His side.

Allah commands all power; therefore any power we seek must be from Him.
And His power is steadfast, the same to-day as yesterday, and for ever. Therefore His
help is always sure.

5035. Each generation, that acts like any of its predecessors, must meet a similar fate.
If the wicked came to an evil end in the past, the same results will follow in the present
and the future. The punishment will come suddenly enough: let them not in mockery ask
that it should be hastened.
60. Woe, then, to the Unbelievers,  
   From that Day\(^{5036}\)  
   Of theirs which they  
   Have been promised!

5036. That is, their eternal Punishment in the Hereafter, as well as any punishment that may come to them in this life.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT ĀT-Ṭūr, 52

This is the third of the group of seven Makkān Sūras described in the Introduction to S. 1.

It is, like its predecessor, an early Makkān Sūra. The points here emphasized are: that revelation is in accord with all Allah's Signs, including previous Revelations, and that the Hereafter is inevitable, and we must prepare for it.

Summary.—All Signs of Allah, including previous Revelations, point to the inevitable consequences of ill-deeds and good deeds: how can people deny or ignore the Message of Revelation? (lii. 1-49).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the Mount (of Revelation); 5037
2. By a Book Inscribed 5038
3. In a parchment unfolded;
4. By the much-frequented House; 5039
5. By the Canopy Raised High; 5040

5037. The adjuration is by five things which we shall presently explain. An appeal is made to these five Signs in verses 1 to 6, and the certainty of future events is asserted in the most emphatic terms in verses 7 to 28, in three parts, viz., the coming of judgment and the passing away of this phenomenal world (verses 7-10); the future ill consequences of ill-deeds done (verses 11-16); and future attainment of bliss and complete realisation of Allah’s love and mercy (verses 17-28).

5038. See last note. The five Signs to which appeal is made are: (1) the Mount (of Revelation), verse 1; (2) the Book Inscribed, verses 2-3; (3) The Much-frequented House, verse 4; (4) the Canopy Raised High, verse 5; and (5) the Ocean filled with Swell, verse 6.

Let us examine these in detail. Each of them has a figurative meaning. (1) The Mount is the sublime world of Revelation. In the case of Moses it is typified by Mount Sinai: Cf. xcv. 2, where it is mentioned in juxtaposition to the sacred territory of Makkah, xcv. 3. In the case of Jesus it is the Mount of Olives: Cf. xcv. 1, and also Matt. xxiv. 3-51, where Jesus made his striking pronouncement about the Judgment to come. In the case of Muhammad it is the Mountain of Light, where he first received the revelation: Cf. n. 11 (2). The Book Inscribed is Allah’s Eternal word. When it becomes Revelation to man, it is figured forth as something “inscribed”, reduced to writing; and as it is made clear to the intelligence of man, it is further described as “in a parchment unfolded”, that is, spread out so that everyone who has the will can seek its guidance.

5039. See the last two notes. (3) “The much-frequented House is usually understood to mean the Ka’ba, which the holy Prophet purified and re-dedicated to true worship.

5040. (4) “The Canopy Raised High” is the canopy of heaven, to whose height or sublimity no limit can be assigned by the mind of man.
6. And by the Ocean\textsuperscript{5041} Filled with Swell;\textsuperscript{5042}

7. Verily, the Chastisement of thy Lord Will indeed come to pass;–

8. There is none Can avert it;–

9. On the Day when\textsuperscript{5043} The firmament will be In dreadful commotion.

10. And the mountains will move.\textsuperscript{5044}

11. Then woe that Day To the rejecters (of Truth);–\textsuperscript{5045}

\textsuperscript{5041} (5) The Ocean—the vast, limitless, all encircling Ocean. It is expressed to be \textit{masjūr}, full of a mighty swell, boiling over, poured forth all over the earth, as if overwhelming all landmarks; \textit{Cf.} lxxxi. 6:—a fitting description of the final disappearance of our temporal world in the supreme establishment of the judgment.

\textsuperscript{5042} This completes the five Signs by which man may know for certain of the Judgment to come. Note that they are in a descending order; –the highest, or most remote from man’s consciousness, being mentioned first, and that nearest to man’s consciousness being mentioned last. The truth of Revelation; its embodiment in a Prophet’s Message given in human language; the universal appeal of divine worship; the starry world above; and the encircling Ocean, full of life and motion below,—all are evidences that the Day of Allah will finally come, and nothing can avert it.

\textsuperscript{5043} The Day of Judgment is typified by two figures. (1) “The firmament will be in dreadful commotion.” The heavens as we see them suggest to us peace and tranquillity, and the power of fixed laws which all the heavenly bodies obey. This will all be shaken in the rise of the new world. \textit{Cf.} Matt. xxiv. 29: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days...the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” For (2) see next note.

\textsuperscript{5044} (2) The mountains are a type of firmness and stability. But things that we think of as firm and stable in this material life will be shaken to pieces, and will be no more substantial than a mirage in a desert. \textit{Cf.} lxxviii. 20.

\textsuperscript{5045} That Day will be a Day of Woe to the wrong doers described in two aspects, the rebels against Allah and Allah’s Truth, just as it will be a Day of Joy and Thanksgiving to the Righteous, who are described in three aspects in verses 17 to 28. The rebels are here described as being those who openly defied Truth and plunged into wrong-doing, or who trifled with truth, who jested with serious matters, who had not the
12. That play (and paddle)  
In shallow trifles.

13. That Day shall they be  
Thrust down to the Fire  
Of Hell, irresistibly.

14. “This”, it will be said,  
“Is the Fire,—which ye  
Were wont to deny!”

15. “Is this then a magic?  
Or is it ye that  
Do not see?”

16. “Burn ye therein:  
The same is it to you  
Whether ye bear it  
With patience, or not:  
Ye but receive the recompense  
Of your (own) deeds.”

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5046. In face of the Realities, it will be borne in on them how wrong it was for them in this life to deny or forget that every wicked thought or deed had its own retributive chain of consequences.

5047. Perhaps they had said that the Hereafter was a fake, mere old wives’ tales! If they had given serious thought to the Signs of Allah, they would have been saved from that serious spiritual blindness: then they will see that the fault was their own, and that the warnings of the messengers of Truth were nothing but pure Truth.

5048. At that stage they will have no justification for anger or impatience; for their whole position will have been due to their own conduct and their rejection of Allah’s Grace. Nor will there be time then for patience or repentance, for their period of probation will then have been over.
17. As to the Righteous,\(^{5049}\)
   They will be in Gardens,
   And in Happiness,—

18. Enjoying the (Bliss) which
   Their Lord hath bestowed
   On them, and their Lord
   Shall deliver them from
   The Chastisement of the Fire.

19. (To them will be said:)\(^{5050}\)
   “Eat and drink ye,
   With profit and health,\(^{5051}\)
   Because of your (good) deeds.”

20. They will recline (with ease)
    Upon couches
    Arranged in ranks;\(^{5052}\)
    And We shall wed them

\(^{5049}\) The Righteous will be in Bliss far beyond their merits: their sins and faults
will be forgiven by the grace of Allah, which will save them from the penalties which
they may have incurred from human frailty. It will be their own effort or striving which
will win them Allah’s grace: see verse 19 below. But the fruits will be greater than they
could strictly have earned.

\(^{5050}\) The bliss of the Righteous is described in three aspects: (1) their individual
bliss, verses 17-20: (2) their social bliss, verses 21-24; and (3) their satisfaction in the
dissipation of past shadows, and their full understanding of the goodness of Allah, verses

\(^{5051}\) Individual satisfaction is expressed in three types or figures of speech. (1)
eating and drinking (2) couches of dignity, and (3) the joy of individual companionship.
But the eating and drinking will be free of all drawbacks, such as excess, aftereffects and
satiety: here there will be pure health, profit, and enjoyment. So about the other two:
see the notes following.

Cf. with this the description of heaven in xxxvii 40-49: while the general account is
the same, special phases are brought out in the two passages to correspond with the
context.

\(^{5052}\) Every one will have a couch of dignity, but it does not follow that the dignity
will be the same. Every one’s Personality will be purified but it will not be merged into
one general sameness.
To maidens, with beautiful
Big and lustrous eyes.\textsuperscript{5053}

21. And those who believe
And whose seeds\textsuperscript{5054} follow
Them in Faith,—to them
Shall We join their families:
Nor shall We deprive them
(Of the fruit) of aught
Of their works:
(Yet) is each individual
In pledge for his deeds.\textsuperscript{5055}

22. And We shall bestow
On them, of fruit and meat,\textsuperscript{5056}
Anything they shall desire.

23. They shall there exchange,
One with another,
A cup

\textsuperscript{5053} Cf. xli. 54, and notes 4728 and 4729, where the meaning of Ḥūr is fully explained. This is the special sharing of individual Bliss one with another. The next verse refers to the general social satisfaction shared with all whom we loved in this earthly life.

\textsuperscript{5054} Zurrīyat: literally, progeny, offspring, family; applied by extension to mean all near and dear ones. Love is unselfish, and works not merely, or chiefly, for Self, but for others; provided the others have Faith and respond according to their capacities or degrees, they will be joined together. Even though on individual merits their rank might be less.

\textsuperscript{5055} As already explained in the last note, though the love poured out by Prophets, ancestors, descendants, friends, or good men and women, will secure for their loved ones the enjoyment of their society, it is an indispensable condition that the loved ones should also, according to their lights, have shown their faith and their goodness in deeds. Each individual is responsible for his conduct. In the kingdom of heaven there is no boasting of ancestors or friends. But it is part of the satisfaction of the good ones who poured out their love that those who were in any way worthy to receive their love should also be admitted to their society, and this satisfaction shall in no way be diminished to them.

\textsuperscript{5056} Note that this verse is embedded in the midst of the description of social bliss; the individual bliss figured by meat and drink has already been mentioned in verse 19 above. The social pleasures will be of any kind or quantity they shall desire, but their desires will then be purified, just as their pleasures will be on a different plane.
Free of frivoltly,
Free of sin.

24. Round about them will serve,
(Devoted) to them,
Youths (handsome) as Pearls[5058]
Well-guarded.

25. They will advance[5059]
To each other, engaging
In mutual enquiry.

26. They will say: “Aforetime,
We were not without fear
For the sake of our people.”[5060]

27. “But Allah has been good
To us, and has delivered us
From the Chastisement
Of the Scorching Wind.”[5061]

28. “Truly, we did call
Unto Him from of old:

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5057. Drinking or loving cups, in our life on this earth, are apt to be misused in two ways: (1) they may be occasions for mere frivoltly or the wasting of time; (2) they may lead to evil thoughts, evil suggestions, evil talk, or evil deeds.

5058. Maknūn: well-guarded, kept close, concealed from exposure: the beautiful nacreous lustre of Pearls is disfigured by exposure to gases, vapours, or acids; when not actually in use they are best kept in closed caskets, guarded from deteriorating agencies.

5059. The third—and the highest—stage of Bliss, after individual Bliss and social Bliss, is the satisfaction of looking to the Past without its shadows and realising to the full in the Present the goodness of Allah. See n. 5050. This, again, is shared in mutual converse and confidence.

5060. A man may be good, and may with limits have found goodness in his own spiritual life, but may have anxieties about his family or friends whom he loves. All such shadows are removed in heaven by the Grace of Allah, and he is free to dwell on it in his confidential converse with other men similarly circumstanced.

5061. “Us” includes the good man or woman and all whom he or she cared for. This would be an ever-expanding circle, until it includes all mankind through Teachers like the Chosen One.
SECTION 2.

29. Therefore Remind. For by the Grace Of thy Lord, thou art No soothsayer, nor possessed.

30. Or do they say:-
   “A Poet! we await For him some calamity (Hatched) by Time!”

31. Say thou: “Await ye!—I too will wait Along with you!”

32. Is it that their intellects Urges them To this, or are they

5062. ‘Before this, we called upon Him, in faith that He is good: now we know in our inmost souls that He is indeed good—the Beneficent, the Merciful.’ This is the climax of the description of Heaven.

5063. The greatest of the Prophets was called a soothsayer, i.e., one who tells fortunes by divination, or a madman possessed of some evil spirit, or a poet singing spiteful satires. Much more may lesser men be called by such names because they proclaim the Truth. They should go on in spite of it all.

5064. If a spiteful poet foretells evil calamities for men, men can afford to laugh at him, hoping that time will bring about its revenge, and spite will come to an evil end. For the various meanings of Raib, see n. 1884 to xiv. 9. Some Commentators suggest Death as the Calamity hatched by Time.

5065. Cf. ix. 52. If the wicked wait or look for some calamity to befall the Prophet, the Prophet can with far more justice await the decision of the issue between him and his persecutors. For he stands for right, and Allah will support the right.

5066. It may be that the persecutors of Truth are ignorant, and their deficient faculties of understanding mislead them, but it is more often the case that they are perverse rebels against the law of Allah, defending their own selfish interests, and preventing those whom they oppress, from getting justice.
But a people transgressing beyond bounds?

33. Or do they say, “He fabricated the (Message)? Nay, they have no faith!

34. Let them then produce A saying like unto it, If (it be) they speak The Truth!

35. Were they created of nothing? Or were they themselves The creators?

36. Or did they create The heavens and the earth? Nay, they have No firm belief.

5067. Cf. li. 53.

5068. As an alternative to the charges of being a soothsayer or a madman or a disgruntled poet, there is the charge of a forger or fabricator applied to the prophet of Allah when he produces his Message. This implies that there can be no revelation or inspiration from Allah. Such an attitude negatives Faith altogether. But if this is so, can they produce a work of man that can compare with the inspired Word of Allah? They cannot. Cf. n. 37-39, and xvii. 88.

5069. “Were they created of nothing?” Three possible alternative meanings are suggested by the Commentators, according to the meaning we give to the Arabic preposition min=of, by, with, for. (1) ‘Were they created by nothing? Did they come into existence of themselves? Was it a mere chance that they came into being? (2) Were they created as men out of nothing? Was there not a wonderful seed, from which their material growth can be traced, as the handiwork of a wise and wonderful Creator? Must they not then seek His Will? (3) Were they created for nothing, to no purpose? If they were created for a purpose, must they not try to learn that purpose by understanding Allah’s Revelation?

5070. They obviously did not create the wonders of the starry heavens and the fruitful globe of the earth. But they can assign no definite cause to explain it, as they have no firm belief on the subject themselves.
37. Or are the Treasures of thy Lord with them,5071 Or have they control over them.

38. Or have they a ladder,5072 By which they can (climb Up to heaven and) listen (To its secrets)? Then let (Such a) listener of theirs Produce a manifest proof.

39. Or has He only daughters5073 And ye have sons?

40. Or is it that thou Dost ask for a reward,5074 So that they are burdened With a load of debt?–

41. Or that the Unseen Is in their hands, And they write it down?

5071. Cf. vi. 50, and n. 867. The Treasures of Allah’s Knowledge are infinite. But the doubters and unbelievers have no access to them, much less can the doubters and unbelievers manage the wonders of this world. Must they not therefore seek grace and revelation from Allah?

5072. Cf. vi. 35: a reference to the Pagan belief that by means of a material ladder a man might climb up to heaven and learn its secrets!

5073. Cf. xvi. 57-59, and n. 2082. To the gospel of Unity it is repugnant to assign begotten sons or daughters to Allah. But the Arab superstition about angels being the daughters of Allah was particularly blasphemous as the Pagan Arabs hated to have daughters themselves and considered it a mark of humiliation!

5074. The prophets of Allah ask for no reward to preach the Message of Allah and direct men to the right Path. Why then do men shun them and persecute those who seek to bring blessings to them?

5075. The Unseen is a subject of Revelation, though it works through the common everyday life of man. The men who reject Revelation simply because it is outside their own experience ought on the contrary to try to learn about it and seek to understand it.
42. Or do they intend
A plot (against thee)?
But those who disbelieve
Are themselves ensnared
In a Plot.

43. Or have they a god
Other than Allah?
Exalted is Allah
Far above the things
They associate with Him!

44. Were they to see
A piece of the sky
Falling (on them), they
Would (only) say: “Clouds
Gathered in heaps!”

45. So leave them alone
Until they encounter
That Day of theirs,
Wherein they shall be
thunderstruck.

5076. Shallow men who plot against Good are themselves the willing victims of insidious plots laid by Evil.

5077. This is the final and decisive question: Is there really any god other than Allah the One True God? Every argument points to the negative. A series of questions has been asked above pointing to the negative of the superstitions of the godless. The gospel of Unity, Revelation, and the Hereafter has thus been preached by a searching examination of the position of the Unbelievers. And the Sûra ends with an exhortation to leave alone those who will not believe because they wish not to believe, and to let Time work out the web and pattern of Allah’s Plan.

5078. In xxvi. 187, Shu’aib, the Prophet of Allah, is challenged by the Companions of the Wood “to cause a piece of the sky to fall on us, if thou art truthful.” Such a challenge, in some form or other, is addressed to all prophets of Allah. It is mere defiance. It has no meaning. If a piece of the sky were to fall on them, it would not convince them, for they would only say: “These are only clouds gathered in heaps.” They do not wish to believe. Otherwise there are ample Signs and Evidences of Allah’s Plan in Creation and in man’s own heart.

5079. That is, the Day of Judgment. Cf. xxxix. 68, and n. 4343.
46. The Day when their plotting
   Will avail them nothing
   And no help shall be
   Given them.

47. And verily, for those
   Who do wrong, there is
   Another punishment besides this:5080
   But most of them
   Know not.

48. Now await in patience
   The command of thy Lord:
   For verily thou art
   In Our eyes:5081
   And celebrate the praises
   Of thy Lord the while
   Thou standest forth,5082

5080. The final Judgment is for all. But in addition, wrong-doers have to fear a retribution or punishment in this very life, an open punishment through external events, or at least the bitter pangs of conscience within.

5081. The messenger of Allah must strive his utmost to proclaim the Message of Allah: as for results, it is not for him to command them. He must wait patiently, in the knowledge that he is not forgotten by Allah, but is constantly under Allah's eyes,—under His loving care and protection. And he must glorify Allah's name, as he is a standard-bearer of Allah's Truth.

5082. The translators and Commentators nearly all understand taqûmu in the sense of rising up from sleep. But the rendering I have given is consistent with Quranic usage. In xxvi. 218, we have the same two words ĥina taqûmu, meaning "standing forth (in prayer)"). In lvii. 25, we have "li-yaqûm an-nâsu bil-qisîši", which obviously means "that men may stand forth in justice," i.e., do all their business in justice. In lxxviii. 38, we have yaqûmu used for the angels standing forth in ranks.

On my rendering the meaning will be: 'celebrate Allah's praises when you stand forth in prayer, or at all times when you go about your business; but also for part of the night and at early dawn when worldly life is at a standstill.'
49. And for part of the night

Also praise thou Him,

And at the setting

Of the stars!

5083. It is not necessary to understand this for any particular canonical prayers. It is good to spend a part of the night in prayer and praise: Cf. lxxiii. 6. And the Dawn is a daily recurring miracle, full of spiritual influences and "testimony": Cf. xvii. 78-79.

5084. Idbār-un-nu'jam: the setting of the stars: the glorious hour of early dawn. In cxiii. 1, we seek Allah’s protection as "Lord of the Dawn".
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT An-Najm, 53.

This is an early Makkan Sūra, and is the fourth of the series of seven which were described in the Introduction to S. 1.

The particular theme of this Sūra is that Revelation is not an illusion: the illusion is in the minds of those who doubt and have false ideas of Allah: Allah is the Originator of all things.

In some Sūras the consecutive arrangement is shown or suggested by a cue-word. Here the cue-word is "star", corresponding to "stars" in the last verse of the last Sūra. So in xlvi. 1, the words: "Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom": are carried forward from the last verse of S. xlv., and indeed the same words occur in the first verse of S. xlv. So, again the words: "Most Merciful, Oft-Forgiving": in xxxiv. 2, refer back to the words: "Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful": in the last line of S. xxxiii. In S. liv. 1, the nearness of Judgment recalls the same idea at the end of the previous Sūra (liii. 57). Other examples will also be found.

Summary.—The impression received by the Prophet in revelation is neither error on his part nor deception by others, nor does he speak from selfish motives: it comes clearly from Allah, Who is not what the vain imaginations of men conceive: He is all-in-all, First and Last, Lord of all, Ample in forgiveness (liii. 1-32).

Those who turn away are petty and ignorant, not knowing that Allah is the Originator of all things—in men, in nature, and in the events of history: therefore serve ye Him (liii. 33-62).
An-Najm, or the Star.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the Star⁵⁰⁸⁵
   When it goes down,-

2. Your Companion is neither⁵⁰⁸⁶
   Astray nor being misled,

3. Nor does he say (aught)
   Of (his own) Desire.

4. It is no less than
   Inspiration sent down to him:

5. He was taught by one⁵⁰⁸⁷
   Mighty in Power,

6. Endued with Wisdom:
   For he appeared
   (In stately form)

⁵⁰⁸⁵. An-Najm is interpreted in various ways. As most commonly accepted, it means either a Star generically, or the close cluster of seven stars known as the Pleiades in the Constellation Taurus, which the sun enters about the 21st of April every year. In mid-April, or a little later, the beautiful cluster would set just after the sun, after having gradually ascended the sky in the winter months. In late May, or a little later, it would rise just before the sun. In its western aspects, it might be considered a spring constellation. To open-air nations (including the Arabs) whose climate usually presents starry skies, this is an object of great interest, and many folklore tales gather round it. When so glorious a cluster is content to bow down in the horizon and merge its light in the greater light created by Allah, it becomes a symbol of humility in beauty and power before the Most High. Whose revelation discloses the summit of beauty, power, and wisdom.

⁵⁰⁸⁶. Hawâ in the text may mean either “goes down (or sets)” or “rises”. Whichever meaning we take, it makes no difference to the interpretation given above.

⁵⁰⁸⁷. “Your Companion” is the holy Prophet Muhammad, who had lived among the Quraish. He is defended from three kinds of charges that the Unbelievers brought against him: (1) that he was going astray, either through defect of intelligence or through carelessness; (2) that he was being misled or deceived by evil spirits; and (3) that he spoke out of a whim or impulse, or from a selfish desire to impress his own personality. None of these charges were true. On the contrary he had direct inspiration from Allah.
7. While he was in
   The highest part\textsuperscript{5088}
   Of the horizon:

8. Then he approached
   And came closer,

9. And was at a distance
   Of but two bow-lengths\textsuperscript{5089}
   Or (even) nearer;

10. So did (Allah) convey\textsuperscript{5090}
    The inspiration to His Servant—
    (Conveyed) what He (meant)
    To convey.

11. The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart
    In no way falsified\textsuperscript{5091}
    That which he saw.

12. Will ye then dispute
    With him concerning
    What he saw?

13. For indeed he saw him
    At a second descent,\textsuperscript{5092}

\textsuperscript{5088}. Gabriel appeared in stately form. \textit{Istawâ} in verse 6, translated “appeared”, means literally “mounted” or “ascended”, or “set himself to execute a design”; see n. 1386 to x. 3.

\textsuperscript{5089}. Two bow-shots (counting 100 to 150 yards to a bow-shot) would be a clearly visible distance.

\textsuperscript{5090}. Gabriel would be just a messenger, to do no more than convey Allah’s Message to Allah’s Messenger.

\textsuperscript{5091}. ‘Heart’ in Arabic includes the faculty of intelligence as well as the faculty of feeling. The impression conveyed was pure truth; there was no illusion in it.

\textsuperscript{5092}. The first occasion when Gabriel appeared in a visible form was at the Mountain of Light, when he brought his first revelation beginning with \textit{Iqrâ’}. The second was at the Prophet’s \textit{Mi’raj} or Ascension: see Introduction to S. xvii.
14. Near the Lote-tree\textsuperscript{5093} Of the utmost boundary.

15. Near it is the Garden Of Abode.\textsuperscript{5094}

16. Behold, the Lote-tree Was shrouded With what shrouds.

17. (His) sight never swerved, Nor did it go wrong!

18. For truly did he see, Of the signs of his Lord, The Greatest!

19. Have ye seen\textsuperscript{5095} Lāt, and 'Uzza, And another, The third (goddess), Manāt?

20. What! For you\textsuperscript{5096} The male sex, And for Him, the female?

5093. For the Lote-tree in its literal meaning, see n. 3814 to xxxiv. 16. The wild Lote is thorny; under cultivation it yields good fruit and shade, and is symbolic of heavenly bliss, as here and in lvi. 28.

5094. The "Garden of Abode" (Jannat al-Mawa) lies close to the Lote-Tree and, in the opinion of some authorities, is so called because the souls of believers will find their abode therein.

5095. From the heights of divine Glory, we come back again to this sorry earth, with its base idolatries. We are asked to "look at this picture, and at that!" The three principal idols of Pagan Arab Idolatry were the goddesses Lāt, Uzzā, and Manāt. Opinions differ as to their exact forms: one version is that Lāt was in human shape, 'Uzzā had its origin in a sacred tree, and Manāt in a white stone.

5096. To show Allah in human shape, or imagine sons or daughters of Allah, as if Allah were flesh, was in any case a derogation from the supreme glory of Allah, high above all creatures, even if the human shapes were invested with great beauty and majesty as in the Greek Pantheon. But when we consider in what low opinion Pagan Arabia held the female sex, it was particularly degrading to show Allah, or so-called daughters of Allah, in female shapes. Cf. xvi. 57-59, and n. 2082; also lii. 39, and n. 5073.
22. Behold, such would be
   Indeed a division
   Most unfair!

23. These are nothing but names
   Which ye have devised,—
   Ye and your fathers,—
   For which Allah has sent
   Down no authority (whatever).
   They follow nothing but
   Conjecture and what
   The souls desire!—
   Even though there has already
   Come to them Guidance
   From their Lord!

24. Nay, shall man have (just)
   Anything he hankers after?

25. But to Allah
   Belongeth the Hereafter
   And the Former life.

SECTION 2.

26. How many-so-ever be
   The angels in the heavens,

5097. Cf. vii. 71; xii. 40, n. 1693. The divine names which they give to stocks and stones, or to heroes living or dead, or even to prophets and men of God, are but the creations of their own fancy. Whatever they were, they were not gods.

5098. Cf. vi. 116. Conjecture is a dangerous thing in speaking of divine things. It follows lines which reflect the lusts of men's own hearts. Why not follow the divine guidance which comes through the prophets of Allah?

5099. The unpurified desires of men's hearts often lead to destruction, for they are dictated by Evil. The true source of guidance and light is Allah, just as He is also the goal to which all persons and things—all existence—returns.

5100. We are apt to imagine the angelic host of heaven as beings of immense power. But their power is all derived from Allah. Men, when they attain to the highest spiritual dignities, may have even more power and position than angels in the sight of Allah, as in typified by angels being bidden to bow down to Adam: ii. 34. The Quraish superstition about angels being intermediaries and intercessors for man with Allah is condemned.
Their intercession will avail nothing Except after Allah has given
Leave for whom He pleases And that he is acceptable To Him.

27. Those who believe not In the Hereafter, name The angels with female names.

28. But they have no knowledge Therein. They follow nothing But conjecture; and conjecture Avails nothing against Truth.

29. Therefore shun those who Turn away from Our Message And desire nothing but The life of this world.

30. That is their Attainment of Knowledge. Verily thy Lord knoweth best Those who stray from His path, and He knoweth Best those who receive guidance.

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5101. Cf. xx. 109 and xxi. 28. No one can intercede except with the permission of Allah, and that permission will only be given for one who is acceptable to Allah. For a possible different shade of meaning. See n. 2643 to xx. 109.

5102. Cf. liii. 21, above, and n. 5096. The Pagan Quraish had no firm belief in the Hereafter. Their prayers for intercession to angels and deities was on account of their worldly affairs.

5103. Cf. liii. 23 above, and n. 5098.

5104. Men with a materialist turn of mind, whose desires are bounded by sex and material things, will not go beyond those things. Their knowledge will be limited to the narrow circle in which their thoughts move. The spiritual world is beyond their ken. While persons with a spiritual outlook, even though they may fail again and again in attaining their full ideals, are on the right Path. They are willing to receive guidance and Allah's Grace will find them out and help them.
31. Yea, to Allah belongs all
That is in the heavens
And on earth: so that
He rewards those who do Evil, according to their deeds,
And He rewards those who Do good, with what is best.

32. Those who avoid
Great sins and indecent deeds,
Save lesser offences,—
Verily thy Lord is ample In forgiveness. He knows You well when He brings You out of the earth,
And when ye are hidden In your mothers’ wombs.
Therefore hold not yourselves purified:
He knows best who it is That guards against evil.

5105. All deeds have their consequences, good or ill. But this is not an iron law, as the Determinists in philosophy, or the preachers of bare Karma, would have us believe. Allah does not sit apart. He governs the world. And Mercy as well as Justice are His attributes. In His Justice every deed or word or thought of evil has its consequence for the doer or speaker or thinker. But there is always in this life room for repentance and amendment. As soon as this is forthcoming, Allah’s Mercy comes into action. It can blot out our evil, and the “reward” which it gives is nearly always greater than our merits.

5106. Allah’s attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness are unlimited. They come into action without our asking, but on our bringing our wills as offerings to Him. Our asking or prayer helps us to bring our minds and wills as offering to Him. That is necessary to frame our own psychological preparedness. It informs Allah of nothing, for He knows all.

5107. As Allah knows our inmost being, it is absurd for us to justify ourselves either by pretending that we are better than we are or by finding excuses for our conduct. We must offer ourselves unreservedly such as we are: it is His Mercy and Grace that will cleanse us. If we try, out of love for Him, to guard against evil, our striving is all that He asks for.
SECTION 3.

33. Seest thou one
Who turns back,

34. Gives a little,
Then hardens (his heart)?

35. What! Has he knowledge
Of the unseen
So that he can see?

36. Nay, is he not acquainted
With what is in the books
Of Moses–

37. And of Abraham
Who fulfilled his
(commandments)

5108. The particular reference in this passage, according to Baidhawi is to Walid ibn Mugaira, who bargained with a Quraish Pagan for a certain sum if the latter would take upon himself the sins of Walid. He paid a part of the sum but withheld the rest. The general application that concerns us is threefold: (1) if we accept Islam, we must accept it whole-heartedly and not look back to Pagan superstitions; (2) we cannot play fast and loose with our promises and (3) no man can bargain about spiritual matters for he cannot see what his end will be unless he follows the law of Allah, which is the law of righteousness.

5109. 'So that he can see what will happen in the Hereafter': for no bargains can be struck about matters unknown.

5110. Books of Moses: apparently not the Pentateuch, in the Taurâ, but some other book or books now lost. For example, the Book of the Wars of Jehovah is referred to in the Old Testament (Num. xxi. 14) but is now lost. The present Pentateuch has no clear message at all of a Life to come.

5111. No original Book of Abraham is now extant. But a book called “The Testament of Abraham” has come down to us, which seems to be a Greek translation of a Hebrew original. See n. 6094 to lxxxvii. 19, where the Books of Moses and Abraham are again mentioned together.

5112. One of the titles of Abraham is Hanif, the True in Faith Cf. xvi. 120, 123.
38. Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another;
39. That man can have nothing but what he strives for;
40. That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight;
41. Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete;
42. That to thy Lord is the final Goal;
43. That it is He Who granteth laughter and tears;
44. That it is He Who granteth death and life;
45. That He did create the pairs—male and female;
46. From a sperm-drop when lodged (in its place);
47. That He hath promised a second creation.

5113. Here follows a series of eleven aphorisms. The first is that a man's spiritual burden—the responsibility for his sin—must be borne by himself and not by another: *Cf. vi. 164. There can be no vicarious atonement.*

5114. The second and third aphorisms are that man must strive, or he will gain nothing; and that if he strives, the result must soon appear in sight and he will find his reward in full measure.

5115. The fourth, fifth, and sixth aphorisms are that all things return to Allah; that all our hope should be in Him; and we should fear none but Him: and that He alone can give life and death.

5116. The seventh aphorism relates to sex: all things are created in pairs: each sex performs its proper function, and yet its wonderful working is part of the creative process of Allah: the living seed fructifies, but contains within itself all the factors disclosed in its later development and life.
48. That it is He Who Giveth wealth and satisfaction;\(^{5118}\)
49. That He is the Lord Of Sirius (the Mighty Star);\(^{5119}\)
50. And that it is He Who destroyed the (powerful) Ancient ‘Ad (people);\(^{5120}\)
51. And the Thamûd, He left no trace of them.
52. And before them, The people of Noah, For that they were (all) Most unjust And most insolent transgressors,\(^{5121}\)

5117. No less wonderful is the promise He has made about the raising of the dead, and a new life in the Hereafter, and this is the subject of the eighth aphorism.

5118. Wealth and material gain are sought by most men, in the hope that they will be a source of enjoyment and satisfaction. But this hope is not always fulfilled. There is a physical and spiritual side to it. But both the material and the spiritual side depend upon the working of Allah's Plan. This is referred to in the ninth aphorism.

5119. The tenth aphorism refers to a mighty phenomenon of nature, the magnificent star Sirius, which is such a prominent object in the skies, in the early part of the solar year, say, from January to April. It is the brightest star in the firmament, and its bluish light causes wonder and terror in Pagan minds. The Pagan Arabs worshipped it as a divinity. But Allah is the Lord, Creator and Cherisher, of the most magnificent part of Creation, and worship is due to Him alone.

5120. The eleventh and last aphorism refers to the punishment of the most powerful ancient peoples for their sins. For the ‘Ad people, see n. 1040 to vii. 65, and for the Thamûd, see n. 1043 to vii. 73. They were strong; and they were talented: but their strength and their talents did not save them from being destroyed for their sins. The same may be said about the earlier generation of Noah, who were destroyed in the Flood: they "rejected Our Signs: they were indeed a blind people" (vii. 64); see also n. 1039 to vii. 59; and xi. 25-49.

Ancient ‘Ad (people): some Commentators construe, “First ‘Ad people”, distinguishing them from the later ‘Ad people, a remnant that had their day and passed away.
53. And He destroyed
   The Overthrown Cities\(^{5121}\)
   (Of Sodom and Gomorrah),
54. So that there covered it
   That which covered.
55. Then which of the favours\(^{5122}\)
   Of thy Lord, (O man,)
   Wilt thou dispute about?
56. This is a Warner,\(^{5123}\)
   Of the (series of) Warners
   Of old!
57. The (Hour) ever approaching
   Draws nigh:
58. No one but Allah
   Can disclose it.
59. Do ye then wonder\(^{5124}\)
   At this recital?

\(^{5121}\) Verses 53-60 may be construed as a commentary on the aphorisms. The story of the Overthrown Cities, to which Lot was sent for a warning, will be found in xi. 74-83 and the notes thereon. This story may well be treated as separate from the aphorisms as it refers to events that happened in the later life of Abraham.

\(^{5122}\) With a slight modification this forms the refrain of the next Sūra but one, the highly artistic Sūra of Rahmān. In S. liv. 15, 17 etc., there is a similar refrain in different words. Every gift and benefit you have is from Allah, and to save you from the just punishment of your sins, Allah at all times sends revelations and Messengers to warn you. Why not accept Allah's Grace instead of disputing about it?

\(^{5123}\) The Prophet before the Quraish (and before us) continues the line of messengers of Allah who have come to teach mankind and lead men into unity and righteousness. Shall we not listen to his voice? Every day that passes, the Judgment approaches nearer and nearer. But Allah alone can say at what precise hour it will come to any of us. It is certain, and yet it is a mystery, which Allah alone can lay bare.

\(^{5124}\) Mere wondering will not do, even if it is the wonder of admiration. Each soul must strive and act, and Allah's Mercy will take it under its wings.
60. And will ye laugh\textsuperscript{5125}
    And not weep,-

61. Wasting your time
    In vanities?

62. But fall ye down in prostration
    To Allah and adore (Him)\textsuperscript{5126}

\textsuperscript{5125} The higher issues of Life and the Hereafter are serious, and therefore all that
we do in this life is serious and important. We must shun inanities and frivolities. It is
no laughing time. If we only realised our own shortcomings, we should weep. But weeping
by itself will not help. We must try and understand Allah and adore Him. Thus shall
we be able to understand ourselves and our fellow-men.

\textsuperscript{5126} And so we are invited to prostrate ourselves and adore Him. For this is the
true end of Revelation and the true attitude when we understand the world, Nature,
History and the working of Allah's Plan.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Qamar, 54.

This is an early Makkan Sūra, the fifth in the series dealing with Judgment, and the truth of Revelation, as explained in the Introduction to S. 1.

The theme of the Sūra is explained by the refrain: “Is there any that will receive admonition?” which occurs six times, at the end of each reference to a past story of sin and rejection of warnings and in the appeal to the simplicity of the Qurān (verses 15, 17, 22, 32, 40, and 51). There is an invitation to listen to the Message and turn to Truth and Righteousness.

Summary.—The Hour of Judgment is nigh, but men forget or reject the Message, as did the people of Noah, of 'Ād, of Thamūd, of Lot, and of Pharaoh. Is there any that will receive admonition? (liv. 1-55).
**Al-Qamar, or the Moon.**

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. The Hour (of Judgment)\(^{5127}\)  
   Is nigh, and the moon  
   Was cleft asunder.\(^{5128}\)

2. But if they see  
   A Sign, they turn away,  
   And say, “This is (But) continuous magic.”\(^{5129}\)

3. They reject (the warning)  
   And follow their (own) lusts  
   But every matter has\(^{5130}\)  
   Its appointed time.

4. There have already come  
   To them such tidings\(^{5131}\)  
   As contain a deterrent,

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5127. See para 2 of the Introduction to S. liii. The idea of the Judgment being nigh at the beginning of this Sūra connects it with the same idea at the end of the last Sūra (verse 57), though the actual words used in the two cases are different.

5128. Three explanations are given in the *Mufradāt*, and perhaps all three apply here: (1) that the moon once appeared cleft asunder in the valley of Makkah within sight of the Prophet, his Companions, and some Unbelievers; (2) that the prophetic past tense indicates the future, the cleaving asunder of the moon being a Sign of the Judgment approaching; and (3) that the phrase is metaphorical, meaning that the matter has become clear as the moon. That the first was noticed by contemporaries, including Unbelievers, is clear from verse 2. The second is an incident of the disruption of the solar system at the New Creation: Cf. lxxv. 8-9.

5129. *Mustamir*: continuous, or powerful; either meaning will apply. The Unbelievers acknowledge the unusual appearance, but call it magic. They do not therefore profit by the spiritual lesson.

5130. The prevalence of sin and the persecution of truth may have its day, but it must end at last.

5131. The stories of the sins of past generations having been visited with exemplary punishments were already in their possession, and should, if they had been wise, have opened their eyes and checked them in their mad career of sin. Five of these stories are again referred to later in this Sūra by way of illustration.
5. A wisdom far-reaching:—but
(The preaching of) Warners
Profits them not.

6. Therefore, (O Prophet,)\textsuperscript{5132}
Turn away from them.
(And wait for)
The Day that the Caller\textsuperscript{5133}
Will call (them)
To a terrible affair,

7. They will come forth,—
Their eyes humbled—
From (their) graves, (torpid)\textsuperscript{5134}
Like locusts scattered abroad,

8. Hastening, with eyes transfixed,
Towards the Caller!—
“Hard is this Day!”
The Unbelievers will say.

9. Before them the People
Of Noah rejected (their messenger):
They rejected Our servant\textsuperscript{5135}
And said, “Here is
One possessed!”', and he
Was driven out.

\textsuperscript{5132.} For a time godlessness seems to triumph, but the triumph is short-lived. And
in any case there is the great Reckoning of the Day of Judgment.

\textsuperscript{5133.} The angel whose voice will call at the Resurrection and direct all souls. Cf.
xx. 108-111.

\textsuperscript{5134.} At one stage in the invasion of locust swarms, the locusts are torpid and are
scattered abroad all over the ground. I have seen them on railway tracks in ‘Iraq, crushed
to death in hundreds by passing trains. The simile is apt for the stunned beings who will
rise up in swarms from their graves and say, “Ah! woe unto us! who has raised us up?”
(xxxvi. 52).

\textsuperscript{5135.} The story of Noah and the Flood is frequently referred to in the Qur-ān. The
passage which best illustrates this passage will be found in xi. 25-48. Note in that passage
how they first insult and abuse him arrogantly; how he humbly argues with them; how
they laugh him to scorn, as much as to say that he was a madman possessed of some
evil spirit; and how the Flood comes and he is saved in the Ark, and the wicked are
doomed to destruction.
Then he called on his Lord:
“I am one overcome:
Do Thou then help (me)!”

So We opened the gates
Of heaven, with water
Pouring forth.

And We caused the earth
To gush forth with springs.
So the waters met (and rose)
To the extent decreed.

But We bore him
On an (Ark) made of
Broad planks and caulked
With palm-fibre:

She floats under Our eyes
(And care): a recompense
To one who had been
Rejected (with scorn)!

And We have left
This as a Sign
(For all time): then

5136. He asked for help in his mission, as he felt himself overpowered by brute force and cast out, which prevented the fulfilment of his mission. But the wicked generation were past all repentance, and they were wiped out.

5137. The torrents of rain from above combined with the gush of waters from underground springs, and caused a huge Flood which inundated the country.

5138. Dusur, plural of disar, which means the palm-fibre with which boats are caulked: from dasara, to ram in, to spear. A derived meaning is “nails”, (which are driven into planks): this latter meaning also applies, and is preferred by translators not familiar with the construction of simple boats.

5139. As usual, Allah’s Mercy in saving His faithful servants takes precedence of His Wrath and Penalty. And He helps and rewards those whom the world rejects and despises!

5140. Cf. xxix. 15, where the Ark (with the salvation it brought to the righteous) is mentioned as a Sign for all Peoples. So also in xxv, 37 and xxvi. 121, it is a Sign for men. Similarly the saving of Lot, with the destruction of the wicked Cities of the Plain, is mentioned as a Sign left for those who would understand: xxix. 35, and li. 37.
Is there any that will receive admonition?\(^{5141}\)

16. But how (terrible) was My Chastisement and My Warning?\(^{5142}\)

17. And We have indeed made the Qur-an easy\(^{5143}\)
To understand and remember:
Then is there any that will receive admonition?

18. The 'Ad (people) (too)
Rejected (Truth): then
How terrible was My Chastisement and My Warning?

19. For We sent against them\(^{5144}\)
A furious wind, on a Day
Of bitter ill-luck,

20. Plucking out men as if
They were roots of palm-trees
Torn up (from the ground).

21. Yea, how (terrible) was
My Chastisement and My Warning?\(^{5145}\)

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5141. A refrain that occurs six times in this Sûra: see Introduction.

5142. While the Mercy of Allah is always prominently mentioned, we must not forget or minimise the existence of Evil, and the terrible Penalty it incurs if the Grace of Allah and His Warning are deliberately rejected.

5143. While the Qur-an sums up the highest philosophy of the inner life, its simple directions for conduct are plain and easy to understand and act upon. Is this not in itself a part of the Grace of Allah? And what excuse is there for any one to fail in receiving admonition?

5144. Cf. xli. 16. How graphic is the description of the tornado that uprooted them! It must indeed be a dreadful tornado that plucks up the palm-trees by their deep tap-roots. The "Day" is an indefinite period of time. The wind that destroyed the ‘Ad people lasted seven nights and eight days: lxix. 7.

5145. Repeated from verse 18 to heighten the description of the sin, the penalty, and the criminal negligence of the sinners in refusing the warnings on account of their self-complacent confidence in their own strength and stability! It is repeated again as a secondary refrain in liv. 30 and (with slight modification) in liv. 32 and 39.
22. But We have indeed
Made the Qurân easy
To understand and remember:
Then is there any that
Will receive admonition?

SECTION 2.

23. The Thamûd (also)
Rejected (their) Warners.

24. For they said: "What!\textsuperscript{5146}
A man! a solitary one
From among ourselves!
Shall we follow such a one?\textsuperscript{5147}
Truly should we then be
In error and madness.

25. "Is it that the Message
Is sent to him,
Of all people amongst us?
Nay, he is a liar,
An insolent one!\textsuperscript{5148}

26. Ah! they will know
On the morrow, which is
The liar the insolent one!

27. For We will send
The she-camel\textsuperscript{5149}
By way of trial for them.

\textsuperscript{5146} The psychology of the Thamûd is more searchingly analysed here than in xli.
17, to show up the contrast between shallow men's ideas about Revelation, and the real
sanity, humanism, social value, and truth of Revelation. To them the Revelation was
brought by Šâlih.

\textsuperscript{5147} Because the Prophet is one among so many, and different from them, although
brought up among themselves, it is made a cause of reproach against him, when it should
have been an index leading to a searching of their hearts and an examination of their
ways.

\textsuperscript{5148} Pure abuse, as a contrast to Šâlih's expostulation! See xxvi. 141-158, and notes.

\textsuperscript{5149} See n. 1044 to vii. 73, for the she-camel as a trial or test case among selfish
people who tried to monopolise water and pasture as against the poor.
So watch them, (O Sāliḥ),
And possess thyself in patience!

28. And tell them that
The water is to be
Divided between them:5150
Each one's right to drink
Being brought forward
(By suitable turns).

29. But they called
To their companion,
And he took a sword
In hand, and hamstrung (her).

30. Ah! how (terrible) was
My Chastisement and My Warning!

31. For We sent against them5151
A single Mighty Blast,
And they became
Like the dry stubble used
By one who pens cattle.5152

32. And We have indeed
Made the Qur-ān easy
To understand and remember:
Then is there any that
Will receive admonition?

33. The People of Lūt5153
Rejected (his) Warning.

5150. See xxvi. 155-156. All were to have water in due turn. It was to be no one's monopoly. And certainly the gates were not to be shut against the poor or their cattle.

5151. See n. 1047 to vii. 78, and Cf. the same phrase "single Blast" used for the signal for the Resurrection in xxxvi. 53. In the case of the Thamūd, the destruction seems to have been by a severe earthquake accompanied with a terrible rumbling noise.

5152. They became like dry sticks such as are used by herdsman in making pens or enclosures for their cattle.

5153. The story of Lot (Lūt) and the Cities of the Plain has been frequently referred to. See xi. 74-83.
34. We sent against them
   A violent tornado
   With showers of stones,5154
   (Which destroyed them), except
   Lūt's household: them We
   Delivered by early Dawn,—
35. As a Grace from Us:
   Thus do We reward
   Those who give thanks.5155
36. And (Lūt) did warn them5156
   Of Our violent Seizure but
   They disputed about the Warning.
37. And they even sought
   To snatch away his guests5157
   From him, but We blinded
   Their eyes. (They heard:)
   "Now taste ye My Wrath
   And My Warning."
38. Early on the morrow
   An abiding Chastisement
   Seized them:
39. "So taste ye My Chastisement
   And my Warning."

5154. Ḥāṣib: a violent tornado bringing a shower of stones. The word occurs here;
in xvii. 68 (without reference to any particular place); in xxix. 40 (where it seems to refer
to Lot's Cities, see n. 3462); and in lxvii. 17 (where again there is no reference to a
particular place). In Lot's Cities the shower was of brimstone: see xi. 82.

5155. "Giving thanks" to Allah in Quranic phrase is to obey Allah's Law, to do His
   Will, to practise righteousness, to use all gifts in His service.

5156. Cf. xi. 78-79.

5157. Lot had been preaching to them some time against their iniquities. The crisis
   of their fate came when the two angels came to Lot in the guise of handsome young
   men. The men of the whole City came in an uproar, assaulted his house, and tried to
   snatch away the two handsome men. Lot tried to prevent them, but was powerless.
   Darkness fell on their eyes, as the first stage in their punishment, and before next
   morning the wicked cities were buried under a shower of brimstone. Lot and his believing
   household were saved.
40. And We have indeed
    Made the Qur-án easy
    To understand and remember:
    Then is there any that
    Will receive admonition?

SECTION 3.

41. To the People
    Of Pharaoh, too, aforetime,
    Came Warners (from Allah).

42. The (people) rejected all
    Our Signs; but We
    Seized them with the Seizure of
    A Mighty, Powerful.

43. Are your Unbelievers,
    (O Qurаish), better than they?
    Or have ye an immunity
    In the Sacred Books?

44. Or do they say:
    “We acting together
    Can defend ourselves”?

5158. The Egyptian people of old are the last people mentioned in this Sùra as an example of iniquity meeting with punishment. And the moral is driven home to the Pagan Qurаish, to warn them of their fate if they persisted in their evil lives. The Egyptians had many Signs given them. They were a gifted people and had made much progress in the sciences and the arts. They could have learnt from history that when the highest virtues disappear, the nation must fall. Moses was brought up among them and commissioned to give Allah’s Message to them. But they were arrogant; they were unjust to Allah’s creatures; they followed debasing forms of worship; they mocked at Truth; and were at last punished with destruction in the Red Sea for their arrogant leaders and army. See x. 75-90 for a narrative.

5159. If the Egyptians with all their power and science were unable to resist the punishment of their sins, the Pagan Qurаish are asked: how will you fare when you come to a trial of strength against Allah’s Truth? You are not specially favoured so as to be immune from Allah’s Law. And if you rely on your numbers, they will be a broken reed when the trial comes, as indeed happened at the Battle of Badr.
5160. The calculations of unjust men—on their science, their resources, their numbers, etc.—will in many cases be falsified even in this world, as stated in the last two verses, but their real Punishment will come with Judgment, *i.e.*, when they find their real place in the next world at the restoration of true values. It will then be a most grievous and most bitter experience for them, throwing into the shade any calamities they may suffer in this life.

5161. *Cf.* liv. 24 above. Note how the tables are turned in the argument by the repetition. The unjust think that the godly are wandering in mind and mad. They will find that it is really they who were wandering in mind, and mad, even when they were in the plenitude of their power and in the enjoyment of all the good things of this life. These minor echoes heighten the effect of the major refrain mentioned in the Introduction.

5162. "On their faces": the Face is the symbol of Personality. Their whole Personality will be subverted and degraded—in the midst of the Fire.

5163. Allah's Creation is not haphazard. Everything goes by law, proportion, and measure. Everything has its appointed time, place, and occasion, as also its definite limitation. Nothing happens but according to His Plan, and every deed, word, and thought of man has its fullest consequences, except in so far as the Grace or Mercy of Allah intervenes, and that is according to law and plan.
50. And Our Command
Is but a single Word,—
Like the twinkling
Of an eye.

51. And (oft) in the past,
Have We destroyed gangs
Like unto you: then
Is there any that
Will receive admonition?

52. All that they do
Is noted in (their)
Books (of Deeds).

5164. While in the life of created things there is "proportion and measure", and a lag of time or distance or circumstance, in Allah's Command, the Design, the Word, the Execution, and the Consequences are but a single Act. The simile given is that of the twinkling of an eye, which is the shortest time that a simple man can think of: the cause which occasions the twinkling, the movement of the muscles connected with it, the closing of the eyelids, and their reopening, are all almost like a simultaneous act. By way of contrast take an illustration like that of a man writing a book. He must form the design in his mind; he must prepare himself by research, collection of knowledge, or of personal experience; he must use or acquire the art of writing; he must collect the materials for writing, viz., paper, ink, pen, etc., and this will connect with a chain of manufacturing processes in which he is dependent upon other people's work and experience; then his book may have to be printed or lightographed or bound, and sold, or taken to a library, or presented to a friend, which will bring into play numerous other chains of processes, and dependence upon other people's work or skill; and the lag of Time, Space, and Circumstance will occur at numerous stages. In Allah's Command, the word "Be" (kun) includes everything, without the intervention, of or dependence upon any other being or thing whatever. And this is also another phase of the philosophy of Unity.

5165. Ashyā'akum: 'gangs or parties or collection of men like you.'—addressed to wicked men who arrogantly rely upon their own strength or combination, neither of which can stand for a moment against the Will of Allah.

5166. The cases of Pharaoh's men of old and the Pagan Quraish are considered as parallel, and an appeal is addressed to the latter from the experience of the former: 'will ye not learn and repent?'

5167. The point is that nothing which men do is lost—good or evil. Everything gives rise to an inevitable chain of consequences, from which a release is only obtained by the intervention of Allah's Grace acting on an act, a striving of the human will to repent and turn to Allah.
53. Every matter, small and great, is on record.

54. As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers, 5168

55. In a sure abode with 5170 A Sovereign Omnipotent. 5171

5168. The record, in the case of those who dishonoured and violated Truth, will lead to their undoing; but in the case of those who honoured the Truth and adopted it so as to shine in their righteous lives, the result is expressed by four metaphors, in an ascending degree of sublimity: (1) they will be in the midst of Gardens where rivers flow; (2) they will be in sure abode; (3) with Allah; (4) Whose sovereignty is omnipotent.

"Gardens" with Rivers (flowing beneath): this has been explained more than once already: Cf. n. 4668 to xliii. 70. The Garden suggests all the Bliss we can imagine through our senses.

5169. While we possess our bodily senses, the best conceptions we can form are through our sense-perceptions.

5170. But there is a higher conception still, something that it can only be expressed by reference to the Presence of Allah.

5171. Muqtadir, which is translated Omnipotent, implies something more: the eighth-declension form denotes not only complete mastery, but the further idea that the mastery arises from Allah's own nature, and depends on nothing else whatever.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT AR-RĀHMAN, 55.

The majority of Commentators consider this an early Makkan Sūra, though some consider at least a part of it as dating from Madinah. The greater part of it is undoubtedly early Makkan.

It is highly artistic and most sublime, and the refrain "Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?" is interspersed 31 times among its 78 verses.

It is the sixth of the series of seven dealing with Revelation, the favours of Allah, and the Hereafter: see Introduction to S. 1.

Here the special theme is indicated by the refrain. The rhyme in most cases is in the Dual grammatical form, and the Argument implies that though things are created in pairs, there is an underlying Unity, through the Creator, in the favours which He bestows, and in the goal to which they are marching.

Summary.—Allah Most Gracious has sent Revelation, one of His greatest favours to man; His creation is in pairs, well-balanced; all created things receive His favours, but they will all pass away, and only Allah will endure through the ages (lv. 1-34).

Ultimately all evil shall return to its destination, as well as all Good, but ever blessed is the name of Allah, Lord of Glory, Honour and Bounty (lv. 35-78).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. The Most Gracious!

2. It is He Who has Taught the Qur-an.

3. He has created man:
   He has taught him An intelligent speech.

4. The sun and the moon Follow courses (exactly) computed;
   And the herbs and the trees Both (alike) bow in adoration.

5. And the Firmament has He Raised high, and He has set up The Balance (of Justice),

5172. The Revelation comes from Allah Most Gracious, and it is one of the greatest Signs of His grace and favour. He is the source of all Light, and His light is diffused throughout the universe.

5173. Bayîn: intelligent speech: power of expression: capacity to understand clearly the relations of things and to explain them. Allah has given this to man, and besides this revelation in man's own heart, has aided him with revelation in nature and revelation through prophets and messengers.

5174. In the great astronomical universe there are exact mathematical laws, which bear witness to Allah's Wisdom and also to His favours to His creatures; for we all profit by the heat and light, the seasons, and the numerous changes in the tides and the atmosphere, on which the constitution of our globe and the maintenance of life depend.

5175. Najîn: may mean stars collectively, or herbs collectively: perhaps both meanings are implied.

5176. All nature adores Allah. Cf. xxii. 18, and n. 2790; xiii. 15; and xvi. 48-49.

5177. The “balance of justice” in this verse is connected with “the Balance” in the next two verses, that men may act justly to each other and observe due balance in all their actions, following the golden mean and not transgressing due bounds in anything. But the Balance is also connected figuratively with the heavens above in three symbols:
8. In order that ye may  
    Not transgress (due) balance.

9. So establish weight with justice\(^{5178}\)  
    And fall not short  
    In the balance.

10. It is He Who has  
    Spread out the earth\(^{5179}\)  
    For (His) creatures:

11. Therein is fruit  
    And date-palms, producing  
    Spathes (enclosing dates);

12. Also corn, with (its)  
    Leaves and stalk for fodder,  
    And sweet-smelling plants.

13. Then which of the favours\(^{5180}\)  
    Of your Lord will ye deny?

\(^{5178}\) To be taken both literally and figuratively. A man should be honest and straight in every daily matter, such as weighing out things which he is selling: and he should be straight, just and honest, in all the highest dealings, not only with other people, but with himself and in his obedience to Allah’s Law. Not many do either the one or the other when they have an opportunity of deceit. Justice is the central virtue, and the avoidance of both excess and defect in conduct keeps the human world balanced just as the heavenly world is kept balanced by mathematical order.

\(^{5179}\) How can Allah’s favours be counted? Look at the earth alone. Life and the conditions here are mutually balanced for Allah’s creatures. The vegetable world produces fruit of various kinds and corn or grain of various kinds for human food. The grain harvest yields with it fodder for animals in the shape of leaves and straw, as well as food for men in the shape of grain. The plants not only supply food but sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. \(\text{\textit{Ra\'ihan}}\) is the sweet basil, but is here used in the generic sense, for agreeable produce in the vegetable world, to match the useful produce already mentioned.

\(^{5180}\) Both the pronoun “your” and the verb “will ye deny” are in the Arabic in the Dual Number. The whole \(\text{\textit{S\‘u\‘ra}}\) is a symphony of Duality, which leads up to Unity, as explained in the Introduction. All creation is in pairs: li. 49, and notes 5025-26; xxxvi. 36, n. 3981. Justice is the conciliation of two opposites to unity, the settlement of the
14. **He created man**
   From sounding clay$^{5181}$
   Like unto pottery,

15. And **He created Jinns**$^{5182}$
    From fire free of smoke:

16. Then which of the favours
    Of your Lord will ye deny?$^{5183}$

17. (He is) Lord
    Of the two Easts$^{5184}$
    And Lord
    Of the two Wests:

18. Then which of the favours
    Of your Lord will ye deny?

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= unending feud between Right and Wrong. The things and concepts mentioned in this Sūra are in pairs: man and outer nature; sun and moon; herbs and trees; heaven and earth; fruit and corn; human food and fodder for cattle; things nourishing and things sweet-smelling; and so on throughout the Sūra. Then there is man and Jinn, for which see n. 5182 below.

"Will ye deny?" that is, fail to acknowledge either in word or thought or in your conduct. If you misuse Allah's gifts or ignore them, that is equivalent to ingratitude or denial or refusal to profit by Allah's infinite Grace.

5181. See n. 1966 to xv. 26. The creation of men and Jinns is contrasted. Man was made of sounding clay, dry and brittle like pottery. The Jinn (see next note) was made from a clear flame of fire. Yet each has capacities and possibilities which only Allah's Grace bestows on them. How can they deny Allah's favours?

5182. For the meaning of Jinn, see n. 929 to vi. 100. They are spirits, and therefore subtle like a flame of fire. Their being free from smoke implies that they are free from grossness, for smoke is the grosser accompaniment of fire.

5183. Part of the idea of this refrain will be found in xvi. 71, 72; xl. 81; and liii. 55 (where see n. 5122).

5184. The two Easts are the two extreme points where the sun rises during the year, and includes all the points between. Similarly the two Wests include the two extreme points of the sun's setting and all the points between. The Dual Number fits with the general atmosphere of Duality in this Sūra. Allah is Lord of every region of the earth and sky, and He scatters His bounties everywhere. See also n. 4641 to xliii. 38, and n. 4034 to xxxvii. 5.
19. He has let free\textsuperscript{5185}
   The two Seas
   Meeting together:

20. Between them is a Barrier
   Which they do not transgress:

21. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

22. Out of them come
   Pearls and Coral:\textsuperscript{5186}

23. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

24. And His are the Ships\textsuperscript{5187}
   Sailing smoothly through the seas,
   Lofty as mountains:\textsuperscript{5188}

25. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5185}See xxv. 53, and n. 3111, where it is explained how the two bodies of water, salt and sweet, meet together, yet keep separate, as if there was a barrier or partition between them. This is also one of the favours of Allah. Sea-water is a sanitating agent, while fresh water is sweet and palatable to drink.
\item \textsuperscript{5186}Pearls are produced by the oyster and coral by the polyp, a minute marine creature, which, working in millions, has by its secretions produced the reefs, islands, and banks in and on both sides of the Red Sea and in other parts of the world. The pearl has a translucent lustre, usually white, but sometimes pink or black. Coral is usually opaque, red or pink, but often white, and is seen in beautiful branching or cup-like shapes as visitors to Port Sudan will recall. Both are used as gems and stand here for gems generally. Mineral gems, such as agate and carnelian, are found in river-beds. Pearl oysters are also found in some rivers.
\item \textsuperscript{5187}The ships—sailing ships and steamers, and by extension of analogy, aeroplanes and airships majestically navigating the air—are made by man, but the intelligence and science which made them possible are given by man’s Creator; and therefore the Ships also are the gifts of Allah.
\item \textsuperscript{5188}Lofty as mountains: both in respect of the high sails, or masts, and in respect of the height to which the top of the ship towers above the surface of the sea. The ‘Queen Mary’—the biggest ship afloat in 1936—has a height, from the keel to the top of the superstructure, of 135 ft. and from keel to the mast-head, of 234 ft.
\end{itemize}
SECTION 2.

26. All that is on earth
   Will perish:

27. But will abide (for ever)
   The Face of thy Lord,—
   Full of Majesty,
   Bounty and Honour.

28. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

29. Of Him seeks (its need)
   Every creature in the heavens
   And on earth:
   Every day in (new) Splendour
   Doth He (shine)!

30. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

5189. The most magnificent works of man—such as they are—are but fleeting. Ships, Empires, the Wonders of Science and Art, the splendours of human glory or intellect, will all pass away. The most magnificent objects in outer Nature—the mountains and valleys, the sun and moon, the Constellation Orion and the star Sirius—will also pass away in their appointed time. But the only One that will endure for ever is the “Face” of Allah.

5190. Ikram; two ideas are prominent in the word, (1) the idea of generosity, as proceeding from the person whose attribute it is, and (2) the idea of honour, as given by others to the person whose attribute it is. Both these ideas are summed up in “nobility”. To make the meaning quite clear, I have employed in the translation the two words “Bounty and Honour” for the single word Ikram. The same attributes recur in the last verse of this Sūra. In the Fact of Allah’s Eternity is the Hope of our Future.

5191. Every single creature depends on Allah for its needs: of all of them the Cherisher and Sustainer is Allah. Seek (its needs): does not necessarily mean ‘seek them in words’: what is meant is the dependence: the allusion is to the Source of supply.

5192. Shan: state, splendour; aim, work, business, momentous affair. Allah’s is still the directing hand in all affairs. He does not sit apart, careless of mankind or of any of His creatures. But His working shows new Splendour every day, every hour, every moment.
31. Soon shall We
Settle your affairs,
O both ye worlds! 5193

32. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

33. O ye assembly of Jinns 5194
And men! If it be
Ye can pass beyond
The zones of the heavens
And the earth, pass ye!
Not without authority
Shall ye be able to pass!

34. Then which of the favours 5195
Of your Lord will ye deny?

35. On you will be sent
(O ye evil ones twain!) 5196

5193. Thaqal: weight, something weighty, something weighed with something else. The two thaqals are Jinns and men who are burdened with responsibility or, as some commentators hold, with sin. They are both before Allah, and the affairs of both are conducted under His Command. If there are inequalities or apparent disturbances of balance, that is only for a season. Allah gives to both good and evil men a chance in this period of probation; but this period will soon be over, and Judgment will be established. To give you this chance, this probation, this warning, is itself a favour, by which you should profit, and for which you should be grateful.

5194. Cf. vi. 130, where the Jinns and men are addressed collectively. That whole passage, vi. 130-134, should be read as a commentary on this verse. 'If you think that because you do things in secret, or because some of your sins do not seem to meet their inevitable punishment or some of your good deeds seem to go unnoticed, do not be deceived. Judgment will soon come. You cannot possibly escape out of the zones in which your lives have been cast, without authority from Allah. Be grateful to Allah for the chances He has given you'. "All that hath been promised unto you will come to pass: nor can ye frustrate it in the least bit" (vi. 134).

5195. Note how gradually we have been led up in the Argument. 'The Signs of Allah are all about you, in revelation, in your intelligence, and in nature around you. Your creation; the light and heat typified by the sun in all directions; the cycle of waters in the physical earth and of Knowledge in the world of Intelligence; the help and cherishing care of Allah Himself;—all these things should teach you the Truth and warn you about the Future, which is more particularly referred to in the remainder of the Sûra.

5196. The Dual is with reference to the two worlds explained above in n. 5193.
8.55, A.35-41

A flame of fire (to burn)
And a (flash of) molten brass.\[^{5197}\]
No defence will ye have:

36. Then which of the favours\[^{5198}\]
Of your Lord will ye deny?

37. When the sky is rent
Asunder, and it becomes red
Like ointment:\[^{5199}\]

38. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

39. On that Day
No question will be asked\[^{5200}\]
Of man or Jinn
As to his sin,

40. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

41. (For) the sinners will be
Known by their Marks.\[^{5201}\]

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\[^{5197}\] We now come to the terrors of the Judgment on the evil ones.

\[^{5198}\] Here and in some of the verses that follow, (verses 40, 42, and 45 below), the refrain applies with an ironical meaning. It is as if it was said: 'You used to laugh at Revelation, and at the warnings which were given for your own benefit in order to draw you to repentance and Allah's Mercy; what do you find now? Is not all that was said to you true?' To reject Allah's Law is in itself to deny Allah's Mercies.

\[^{5199}\] Melting away like grease or ointment. The red colour will be due to the flames and the heat. The whole of the world as we know it now will dissolve.

\[^{5200}\] This does not of course mean that they will not be called to account for their sin. They will certainly be called to account for all their deeds: xv. 92. The meaning of this whole passage is that their personal responsibility will be enforced. But their own tongues and hands and feet will bear witness against them as to their actions: xxiv. 24. Every man will bear marks on his person, showing his classification in the Final Account: vii. 48. After these Marks are affixed, everyone's position and status in the Final Account will be known to everyone. As to the Judge on the Throne of Judgment, He will of course know all before Judgment is set up. But to give every chance to the accused, his record will be produced and shown to him (lxix. 19, 25, xviii. 49), and he will be given a chance to plead (vii. 53), but if a sinner, he will be in confusion (xxviii. 66).

\[^{5201}\] By their Marks: see last note.
But for such as fear
The time when they will
Stand before (the Judgment Seat of) their Lord,
There will be two Gardens.

It will then become too real to them. "Oh! that this too, too solid flesh would melt", as Hamlet said to his Queen-Mother (Hamlet, i. 2. 129).

They will apparently have no rest. The fire will burn but not consume them, and their drink will be only boiling water.

The reference to the Punishment of Sin having been dismissed in a few short lines, we now come to a description of the state of the Blessed.

Here two Gardens are mentioned, and indeed four, counting the other two mentioned in lv. 62-76. Opinions are divided about this, but the best opinion is that the two mentioned in verses 46-61 are for the degree of those Nearest to Allah (Muqarrabûn), and those in verses 62-76 for the Companions of the Right Hand: Why two for each? The Duality is to express variety, and the whole scheme of the Sûra runs in twos. There will be no dulness of uniformity: as our minds can conceive it now, there will be freshness in change, but it will be from Bliss to Bliss, and there will be Unity.
48. Abounding in Branches;‐

49. Then which of the favours Of your Lord will ye deny?‐

50. In them (each) will be Two Springs flowing (free);5206

51. Then which of the favours Of your Lord will ye deny?‐

52. In them will be Fruits Of every kind, two and two.5207

53. Then which of the favours Of your Lord will ye deny?

54. They will recline on Carpets, Whose inner linings will be Of rich brocade: the Fruit Of the Gardens will be Near (and easy of reach).5208

55. Then which of the favours Of your Lord will ye deny?

56. In them will be (Maidens),5209 Chaste, restraining their glances.5210 Whom no man or Jinn Before them has touched;‐

57. Then which of the favours Of your Lord will ye deny?

5206. Two Springs, for the same reasons as there will be two Gardens. See last note.

5207. The Duality of Fruits is for the same reason as the Duality of the Gardens. See n. 5205.

5208. The toil and fatigue of this life will be over: Cf. xxxv. 35.

5209. See notes 4728-29 to xlv. 54.

5210. Cf. xxxvii. 48 and n. 4064. Their purity is the feature hereby chiefly emphasised.
58. Like unto rubies and coral.

59. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

60. Is there any Reward
For Good—other than Good?

61. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

62. And besides these two,
There are two other Gardens.

63. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

64. Dark-green in colour
(From plentiful watering).

65. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

66. In them (each) will be
Two Springs pouring forth water
In continuous abundance:

67. Then which of the favours
Of your Lord will ye deny?

5211. Delicate pink, with reference to their complexions and their beauty of form. The gems also indicate their worth and dignity.

5212. This is the summing up of all the description used to express the Fruit of Goodness or Good. But the fullest expression can only be given in abstract terms: "Is there any reward for Good—other than Good?" Can anything express it better?

5213. See n. 5205 above.

5214. "Dark-green in colour"; these Gardens will also be fruitful and flourishing, and watered plentifully; but their aspect and characteristics will be different, corresponding to the subjective differences in the ideas of Bliss among those who would respectively enjoy, the two sets of Gardens.

5215. In comparison with the Springs in the other two Gardens, described in iv. 50 above, these Springs would seem to irrigate crops of vegetables and fruits requiring a constant supply of abundant water.
68. In them will be Fruits,  
And dates and pomegranates.\footnote{5216}

69. Then which of the favours  
Of your Lord will ye deny?

70. In them will be  
Fair (Maidens), good, beautiful;\footnote{5217}

71. Then which of the favours  
Of your Lord will ye deny?

72. Maidens restrained (as to\footnote{5218}  
Their glances), in (goodly)  
pavilions:\footnote{5219}

73. Then which of the favours  
Of your Lord will ye deny?

74. Whom no man or Jinn  
Before them has touched;\footnote{5220}

75. Then which of the favours  
Of your Lord will ye deny?

76. Reclining on green Cushions\footnote{5220}  
And rich Carpets of beauty.

\footnote{5216}{See last note. Cf. also with lv. 52 above, where "fruits of every kind" are mentioned.}
\footnote{5217}{See n. 5209 above. Goodness and Beauty are specially feminine attributes.}
\footnote{5218}{Maqṣūrat here is the passive participle of the same verb as the active participle Qāṣirāt in lv. 56, xxxvii. 48 and xxxviii. 52. As I have translated Qāṣirāt by the phrase "restraining (their glances)", I think I am right in translating the passive Maqṣūrat by "restrained (as to their glances)". This is the only place in the Qur-ān where the passive form occurs.}
\footnote{5219}{The Pavilions seem to add dignity to their status. In the other Gardens (lv. 58), the description "like rubies and corals" is perhaps an indication of higher dignity.}
\footnote{5220}{Cf. the parallel words for the other two Gardens, in lv. 54 above, which suggest perhaps a higher dignity.}

\textit{Rafraf} is usually translated by Cushions or Pillows, and I have followed this meaning in view of the word "reclining". But another interpretation is "Meadows", in view of the adjective "green"—\textit{rabqari}: carpets richly figured and dyed, and skillfully worked.
77. Then which of the favours
   Of your Lord will ye deny?

78. Blessed be the name
   Of thy Lord,
   Full of Majesty,
   Bounty and Honour.5221

5221. Cf. lv. 27 and n. 5190. This minor echo completes the symmetry of the two leading Ideas of this Sûra,—the Bounty and Majesty of Allah, and the Duty of man to make himself worthy of nearness to Allah.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT AL-Wâqi‘a, 56.

This is the seventh and last Sûra of the series devoted to Revelation and the Hereafter, as explained in the Introduction to S. 1.

It belongs to the early Makkân period, with the possible exception of one or two verses.

The theme is the certainty of the Day of Judgment and its adjustment of true Values (Ivi. 1-56); Allah’s Power, Goodness and Glory (Ivi. 57-74); and the truth of Revelation (Ivi. 75-96).

Summary.—When the Day of Judgment comes, the world as we know it will be shaken to its foundations, and men shall be sorted out into three sorts: Those nearest to Allah, in exalted Bliss; the Companions of the Right Hand, in Bliss; and the Companions of the Left Hand, in Misery (Ivi. 1-56).

Surely the Power and Goodness of Allah, of which Revelation is a Sign, should lead man to accept the Message and glorify Him (Ivi. 57-96).
The Inevitable Event.

1. When the Event Inevitable Cometh to pass,
2. Then will no (soul) Deny its coming.
3. (Many) will it bring low; (Many) will it exalt;
4. When the earth shall be Shaken to its depths,
5. And the mountains shall Be crumbled to atoms,
6. Becoming dust scattered abroad,
7. And ye shall be sorted out Into three classes.
8. Then (there will be) The Companions of The Right Hand;
   What will be The Companions of The Right Hand?

5222. The Event Inevitable is the Hour of Judgment. People may doubt now whether it will come. But when it comes, as it will come, suddenly upon them, it will come with such tremendous reality that it will be burnt deep into the experience of every soul. No one can then be deceived or entertain false notions about it.

5223. There will be a sorting out of Good and Evil. Or rather, (verse 7 below), there will be three main classes. Among the Good there will be the specially exalted class, those nearest to Allah (muqarrabûn, lvi. 11-26), and the righteous people generally, called the Companions of the Right Hand (Ashâb-ul-maimana, lvi. 27-40). And there will be those in agony, the Companions of the Left Hand (Ashâb-ul-mash-ama, lvi. 41-56). Many who were high and mighty in this life will be brought low for their sins, and many who were lowly but virtuous will be exalted to various ranks and degrees. The old landmarks will be lost in the inner world, as they will be in the outer world.

5224. The old physical world will disappear in the New Creation.

5225. See n. 5223 above.
9. And the Companions of The Left Hand,—
What will be The Companions of The Left Hand!

10. And those Foremost (In Faith) will be Foremost (in the Hereafter). 5226

11. These will be Those Nearest to Allah: 5227

12. In Gardens of Bliss:

13. A number of people From those of old, 5228

14. And a few from those Of later times.

15. (They will be) on couches Encrusted (with gold And precious stones), 5229

16. Reclining on them, Facing each other. 5230

5226. Foremost (in Faith)" there are two meanings, and both are implied (1) Those who have reached the highest degree in spiritual understanding, such as the great prophets and teachers of mankind, will also take precedence in the Hereafter. (2) Those who are the first in time—the quickest and readiest to accept Allah's Message—will have the first place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Verses 8, 9 and 10 mention the three main categories or classifications after Judgment. In the subsequent verses their happiness or misery are described. This category, Foremost in Faith, is nearest to Allah.

5227. See n. 5223 above. Nearness to Allah is the test of the highest Bliss.

5228. Of great Prophets and Teachers there were many before the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad. As he was the last of the Prophets, he and the great Teachers under his Dispensation will be comparatively fewer in number, but their teaching is the sum and flower of all mankind's spiritual experience.

5229. Cf. xv. 47; xxxvii. 44, lii. 20, and xxxviii. 13.

5230. But they will not be separate each in his own corner. They will face each other. For they are all one, and their mutual society will be part of their Bliss.
17. Round about them will (serve)\textsuperscript{5231} Youths of perpetual (freshness),

18. With goblets, (shining) beakers,
    And cups (filled) out of
    Clear-flowing fountains:

19. No after-ache will they
    Receive therefrom, nor will they
    Suffer intoxication:\textsuperscript{5232}

20. And with fruits,
    Any that they may select;

21. And the flesh of fowls,
    Any that they may desire.

22. And (there will be) Companions
    With beautiful, big,
    And lustrous eyes,\textsuperscript{5233}

23. Like unto Pearls\textsuperscript{5234}
    Well-guarded.

    Of their past (Life).

\textsuperscript{5231} Cf. lii. 24, and n. 5058. The youth and freshness with which the attendants will serve is a symbol of true service such as we may expect in the next world. That freshness will be perpetual, and not subject to any moods, or chances, or changes.

\textsuperscript{5232} The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul are typified by all that is best in the feasts in this imperfect world, but there will be none of the disadvantages incident to such feasts in this world, such as satiety, aches, excess, a sense of exhaustion, or loss of senses, etc. Cf. xxxvii. 47, and n. 4063. A goblet is a bowl without handles; a beaker has a “lip” and a stem; “cup” is a general term.

\textsuperscript{5233} Cf. xliv. 54, and n. 4729. The companionship of Beauty and Grace is one of the highest pleasures of life. In this bodily life it takes bodily form. In the higher life it takes a higher form.

\textsuperscript{5234} Cf. lii. 24, where this description is applied to the youths who serve. See also n. 5058 there. In lvi. 78 below the adjective makin\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textadddot{}}}n} is applied to the Qur\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{\textadddot{}}}n}, “the well guarded Book”. 
25. No frivolity will they suffer. Hear therein, nor any mischief.

26. Only the Saying, "Peace! Peace".

27. The Companions of The Right Hand,— What will be The Companions of The Right Hand!

28. (They will be) among Lote-trees without thorns,

29. Among Talh trees With flowers (or fruits) Piled one above another,—

30. In shade long-extended,

31. By water flowing constantly,

32. And fruit in abundance.

33. Whose season is not limited, Nor (supply) forbidden,

5235. Cf. lii. 23. Apart from physical ills worldly feasts or delights are apt to suffer from vain or frivolous discourse, idle boasting, foolish flattery, or phrases pointed with secret venom or moral mischief. The negation of these from the enjoyment of the Garden.

5236. Qil is best translated "saying", rather than "word". For the saying is an act, a thought, a fact, which may be embodied in a word, but which goes far beyond the word. The "Peace of Allah" is an atmosphere which sums up Heaven even better than "Bliss".

5237. Lote-trees: see xxxiv. 16 n. 3814.

5238. Talh: some understand by this the plantain or banana tree, of which the fruit is borne in bunches, one tier above another; but the banana tree does not grow in Arabia and its ordinary Arabic name is Mauz; perhaps it is better to understand a special kind of Acacia tree, which flowers profusely, the flowers appearing in tiers one above another.

5239. As it is not like earthly fruit, its season is not limited, nor is there any prohibition by law or custom or circumstance as to when or how it is to be consumed.
34. And on couches
   Raised high.
35. We have created them\textsuperscript{5240}
   Of special creation.
36. And made them
   Virgin-pure (and undefiled),--
37. Full of love (for their mates),
   Equal in age,--
38. For the Companions
   Of the Right Hand.

SECTION 2.

39. A (goodly) number
   From those of old,\textsuperscript{5241}
40. And a (goodly) number
   From those of later times.
41. The Companions of
   The Left Hand,--
   What will be
   The Companions of
   The Left Hand!
42. (They will be) in the midst
   Of a fierce Blast of Fire\textsuperscript{5242}
   And in Boiling Water,

\textsuperscript{5240} The pronoun in Arabic is in the feminine gender. It is made clear that these maidens for heavenly society will be of special creation,—of virginal purity, grace, and beauty, inspiring and inspired by love, with the question of time and age eliminated.

\textsuperscript{5241} This class—the righteous—will be a large company in Heaven, belonging to all the ages of the world. Cf. n. 5228 to lvi. 13 above. Such is the unbounded Bounty of Allah.

\textsuperscript{5242} Notice the parallelism in the contrast between those in Bliss and those in Misery. The description in each case pursues the idea of contrast. The fierce Blast of Fire and the Boiling Water are in contrast to the happy Lote-tree and the flowers and fruits in verses 28-29 above.
43. And in the shades
Of Black Smoke.\textsuperscript{5243}

44. Neither cool nor refreshing:

45. For that they were wont
To be indulged, before that,
In sinful luxury,\textsuperscript{5244}

46. And persisted obstinately
In wickedness supreme!\textsuperscript{5244-A}

47. And they used to say,
"What! when we die
And become dust and bones,\textsuperscript{5245}
Shall we then indeed
Be raised up again?­

48. "(We) and our fathers of old?"

49. Say: "Yea, those of old
And those of later times,

50. "All will certainly be
Gathered together for the meeting
Appointed for a Day
Well-known.\textsuperscript{5246}

51. "Then will ye truly,­
O ye that go wrong,
And deny (the truth);
52. "Ye will surely taste
Of the Tree of Zaqqûm." 5247

53. "Then will ye fill
Your insides therewith,

54. "And drink Boiling Water
On top of it:

55. "Indeed ye shall drink
Like diseased camels
Raging with thirst!" 5248

56. Such will be their entertainment
On the Day of Requital!

57. It is We Who have
Created you: why will ye not admit the Truth?

58. Do ye then see?
The (human Seed) that
Ye emit,—

59. Is it ye who create it,
Or are We the Creators?

60. We have decreed Death
To be your common lot, 5250
And We are not
To be frustrated

5247. This is the Cursed Tree mentioned in xvii. 60, where see n. 2250. Cf. also xxxvii. 62, n. 4072; and xliv. 43-46 and n. 4722.

5248. A terrible picture of Misery in contrast to the Companionship of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, on raised couches, for the Companions of the Right Hand, in verses 34-38 above.

5249. Man is apt to forget his Creator, and even the fact that he, man, is a created being. The seed of his body, out of which his physical life starts, is not created by man, but by Allah in the process of the unfoldment of the world. Why will not man recognise and bear witness of this fact by a life of obedience to Allah's Law?

5250. Just as Allah has created this life that we see, so He has decreed that Death should be the common lot of all of us. Surely, if He can thus give life and death, as we see it, why should we refuse to believe that He can give us other forms when this life is over? The Future Life, though indicated by what we know now, is to be on a wholly different plane.
61. From changing your Forms
And creating you (again)
In (Forms) that ye know not.

62. And ye certainly know already
The first form of creation:
Why then do ye not
Take heed?

63. See ye the seed that.\(^{5251}\)
Ye sow in the ground?

64. Is it ye that cause it
To grow, or are We
The Cause?

65. Were it Our Will,
We could make it broken orts.
And ye would
Be left in wonderment,

66. (Saying), "We are indeed
Left with debts (for nothing).\(^{5252}\)

67. "Indeed we are deprived"

68. See ye the water
Which ye drink?

69. Do ye bring it Down
(In rain) from the Cloud
Or do We?

---

\(^{5251}\) Having appealed to our own nature within us, He appeals now to the external nature around us, which should be evidence to us (1) of His loving care for us, and (2) of its being due to causes other than those which we produce and control. Three examples are given: (1) the seed which we sow in the soil; it is Allah's processes in nature, which make it grow; (2) the water which we drink; it is Allah's processes in nature, that send it down from the clouds as rain, and distribute it through springs and rivers: (3) the fire which we strike; it is again a proof of Allah's Plan and Wisdom in nature.

\(^{5252}\) The cultivator contracts debts for seed and gives labour for ploughing, sowing, watering, and weeding, in the hope of reaping a harvest. Should he not give thanks to Allah when his harvest is in?
70. Were it Our Will,
We could make it
Saltish (and unpalatable):\textsuperscript{5253}
Then why do ye not
Give thanks?

71. See ye the Fire
Which ye kindle?

72. Is it ye who grow
The tree which feeds\textsuperscript{5254}
The fire, or do We
Grow it?

73. We have made it
A reminder\textsuperscript{5255}
And an article of comfort
And convenience for
The denizens of deserts.\textsuperscript{5256}

74. Then glorify\textsuperscript{5257}
The name of thy Lord,
The Supreme!

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5253} The wonder of the two streams of water, one sweet and the other salt, constantly mingling, and yet always separate, is referred to more than once. The never-ending circuit is established by streams and rivers mingling with the ocean, the ocean sending forth mists and steam through a process of evaporation which forms clouds, and the clouds by condensation pouring forth rain to feed the streams and rivers again: see notes 3111-2 to xxv. 53, and n. 5185 to lv. 19, and the further references given there.
\item \textsuperscript{5254} The relation of Fire to Trees is intimate. In nearly all the fire that we burn, the fuel is derived from the wood of trees. Even mineral coal is nothing but the wood of prehistoric forests petrified under the earth through geological ages. Fire produced out of green trees is referred to in xxxvi. 80; and n. 4026 there gives instances.
\item \textsuperscript{5255} That is, the ordinary fire in this world is a reminder of the Great Fire of the next world to all those who heed and reflect.
\item \textsuperscript{5256} A fire in a desert is a sign of human habitation; by following it you may get human society and human comfort. A fire, or light, or beacon in many places directs a traveller or the way. Lighthouses at sea and beacons in modern aerodromes serve the same purpose for mariners and airmen.
\item Another parable about fire will be found in ii. 17-18, and n. 38.
\item \textsuperscript{5257} Seeing all these Signs in nature man must turn to Allah and do His Will.
\end{itemize}
SECTION 3.

75. Furthermore I swear by
   The setting of the Stars,—

76. And that is indeed
   A mighty adjuration
   If ye but knew,—

77. That this is indeed
   A Qur-an most honourable,

78. In a Book well-guarded,

79. Which none shall touch
   But those who are clean:

80. A Revelation from the Lord
   Of the Worlds.

81. Is it such a Message
   That ye would hold
   In light esteem?

5258. Cf. liii. 1.

5259. The glory of the firmament as it exists, and the wonder of its passing away, are both evidence, to the discerning mind, of the Future which Allah has prepared, but this evidence can only be effective if men “but knew”, i.e., turned their earnest attention to it.

5260. Your attention is drawn to the momentous issues of the Future by the Qur-an. It is a Revelation described by four characteristics. (1) It is most honourable, karim, which implies, besides the fact that it is worthy of receiving honour, that it confers great favours on those who receive it. (2) It is well-guarded, maktûn; precious in itself, and well-preserved in its purity; see n. 5234 to lvi. 23; see also xv. 9, and n. 1944. (3) None but the clean shall touch it, clean in body, mind, thought, intention, and soul; only such can achieve real contact with its full meaning. (4) It is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, and therefore universal for all.

5261. The Message being such as is described in the last note, how can any one ignore it or treat it with contempt or refuse to allow it to improve his life?
82. And have ye made it Your livelihood that ye Should declare it false?

83. Then why do ye not (Intervene) when (the soul Of the dying man) Reaches the throat,—

84. And ye the while (Sit) looking on,—

85. But We are nearer To him than ye, And yet see not,—

86. Then why do ye not, If you are exempt From (future) account,—

87. Call back the soul, If ye are true (In your claim of Independence)?

5262. The worst indictment of an enemy of Revelation would be that he should make Falsehood a source of filthy lucre for himself, or that he should let his precious life be corrupted by such unholy occupation.

5263. There is a hiatus after "why do ye not?"—and two parenthetical clauses,—after which the clause "why do ye not?" is resumed again in verse 86 below, with its complement in verse 87. It is permissible to the translator to add some such word as "intervene" here, to make the translation run smoothly.

5264. The dying man's friends, relatives, and companions may be sitting round him and quite close to him in his last moments, but Allah is nearer still at all times for He is nearer than the man's own jugular vein (I. 16), and one of Allah's own titles is "Ever Near" (xxxiv. 50).

5265. These words resume the sentence begun at verse 83 above and interrupted by the two parenthetical clauses in verses 84 and 85. See n. 5263 above.

5266. The sentence may now be briefly paraphrased. 'If you disbelieve in Revelation and a future Judgment, and claim to do what you like and be independent of Allah, how is it you cannot call back a dying man's soul to his body when all of you congregate round him at his death-bed? But you are not independent of Judgment. There is a Day of Account, when you will have to be judged by your deeds in this life.'
88. Thus, then, if he
   Be of those Nearest to Allah, 5267

89. (There is for him) Rest
   And Satisfaction, 5268 and
   A Garden of Delights.

90. And if he be
   Of the Companions of
   The Right Hand, 5269

91. (For him is the salutation),
   "Peace be unto thee," 5270
   From the Companions
   Of the Right Hand.

92. And if he be
   Of those who deny (the truth) 5271
   Who go wrong,

93. For him is Entertainment
   With Boiling Water,

94. And burning in Hell-Fire.

95. Verily, this is
   The very Truth
   Of assured Certainty. 5272

5267. See above. lvi. 11-26 and notes.

5268. Raiḥān: sweet-smelling plants, as in lv. 12. Here used as an indication of Satisfaction and Delight.

5269. See above, lvi. 27-38 and notes.

5270. In lvi. 26 above the salutation of "Peace, Peace!" is addressed to those Nearest to Allah. Here we learn that it is also addressed to the Companions of the Right Hand. Both are in Gardens of Bliss: only the former have a higher Dignity than the latter.

5271. Cf. above, lvi. 51-55.

5272. "The assurance of the Hereafter" is one of the strongest features of Faith. For without it the apparent inequalities and injustices of this Life cannot be satisfactorily explained.
96. So glorify\textsuperscript{5273}

The name of thy Lord,
The Supreme.

\textsuperscript{5273} Cf. lvi. 74 above. That was the conclusion of the argument about the Future from the examples of Allah's goodness in nature. Now we have the conclusion of the same argument from Allah's revelation through His inspired Messengers.
INTRODUCTION TO SURAT Al-Ḥadīd, 57.

We have now studied the contents of nearly nine-tenths of the Qurān. We have found that the arrangement of the Sūras in the present Text is not haphazard, but they follow a distinct logical order more helpful for study than the chronological order. The comprehensive scheme of building up the new Ummat or Brotherhood and its spiritual implications is now complete. The remaining tenth of the Qurān may be roughly considered in two parts. The first contains ten Sūras (S. lvii. to S. lxvi.), all revealed in Madinah, and each dealing with some special point which needs emphasis in the social life of the Ummat. The second (S. lxvii. to cxiv.) contains short Makkān lyrics, each dealing with some aspect of religious life, expressed in language of great artistic beauty.

The present Madinah Sūra is chiefly concerned with humility and the avoidance of arrogance, and a warning that retirement from the world may not be the best way of seeking the good pleasure of Allah. Its probable date is after the Conquest of Makkah, A.H. 8.

Summary.—Allah's Power and Knowledge extend to all things: follow His Light direct, without doubt or fear or half-heartedness, but with humility, generous charity, and faith, and not in a life of isolation from the world. (lvii. 1-29).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Whatever is in The heavens and on earth, Declares The Praises and Glory of Allah: For He is the Exalted In Might, the Wise.

2. To Him belongs the dominion Of the heavens and the earth: It is He Who gives Life and Death; and He Has Power over all things.

3. He is the First And the Last, The Evident And the Hidden: And He has full knowledge Of all things.

4. He it is Who created The heavens and the earth In six Days, then

5274. Iron is the type and emblem of strength and reliability, on which depend the real virtues expounded in this Sûra, such as real humility, whole-heartedness, and charity, as opposed to Monasticism, Loadiceanism, and Niggardliness. See lii. 25 below.

5275. A connecting thought between this and the last Sûra, of which see verse 96. See also paragraph 3 of the Introduction to S. liii.

5276. Allah is Evident in so far as there is ample evidence of His existence and providence all around us. On the other hand, Allah is Hidden in so far as intellect cannot grasp His essence nor can He be seen in the present world. The following tradition in Sahih Muslim is also significant for an understanding of this verse. The Prophet (peace be on him) said: "Thou art the First, so that there was nothing before Thee; and Thou art the Last, so that there is nothing after Thee; and Thou art Evident, (or Ascendant) so that there is nothing above Thee, and Thou art the the Hidden, the Knower of hidden things, so that there is nothing hidden from Thee."

5277. "In six Days": see xli. 9-12, and notes; also more briefly, n. 1031 to vii. 54.
He established Himself on the Throne. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do.

5. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: And all affairs go back to Allah.

6. He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night; And He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts.

7. Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance)
Whereof He has made you\textsuperscript{5281} Heirs. For, those of you Who believe and spend (In charity),—for them Is a great Reward.

8. How is it with you\textsuperscript{5282} That you believe not In Allah?—And the Messenger Invites you to believe In your Lord and has Indeed taken your Covenant,\textsuperscript{5283} If ye are men of faith.

9. He is the One Who Sends to His Servant\textsuperscript{5284} Manifest Signs, that He May lead you from The depths of Darkness Into the Light And verily, Allah is to you Most Kind and Merciful.

\textsuperscript{5281} Whenever power or wealth or influence or any good thing is transferred from one person or group of persons to another, it involves added responsibilities to the persons receiving these advantages. They must be the more zealous in real charity and all good works, for that is a part of the evidence which they give of their faith and gratitude. And, besides, their good deeds carry their own reward.

\textsuperscript{5282} A figure of speech implying a far wider meaning than the words express. It is equivalent to saying: "There is every reason why ye should believe in Allah", etc. The same construction applies to verse 10 below.

\textsuperscript{5283} There are two shades of meaning. (1) There is the implied Covenant in a man who accepts the Gospel of Unity that he will bring forth all the fruits of that Gospel, \textit{i.e.}, believe in Allah, and serve Allah and humanity. See n. 682 to v. 1. (2) There were at various times express Covenants entered into by the Muslims to serve Allah and be true to the Prophet, comparable to the Covenants of the Jewish nation about the Message of Moses; \textit{e.g.}, the two Covenants of 'Aqaba (v. 8, and n. 705) and the Pledge of Hudaibiya (xlviii. 10, n. 4877). For the Covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, see. ii. 63, n. 78.

\textsuperscript{5284} The holy Prophet Muhammad. The Signs sent to him were: (1) the Ayats of the Qur-\text{"an}, and (2) his life and work, in which Allah's Plan and Purpose were unfolded.
10. How is it with you
    That you spend not
    In the cause of Allah?­
    For to Allah belongs5285
    The heritage of the heavens
    And the earth.
    Not equal among you
    Are those who spent (freely)
    And fought, before the Victory,5286
    (With those who did so later).
    Those are higher in rank
    Than those who spent (freely)
    And fought afterwards.
    But to all has Allah promised
    A goodly (reward). And Allah
    Is well acquainted
    With all that ye do.

SECTION 2.

11. Who is he that will
    Loan to Allah a beautiful5287
    Loan? For (Allah) will
    Increase it manifold
    To his credit,
    And he will have (besides)
    A generous reward.

5285. "To Allah belongs the heritage of...": see n. 485 to iii. 180; also n. 988 to vi.
       165; and n. 1964 to xv. 23.

5286. This is usually understood to refer to the Conquest of Makkah, after which
       the Muslims succeeded to the power and position which the Pagan Quraish had so
       misused at Makkah. Thereafter the Muslims had the hegemony of Arabia, and in a few
       centuries, for a time, the hegemony of the world. But the words are perfectly general,
       and we must understand the general meaning also: that the people who fight and struggle
       in Allah's Cause and give of their best to it at any time are worthy of praise: but those
       are worthy of special distinction who do it when the Cause is being persecuted and in
       most need of assistance, before victory comes.

5287. Cf. ii. 245, n. 276.
12. The Day shalt thou see
The believing men and
The believing women—
How their Light runs\textsuperscript{5288}
Forward before them
And by their right hands:
(Their greeting will be):
"Good News for you this Day!
Gardens beneath which flow rivers!
To dwell therein for aye!
This is indeed
The highest Triumph."\textsuperscript{5289}

13. The Day will the Hypocrites—
Men and women—say
To the Believers: "Wait
For us! Let us borrow
(A light) from your Light!"\textsuperscript{5290}
It will be said: "Turn
Ye back to your rear!
Then seek a light (where
Ye can)!" So a wall\textsuperscript{5291}
Will be put up betwixt them,
With a gate therein.

\textsuperscript{5288}. In the Darkness of the Day of Judgment there will be a Light to guide the righteous to their Destination. This will be the Light of their Faith and their Good Works. Perhaps the Light of the Right Hand mentioned here is the Light of their Good Works: for the Blessed will receive their Record in their right hand (lxix. 19-24).

\textsuperscript{5289}. The highest Achievement, the highest felicity, the attainment of Salvation, the fulfilment of all desires. See n. 4733 to xliv. 57.

\textsuperscript{5290}. Watchful preparation in Life, and the light of Faith, which reflects the divine Light, are matters of personal Life, and cannot be borrowed from another. So, in Christ's parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. xv. 1-13), when the foolish ones had let their lamps go out for want of oil, they asked to borrow oil from the wise ones, but the wise ones answered and said, "Not so;...but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves".

\textsuperscript{5291}. The wall will divide the Good from the Evil. But the Gateway in it will show that communication will not be cut off. Evil must realise that Good—i.e., Mercy and Felicity—had been within its reach, and that the Wrath which envelops it is due to its own rejection of Mercy.
Within it will be Mercy
Throughout, and without it,
All alongside, will be
(Wrath and) Punishment!

14. (Those without) will call out,
"Were we not with you?"5292
(The others) will reply, "True!
But ye led yourselves
Into temptation; ye waited
(To our ruin); ye doubted
(Allah’s Promise); and (your false)
Desires deceived you; until
There issued the Command
Of Allah. And the Deceiver
Deceived you in respect of Allah.5293

15. “This Day shall no ransom
Be accepted of you, nor
Of those who rejected Allah.5294
Your abode is the Fire:
That is the proper place
To claim you: and an evil
Refuge it is!”

5292. The evil will now claim some right of kinship or association or proximity with the good in earthly life; but in fact they had been arrogant and had selfishly despised them before. The reply will be: (1) you yourselves chose temptation and evil; (2) when you had power in your earthly life, you hoped for ruin to the good, and perhaps plotted for it; (3) you were warned by prophets of Allah, but you doubted Allah’s very existence and certainly His Mercy and Justice, and the Hereafter; (4) you followed your own lusts and neglected Reason and Truth; (5) you were given plenty of rope, but you followed your mad career, until Judgment came upon you, and now it is too late for repentance.

5293. The Arch-Deceiver (Satan) deceived you in respect of Allah in many ways: for example, he made you oblivious of Allah’s Mercy and loving-kindness; he made you reject His Grace; he made you think that Allah’s Justice may not overtake you; etc.

5294. In personal responsibility there is no room for vicarious ransom or for ransom by payments of gold or silver or by sacrifice of possessions. Nor can the crime be expiated for after Judgment. ‘You’ and ‘those who rejected Allah’ are two ways of looking at the same persons. ‘You are rejected because you rejected Allah.’
16. Has not the time arrived\(^{5295}\)

For the Believers that
Their hearts in all humility
Should engage in the remembrance
Of Allah and of the Truth
Which has been revealed (to them),
And that they should not
Become like those to whom
Was given The Book aforetime,\(^{5296}\)
But long ages passed over them
And their hearts grew hard?
For many among them
Are rebellious transgressors.

17. Know ye (all) that
Allah giveth life
To the earth after its death!\(^{5297}\)
Already have We shown
The Signs plainly to you,
That ye may understand.

18. For those who give
In Charity, men and women,
And loan to Allah\(^{5298}\)
A Beautiful Loan,

\(^{5295}\). Humility and the remembrance of Allah and His Message are never more necessary than in the hour of victory and prosperity.

\(^{5296}\). The men immediately referred to are the contemporary Jews and Christians. To each of these Ummats was given Allah's Revelation, but as time passed, they corrupted it, became arrogant and hard-hearted, and subverted justice, truth, and the purity of Life. But the general lesson is far wider. No one is favoured of Allah except on the score of righteousness. Except on that score, there is no chosen individual or race. There is no blind good fortune or ill fortune. All happens according to the just laws and will of Allah. But at no time is humility or righteousness more necessary than in the hour of victory or triumph.

\(^{5297}\). As the dead earth is revived after the refreshing showers of rain, so is it with the spirit of man, whether as an individual or a race or Ummat. There is no cause for despair. Allah's Truth will revive the spiritual faculties if it is accepted with humility and zeal.

\(^{5298}\). Cf. lvii. 11; also see ii. 245, n. 276.
It shall be increased manifold  
(To their credit),  
And they shall have (besides)  
A generous reward.

19. And those who believe  
In Allah and His messengers—  
They are the Truthful\(^{5299}\)  
And the martyrs,\(^{5300}\)  
In the eye of their Lord:  
They shall have their Reward  
And their Light.\(^{5301}\)  
But those who reject Allah  
And deny Our Signs,—  
They are the Companions  
Of Hell-Fire.

SECTION 3.

20. Know ye (all), that  
The life of this world  
Is but play and a pastime,\(^{5302}\)  
Adornment and mutual boasting  
And multiplying, (in rivalry)  
Among yourselves, riches  
And children.

---

\(^{5299}\) Cf. iv. 69, and n. 586. The four categories there mentioned as constituting the beautiful Company of Faith are: the Prophets who teach, the Sincere Lovers of Truth, the Martyrs, and the Righteous who do good. Of these, the prophets or messengers have already been mentioned in this verse. The Righteous who do good are mentioned as the men and women given over to deeds of charity in verse 18.

\(^{5300}\) The Martyrs (witnesses) are all those who carry the Banner of Truth against all odds and in all positions of danger, whether by pen or speech, or deed or counsel.

\(^{5301}\) Note that these two are specially high degrees in the Hereafter, just short of Prophethood. For they have not only their reward in the Hereafter, like those who practise charity (verse 18 above), but they themselves become sources of light and leading.

\(^{5302}\) Cf. vi. 32, and n. 855. In the present passage the idea is further amplified. In this life people not only play and amuse themselves and each other, but they show off, and boast, and pile up riches and man-power and influence, in rivalry with each other.
Here is a similitude.\(^{5303}\)

How rain and the growth
Which it brings forth, delight
(The hearts of) the tillers;\(^{5304}\)
Soon it withers; thou
Wilt see it grow yellow;
Then it becomes dry
And crumbles away.
But in the Hereafter
Is a Chastisement severe
(For the devotees of wrong).
And Forgiveness from Allah
And (His) Good Pleasure
(For the devotees of Allah).
And what is the life
Of this world, but
Goods and chattels
Of deception?\(^{5305}\)

21. Be ye foremost (in seeking)
Forgiveness from your Lord,
And a Garden (of Bliss),
The width whereof is
As the width of
Heaven and earth.\(^{5306}\)

---

5303. Cf. xxxix. 21, and n. 4273. Here the Parable is meant to teach a slightly different lesson. Allah's mercies are free and open to all, like His rain. But how do men make use of them? The good men take the real spiritual harvest and store the spiritual grain. The men who are in love with the ephemeral are delighted with the green of the tares and the grass; but such things give no real nourishment; they soon wither, become dry, and crumble to pieces, like the worldly pleasures and pomps, boasting and tumults, possessions and friends.

5304. Kuffār is here used in the unusual sense of 'tillers or husbandmen', because they sow the seed and cover it up with soil. But the ordinary meaning, 'Rejecters of Truth', is not absent. The allegory refers to such men.

5305. Cf. iii. 185, and n. 492. Many of the attractive vanities of this world are but nets set by Satan to deceive man. The only thing real and lasting is the Good Life lived in the Light of Allah.

5306. Cf. iii. 133, and n. 452.
Prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers: That is the Grace of Allah, Which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is The Lord of Grace abounding.

22. No misfortune can happen On earth or in your souls But is recorded in A Book before We bring it into existence: That is truly easy for Allah:

23. In order that ye may Not despair over matters That pass you by, Nor exult over favours Bestowed upon you. For Allah loveth not Any vainglorious boaster.

5307. "Bestows on whom He pleases." That is, such grace and favour is beyond any one's own merits. It is bestowed by Allah according to His holy Will and Plan, which is just, merciful, and righteous.

5308. External disasters or misfortunes may strike people's eye or imagination, but there are worse crisis and misfortunes in the spiritual world, which are of equal or greater importance to man's future. All this happens according to the Will and Plan of Allah. Even where we are allowed the exercise of our own wills, the consequences that follow are in accordance with the laws and Plan decreed by Allah beforehand.

5309. For baraa, 'to bring into existence', and other words denoting Allah's creative energy, see n. 120 to ii. 117; n. 916 to vi. 94; and n. 923 to vi. 98.

5310. In the external world, what people may consider misfortune or good fortune may both turn out to be illusory,—in Kipling's words, "both imposters just the same". The righteous man does not grumble if some one else has possessions, nor exult if he has them. He does not covet and he does not boast. If he has any advantages, he shares them with other people, as he considers them not due to his own merits, but as gifts of Allah.
24. Such persons as are\textsuperscript{5311} Covetous and commend Covetousness to men. And if any turn back\textsuperscript{5312} (From Allah’s Way), verily Allah is free of all needs, Worthy of all praise.

25. We sent aforetime Our messengers with Clear Signs And sent down with them The Book and the Balance\textsuperscript{5313} (Of Right and Wrong), that men May stand forth in justice; And We sent down\textsuperscript{5314} Iron,\textsuperscript{5315} In which is Great might, as well as Many benefits for mankind,

\textsuperscript{5311} Neither the Covetous nor the Boasters have any place in the Good Pleasure of Allah. The Covetous are particularly insidious, as their avarice and niggardliness not only keep back the gifts of Allah from men, but their pernicious example dries up the streams of Charity in others.

\textsuperscript{5312} It is Charity in Allah’s Way that is specially in view here. If people are selfish and withhold their hand, they only injure themselves. They do not hurt Allah’s Cause, for He is independent of all needs, and He will find other means of assisting His more meagrely-endowed servants; He is worthy of all praise in His care for His creatures.

\textsuperscript{5313} Three things are mentioned as gifts of Allah. In concrete terms they are the Book, the Balance, and Iron, which stand as emblems of three things which hold society together, \textit{viz.} Revelation, which commands Good and forbids Evil; Justice, which gives to each person his due; and the strong arm of the Law, which maintains sanctions for evil-doers. For Balance, see also xlii. 17, and n. 4550.

\textsuperscript{5314} “Sent down”: anzala: in the sense of revealed to man the use of certain things, created in him the capacity of understanding and using them: \textit{cf.} xxxix. 6: “sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs”.

\textsuperscript{5315} Iron: the most useful metal known to man. Out of it is made steel, and from steel and iron are made implements of war, such as swords, spears, guns, etc., as well as instruments of peace, such as ploughshares, bricklayers’ trowels, architects’ and engineers’ instruments, etc. Iron stands as the emblem of Strength, Power, Discipline, Law’s sanctions, etc. Iron and steel industries have also been the foundation of the prosperity and power of modern manufacturing nations’.
That Allah may test who
It is that will help,
Unseen,\textsuperscript{5316} Him and His
messengers:\textsuperscript{5317}
For Allah is Full of Strength,
Exalted in Might\textsuperscript{5318}.

SECTION 4.

26. And We sent Noah
And Abraham, and established
In their line Prophethood
And Revelation: and some of
them\textsuperscript{5319}
Were on right guidance,
But many of them
Became rebellious transgressors.

27. Then, in their wake,
We followed them up
With (others of) Our messengers:
We sent after them
Jesus the son of Mary,
And bestowed on him
The Gospel; and We ordained
In the hearts of those

\textsuperscript{5316} In xxi. 49, I have translated "in their most secret thoughts" for the more literal "unseen" (bil-gaibi). Perhaps the more literal "unseen" may do if understood in the adverbial sense as explained in xxxv. 18, n. 3902. The sincere man will help the Cause, whether he is seen or brought under notice or not.

\textsuperscript{5317} To help Allah and His messengers is to help their Cause. It is to give men an opportunity of striving and fighting for His Cause and proving their true mettle, for thus is their spirit tested. As explained in the next line, Allah in Himself is Full of Strength, Exalted in Power, and Able to enforce His Will, and He has no need of others' assistance.

\textsuperscript{5318} Cf. xxii, 40 and n. 2818. "Strength" is specific; Power or Might is more abstract, the ability to enforce what is willed.

\textsuperscript{5319} Some of them: i.e., of their line, or posterity, or Ummat. When the Book that was given to them became corrupted, many of them followed their own fancies and became transgressors.
Who followed him
Compassion and Mercy.\(^{5320}\)
But the Monasticism
Which they invented
For themselves, We did not
Prescribe for them:\(^{5321}\)
(We commanded) only
The seeking for the Good
Pleasure of Allah; but that
They did not foster\(^{5322}\)
As they should have done.
Yet We bestowed, on those
Among them who believed,\(^{5323}\)
Their (due) reward, but

5320. The chief characteristic of the teaching in the Gospels is humility and other-worldliness. The first blessings in the Sermon on the Mount are on “the poor in spirit”, “they that mourn”, and they that are “meek” (Matt. v. 3-5). Christ’s disciples were enjoined to “take no thought for the morrow”, and told “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. vi. 34). They were also commanded “that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. v. 39). These are fragmentary presentments of an imperfect philosophy as seen through monastic eyes. In so far as they represent pity, sympathy with suffering, and deeds of mercy, they represent the spirit of Christ.

5321. But Allah’s Kingdom requires also courage, resistance to evil, the firmness, law, and discipline which will enforce justice among men. It requires men to mingle with men, so that they can uphold the standard of Truth, against odds if necessary. These were lost sight of in Monasticism, which was not prescribed by Allah.

5322. Allah certainly requires that men shall renounce the idle pleasures of this world, and turn to the Path which leads to Allah’s Good Pleasure. But that does not mean gloomy lives, (“they that mourn”), nor perpetual and formal prayers in isolation. Allah’s service is done through pure lives in the turmoil of this world. This spirit was lost, or at least not fostered by monastic institutions. On the contrary a great part of the “struggle and striving” for noble lives was suppressed.

5323. Many of them lost true Faith, or had their Faith corrupted by superstitions. But those who continued firm in Faith saw the natural development of Religion in Islam. Their previous belief was not a disadvantage to them, but helped them, because they kept it free from false and selfish prejudices. These are the ones who are further addressed at the beginning of verse 28 below.
Many of them are
Rebellious transgressors.\textsuperscript{5324}

28. \textit{O ye that believe!\textsuperscript{5325}}
Fear Allah, and believe
In His Messenger, and He will
Bestow on you a double\textsuperscript{5326}
Portion of His Mercy:
He will provide for you
A Light by which ye\textsuperscript{5327}
Shall walk (straight
In your path), and He
Will forgive you (your past):\textsuperscript{5328}
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful:

\textsuperscript{5324}. The corruptions in the Christian Church, the hair-splitting disputes, and mutual strife and hatred of sects had become a scandal by the time that the light of Islam came into the world. The pages of Gibbon's great History bear witness. Not only had the religion become void of grace, but the lives of the people, priests and laity, had fallen into great depths of degradation.

\textsuperscript{5325}. From the context before (see n. 5323 above) and after (see next note), this is held to refer to the Christians and People of the Book who kept their Faith true and undefiled.

\textsuperscript{5326}. The double portion refers to the past and the future. As noted in the last note, this passage is addressed to the Christians and the People of the Book, who, when honestly facing the question of the new Revelation in Islam, find in it the fulfilment of previous revelations, and therefore believe in Allah's Messenger Muhammad, and walk by the new Light. Their previous merits will be duly recognised, and they will be treated on fully equal terms in the new Ummat. This is their double share, not necessarily more in quantity than that of their brethren in Islam who passed through no other gate, but having a twofold aspect.

\textsuperscript{5327}. As this refers to the Christians and the People of the Book, the following saying of Christ in his last days may interest them: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you... While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them". (John, xii. 35-36). The light of Christ's Gospel soon departed; his Church was enveloped in darkness; then came the light again, in the fuller light of Islam. And they are asked to believe in the Light, and to walk in it. Cf. also lvii. 12. and n. 5288 above.

\textsuperscript{5328}. Any wrongs they may have committed through ignorance or misconceptions in their previous religion will be forgiven them, as they have seen the new Light and walk by it.
29. That the People of
The Book may know
That they have no power5329
Whatever over the Grace
Of Allah, that (His) Grace
Is (entirely) in His Hand,
To bestow it on
Whomsoever He wills.
For Allah is the Lord
Of Grace abounding.

5329. Let not any race, or people, or community, or group, believe that they have exclusive possession of Allah’s Grace, or that they can influence its grant or its withholding. Allah’s Grace is free, and entirely controlled by Him, independently of any priests and privileged people. He dispenses it according to His own wise and holy Will and Plan; and to His Grace there is no limit.

It is upto Him to bestow His Grace upon whom He likes. The Qur-án is the final revelation in which He said: “ye are the best Ummah brought forward to mankind.” So in order to receive His Grace, one should submit to Islam.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Mujādila, 58.

This is the second of the ten Madinah Sūras referred to in the Introduction to the last Sūra. Its subject-matter is the acceptance of a woman’s Plea on behalf of herself and her children (see n. 5330 to Iviii. 1 below), and a condemnation of all secret counsels and intrigues in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The date is somewhat close to that of S. xxxiii. say between A.H. 5 and A.H. 7.

Summary.– All false pretences, especially those that degrade a woman’s position, are condemned,—as well as secret consultations between men and intrigues with falsehood, mischief, and sedition. (Iviii. 1-22).
Al-Mujādila, or The Woman who Pleads.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Allah has indeed
Heard (and accepted) the statement
Of the woman who pleads5330
With thee concerning her husband
And carries her complaint
(In prayer) to Allah:
And Allah (always) hears
The arguments between both5331
Of you: for Allah
Hears and sees (all things).

2. If any men among you
Divorce their wives by Zihār5332
(Calling them mothers),
They cannot be their mothers:
None can be their mothers
Except those who gave them
Birth. And in fact
They use words (both) iniquitous5333
And false: but truly

5330. The immediate occasion was what happened to Khaula bint Tha’labā, wife of Aus son of Šāmit. Though in Islam, he divorced her by an old Pagan custom: the formula was known as Zihār, and consisted of the words “Thou art to me as the back of my mother”. This was held by Pagan custom to imply a divorce and freed the husband from any responsibility for conjugal duties. Such a custom was in any case degrading to a woman. It was particularly hard on Khaula, for she loved her husband and pleaded that she had little children whom she had no resources herself to support. She urged her plea to the Prophet and in prayer to Allah. Her just plea was accepted, and this iniquitous custom, based on false words, was abolished. See also n. 3670 to xxxiii. 4.

5331. For He is a just God, and will not allow human customs or pretences to trample on the just rights of the weakest of His creatures.

5332. See n. 5330 above.

5333. Such words are false in fact and iniquitous, inasmuch as they are unfair to the wife and unseemly in decent society.
Allah is All-Pardoning, All-Forgiving.

3. But those who pronounce The word “Zihār” To their wives Then wish to go back On the words they uttered, (It is ordained that Such a one) Should free a slave Before they touch each other: This are ye admonished To perform: and Allah is Well-acquainted with (all) That ye do.

4. And if any has not (The means), He should fast for Two months consecutively Before they touch each other, But if any is unable To do so, he should feed

5334. Cf. iv. 99 and xxii. 60. Were it not that Allah in His Mercy makes allowances for our weaknesses and the various grades of motives that actuate us, such conduct would be inexpiable. But He prescribes expiation as in the next verse, because He wishes to blot out what is wrong and give us a chance to reform by His forgiveness.

5335. If Zihār were to be ignored as if the words were never uttered, it would mean that men may foolishly resort to it without penalty. It is therefore recognised in respect of the penalty which the man incurs, but safeguards the woman’s rights. She can sue for maintenance for herself. If it was a hasty act and be repented of it, be could not claim his conjugal rights until after the performance of his penalty as provided below.

5336. Cf. iv. 92. The penalty is: to get a slave his freedom, whether it is your own slave or you purchase his freedom from another; if that is not possible, to fast for two months consecutively (in the manner of the Ramadān fast); if that is not possible, to feed sixty poor. See next note.
Sixty indigent ones.\textsuperscript{5337}
This, that ye may show
Your faith in Allah\textsuperscript{5338}
And His Messenger.
Those are limits (set
By) Allah. For those who
Reject (Him), there is
A grievous Chastisement.\textsuperscript{5339}

5. Those who oppose
(The commands of) Allah
And His Messenger will be
Humbled to dust, as were
Those before them: for We
Have already sent down
Clear Signs. And the Unbelievers
(Will have) a humiliating
Chastisement,

6. On the Day that
Allah will raise them
All up (again) and tell them

\textsuperscript{5337} There is a great deal of learned argument among the jurists as to the precise requirements of Canon Law under the term "feeding" the indigent. For example, it is laid down that half a Şā' of wheat or a full Şā' of dates or their equivalent in money would fulfil the requirements, a Şā' being a measure corresponding roughly to about 9 lbs. of wheat in weight. Others hold that a Mudd measure equivalent to about 2\textsuperscript{1/4} lbs. would be sufficient. This would certainly be nearer the daily ration of a man. It is better to take the spirit of the text in its plain simplicity, and say that an indigent man should be given enough to eat for two meals a day. The sixty indigent ones fed for a day would be equivalent to a single individual fed for sixty days, or two for thirty days, and so on. But there is no need to go into minutiae in such matters.

\textsuperscript{5338} These penalties in the alternative are prescribed, that we may show our repentance and Faith and our renunciation of "iniquity and falsehood" (verse 2 above), whatever our circumstances may be.

\textsuperscript{5339} It would seem that this refers to the Penalty in the Hereafter for not complying with the small penalty here prescribed. The next verse would then refer to the bigger "humiliating Penalty" for "resistance" to Allah's Law generally.
7. Seest thou not that
Allah doth know (all) that is
In the heavens and
On earth? There is not
A secret consultation
Between three, but He
Is the fourth of them, -\(^{5341}\)
Nor between five but
He is the sixth, -
Nor between fewer nor more,
But He is with them,
Wheresoever they be:
In the end will He
Tell them what
They did on the Day
Of Judgment. For Allah
Has full knowledge
Of all things.

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5340. This phrase, "Allah will tell them of their deeds (or their doings or their conduct)" occurs frequently. See v. 51, n. 762; v. 108, n. 811; vi. 60; ix. 94; etc. In this life there is a certain mist or illusion in our spiritual sight. We see things from different angles and dispute about them; we hide real motives, and pretend to virtues which we do not possess; others may attribute such virtues to us, and we may come to believe it ourselves; we conceive likes and hatreds on insufficient grounds; we forget what we should remember, and remember what we should forget. Our vision is narrow, and our values are false. On the Day of Account all this will be remedied. Not only will true values be restored, but we shall ourselves see the inwardness of things in our own lives, which we never saw before.

5341. Secrecy is a relative and limited term among ourselves. There is nothing hidden or unknown to Allah. Usually secrecy implies fear or distrust, plotting or wrong-doing. But all is open before Allah's sight.
8. Seest thou not
Those who were
Forbidden secret counsels\textsuperscript{5342}
Yet revert to that which
They were forbidden (to do)?
And they hold secret counsels
Among themselves for iniquity
And hostility, and disobedience
To the Messenger, And when
They come to thee,
They salute thee,\textsuperscript{5343}
Not as Allah salutes thee,
(But in crooked ways):
And they say to themselves,
"Why does not Allah
Punish us for our words?"\textsuperscript{5344}
Enough for them is
Hell:
In it will they burn,
And evil is that destination!

9. O ye who believe!
When ye hold secret counsel,
Do it not for iniquity
And hostility, and disobedience
To the Messenger; but do it

\textsuperscript{5342} When the Muslim Brotherhood was acquiring strength in Madinah and the forces of disruption were being discomfited in open fight against the Messenger of Righteousness, the wicked resorted to duplicity and secret intrigues, in which the ringleaders were the disaffected Jews and the Hypocrites, whose machinations have been frequently referred to in the Qur-\-\-yn. \textit{E.g.} see ii. 8-16; and iv. 142-145.

\textsuperscript{5343} The salutation of Allah was (and is) "Peace!" But the enemies, who had not the courage to fight openly often twisted the words, and by using a word like "\textit{S\-\-\-m}," which meant "Death!" or "Destruction!" instead of "\textit{Sal\-\-\-\-m!}" (Peace!), they thought they were secretly venting their spite and yet apparently using a polite form of salutation. Cf. ii. 106, and n. 107, where another similar trick is exposed.

\textsuperscript{5344} The enemies derisively enjoyed their trick (see last note) according to their own perverted mentality. They asked blasphemously, "Why does not Allah punish us?" The answer is given: there is a Punishment, far greater than they imagine: it will come in good time: it will be the final Punishment after Judgment: it is delayed in order to give them a chance of repentance and reformation.
For righteousness and self-restraint;\(^{5345}\)

And fear Allah, to Whom
Ye shall be brought back.

10. Secret counsels are only
(Inspired) by Satan,
In order that he may
Cause grief to the Believers;
But he cannot harm them
In the least, except as\(^{5346}\)
Allah permits; and on Allah
Let the Believers
Put their trust.

11. O ye who believe!
When ye are told
To make room
In the assemblies,\(^{5347}\)
(Spread out and) make room:
(Ample) room will Allah provide
For you. And when
Ye are told to rise up,\(^{5348}\)

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5345. Ordinarily secrecy implies deeds of darkness, something which men have to hide; see the next verse. But there are good deeds which may be concerted and done in secret: e.g., charity, or the prevention of mischief, or the defeat of the dark plots of evil. The determining factor is the motive. Is the man doing some wrong or venting his spite, or trying to disobey a lawful command? Or is he doing some good, which out of modesty or self-renunciation he does not want known, or is he in a righteous cause defeating the machinations of Evil, which may involve great sacrifice of himself?

5346. Evil can harm no one who is good, except in so far as (1) there is some question of trial in Allah's Universal Plan, or (2) what appears to be harm may be real good. Nothing happens without Allah's will and permission. And we must always trust Him, and not our cleverness or any adventitious circumstances that draw us the least bit from the path of rectitude.

5347. Even when a great man or a Leader comes into an Assembly, we are not to press forward without discipline, as it causes inconvenience to him and detriment to public business. Nor are we to shut out other people who have equal rights to be in the Assembly. We must spread out, for Allah's earth is spacious, and so are our opportunities

5348. "Rise up" here may imply: 'when the Assembly is dismissed, do not loiter about'.
Rise up: Allah will Raise up, to (suitable) ranks (And degrees), those of you Who believe and who have Been granted Knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted With all ye do.

12. O ye who believe! When ye consult The Messenger in private, Spend something in charity Before your private consultation. That will be best for you, And most conducive To purity (of conduct). But if ye find not (The wherewithal), Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

5349. Faith makes all people equal in the Kindom of Allah, as regards the essentials of citizenship in the Kingdom. But there is leadership, and rank and degree, joined with greater or less responsibility, and that depends on true knowledge and insight.

5350. In the Kingdom of Allah all instruction or consultation is open and free. But human nature is weak. And people want special instruction or private consultation with the Prophet from one of several motives: (1) they may have, or think they have, a special case, which they are not willing to disclose to their brethren in general; (2) they may have some sense of delicacy or dignity, which can only be satisfied by a private interview; (3) they may even be selfish enough to want to monopolise the Prophet's time. These motives are, in an ascending order, worth discouraging; and yet, considering the weakness of human nature, they cannot be reprobated to the extent of shutting out their victims from chances of improvement. It is therefore recommended that they spend something in charity for the good of their poorer brethren before they indulge in such weaknesses.

5351. The charity is a sort of expiation for their pardonable weakness. Having made some monetary sacrifice for their poorer brethren they could face them with less shame, and the charity would direct their attention to the need for purifying their motives and conduct. At the same time, this special charity is not made obligatory, lest such persons should be shut out altogether from chances of the higher teaching on account of their pardonable foibles.
13. Is it that ye are afraid of spending sums in charity before your private consultation (with him)? If, then, ye do not so, and Allah forgives you, then (at least) establish regular prayer; give Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

SECTION 3.

14. Seest thou not those who tum (in friendship) to such as have the wrath of Allah upon them? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to falsehood knowingly.

5352. Note the plural here, Ṣadaqāt, instead of the singular, Ṣadaqat in verse 12 above. While people with the foibles described in n. 5350 may be willing to spend something (small) in charity for a special consultation occasionally, they may be frightened of spending large sums when their needs for consultation may be numerous. What is to be done then? Are they to be shut out altogether? No. They are asked to be punctilious in the discharge of their normal duties of at least normal regular prayers and regular charity, “if Allah forgives you”, i.e., if Allah’s Messenger relieves them of further special contributions such as those noted in verse 12. This condition, “if Allah forgives you”, provides the safeguard against the abuse of the privilege. The messenger would know in each case what is best for the individual and for the community.

5353. Zakāt was instituted about A.H. 2.

5354. This refers to the Hypocrites of Madinah who pretended to be in Islam but intrigued with the Jews. See references as given in n. 5342 above.

5355. By this time the Jews of Madinah and the Jewish tribes around had become actively hostile to Islam, and were being sharply called to account for their treachery.

5356. They knew that as Muslims their duty was to refrain from the intrigues of the enemies of Islam and to assist Islam against them.
5357. A false man, by swearing that he is true, makes his falsehood all the more heinous. He stands in the way of other people accepting Truth. He gives a handle to the cynics and the sceptics.

5358. They may arrogantly boast of riches of alliances and followers in man-power. But what are such worldly advantages before the Throne of the Disposer of all events? They must come to utter misery.

5359. When Judgment is established, and before they realise the Truth, they may think (as now) that some oaths or excuses will save them. But they have not now—much less will they have then—any footing to stand upon. Falsehood is falsehood, and must perish. They must learn the worthlessness of their falsehood.
19. Satan has
   Got the better of them:  
   So he has made them
   Forgot the remembrance
   Of Allah. They are the Party
   Of Satan. Truly,
   It is the Party
   Of Satan
   That will lose.

20. Those who oppose
   (The commands of)
   Allah and His Messenger
   Will be among those
   Most humiliated.

21. Allah has decreed:
   “It is I and My messengers
   Who must prevail”:
   For Allah is Strong, Mighty.

22. Thou wilt not find
   Any people who believe
   In Allah and the Last Day,
   Loving those who oppose
   Allah and His Messenger,
   Even though they were
   Their fathers or their sons,
   Or their brothers, or

5360. Man’s original nature as created by Allah is good (xxx. 30, and n. 3541). It
   is because man, in spite of the warnings he has received, allows Evil to get the mastery
   over him, that man forgets Allah and the divine qualities which Allah give him. The result
   of the perversion is that man becomes a partisan of Evil, and as such dooms himself to
   perdition.

5361. There are various degrees of humiliation in the final state in the next world. But
   the worst is the humiliation of being numbered among those who ignominiously
   attempted to resist the Irresistible.

5362. For the meaning of ‘Azīz, see n. 2818 to xxii. 40.

5363. If any one believes in Allah and His goodness and justice, and in the
   Hereafter, in which all true values will be restored he will never love evil or wrong-doing
   or rebellion against Allah, even if these things are found in his nearest kith and kin.
Their kindred. For such
He has written Faith\textsuperscript{5364}
In their hearts, and strengthened
Them with a spirit\textsuperscript{5365}
From Himself. And He
Will admit them to Gardens
Beneath which Rivers flow,
To dwell therein (for ever).
Allah will be well pleased
With them, and they with Him.\textsuperscript{5366}
They are the Party\textsuperscript{5367}
Of Allah. Truly it is
The Party of Allah that
Will achieve Success.

\textsuperscript{5364} Faith in Allah is indelibly written on the tablets of their hearts and they can never be false to Allah.

\textsuperscript{5365} Cf. ii. 87 and 253, where it is said that Allah strengthened the Prophet Jesus with the holy spirit. Here we learn that all good and righteous men are strengthened by Allah. If anything, the phrase used here is stronger. “a spirit from Himself”. Whenever any one offers his heart in faith and purity to Allah, Allah accepts it, engraves that Faith on the seeker’s heart, and further fortifies him with his help which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of Allah.

\textsuperscript{5366} Again we have the doctrine of Allah’s Good Pleasure as the highest goal of man, the spiritual heaven which he achieves by a life of purity and faith. He not only attains Allah’s Good Pleasure as the crown of his felicity, but his own nature is so far transformed to the pattern of Allah’s original creation that his own good pleasure is in nothing but in Allah’s Good Pleasure. The mutual good pleasure shows the heights to which man can attain.

\textsuperscript{5367} This is in antithesis to the Party of the Satan, mentioned in verse 19 above. The Party of Evil will perish, but while it has its run in the scheme of the present world, the Party of Truth and Reality may be rightly called the Party of Allah, even though all Creation is Allah’s in another sense.
INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Al-Hasr, 59.

This is the third of the series of ten short Madinah Sûras, dealing each with a special point in the life of the Ummat: see Introduction to S. lvii. The special theme here is how treachery to the Ummat on the part of its enemies recoils on the enemies themselves, while it strengthens the bond between the different sections of the Ummat itself, and this is illustrated by the story of the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of the Banû Nadhir in Rabî I, A.H. 4.

This fixes the date of the Sûra.

Summary.—The expulsion of the treacherous Jews from the neighbourhood of Madinah was smoothly accomplished: their reliance on their fortified position and on the faith of their allies in treachery proved futile. But the internal bonds in the Ummat were strengthened. Such is the wisdom of Allah, Lord of the Most Beautiful Names. (lix. 1-24).
Al-Hashr, or The Gathering
(or Banishment, lxx. 2-3)

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Whatever is
In the heavens and
On earth, declares
The Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is
The Exalted in Might,
The Wise.

2. It is He Who got out
The Unbelievers among
The People of the Book From their homes
At the first gathering (Of the forces).
Little did ye think
That they would get out:

5368. This verse, introducing the Sûra is identical with lvii. 1, introducing S. lvii. The theme of both is the wonderful working of Allah’s Plan and Providence. In the one case it referred to the conquest of Makkah and taught the lesson of humility. In this case it refers to the dislodgment of the treacherous Banû Nadhir from their nest of intrigue in the neighbourhood of Madinah practically without a blow. See next note.

5369. This refers to the Jewish tribe of the Banû Nadhir whose intrigues and treachery nearly undid the Muslim cause during the perilous days of the battle of Uhud in Shawwal, A.H. 3. Four months after, in Rabi, I. A.H. 4, steps were taken against them. They were asked to leave the strategic position which they occupied, about three miles south of Madinah, endangering the very existence of the Ummat in Madinah. At first they demurred, relying on their fortresses and on their secret alliance with the Pagans of Makkah and the Hypocrites of Madinah. But when the Muslim army was gathered to punish them and actually besieged them for some days, their allies stirred not a finger in their aid, and they were wise enough to leave. Most of them joined their brethren in Syria, which they were permitted to do, after being disarmed. Some of them joined their brethren in Khaibar; see n. 3705 to xxxiii. 27. The Banû Nadhir richly deserved punishment, but their lives were spared, and they were allowed to carry away their goods and chattels.

5370. That is, without actual hostilities, and the shedding of precious Muslim blood.
And they thought
That their fortresses
Would defend them from Allah!
But the (Wrath of) Allah
Came to them from quarters\textsuperscript{5371}
From which they little
Expected (it), and cast
Terror into their hearts,
So that they destroyed
Their dwellings by their own\textsuperscript{5372}
Hands and the hands
Of the Believers.
Take warning, then,
O ye with eyes (to see)!

3. And had it not been
That Allah had decreed
Banishment for them,\textsuperscript{5373}
He would certainly have
Punished them in this world:

\textsuperscript{5371} They had played a double game. Originally they were sworn allies of the Madinah Muslims under the holy Prophet, but they secretly intrigued with the Makkah Pagans under Abū Sufyān and the Madinah Hypocrites. They even tried treacherously to take the life of the Prophet while he was on a visit to them, breaking both the laws of hospitality and their own sworn alliance. They thought the Pagan Quraish of Makkah and the Hypocrites of Madinah would help them, but they did not help them. On the contrary the eleven days siege showed them their own helplessness. Their supplies were cut off; the exigencies of the siege necessitated the destruction of their outlying palm trees; and the unexpected turn in their fortunes disheartened them. Their hearts were struck with terror and they capitulated. But they laid waste their homes before they left: see next note.

\textsuperscript{5372} Their lives were spared, and they were allowed ten days in which to remove themselves, their families, and such goods as they could carry. In order to leave no habitations for the Muslims they demolished their own houses and laid waste their property, to complete the destruction which the operations of war had already caused at the hands of the besieging force of the Muslims.

\textsuperscript{5373} Banishment was a comparatively mild punishment for them, but the Providence of Allah had decreed that a chance should be given to them even though they were a treacherous foe. Within two years, their brethren the Banū Quraizah showed that they had not profited by their example, and had to be dealt with in another way: see xxxii. 26 and notes.
And in the Hereafter
They shall (certainly) have
The Punishment of the Fire,

4. That is because they
Resisted Allah and His Messenger:
And if any one resists Allah,\textsuperscript{5374}
Verily Allah is severe
In Punishment.

5. Whatever ye cut down
(O ye Muslims!) of
The tender palm-trees,
Or ye left them standing
On their roots, it was\textsuperscript{5375}
By leave of Allah, and
In order that He might\textsuperscript{5376}
Cover with shame
The rebellious transgressors.

6. What Allah has bestowed
On His Messenger (and taken
Away) from them—for this
Ye made no expedition
With either cavalry or camelry:\textsuperscript{5377}

\textsuperscript{5374.} The punishment of the Banû Nadhîr was because in breaking their plighted word with the Messenger and in actively resisting Allah's Message and supporting the enemies of that Message, they rebelled against him. For such treason and rebellion the punishment is severe, and yet in this case it was seasoned with Mercy.

\textsuperscript{5375.} The unnecessary cutting down of fruit trees or destruction of crops, or any wanton destruction whatever in war, is forbidden by the law and practice of Islam. But some destruction may be necessary for putting pressure on the enemy, and to that extent it is allowed. But as far as possible, consistently with that objective of military operations, such trees should not be cut down. Both these principles are in accordance with the Divine Will, and were followed by the Muslims in their expedition.

\textsuperscript{5376.} The arrogance of the Banû Nadhîr had to be humbled, and their power for mischief destroyed.

\textsuperscript{5377.} Neither cavalry nor troops mounted on camels were employed in the siege. In fact the enemy surrendered at the first onset. See lix. 2, and n. 5369 above.
But Allah gives power
To His messengers over
Any He pleases: and Allah\textsuperscript{5378}
Has power over all things.

7. What Allah has bestowed\textsuperscript{5379}
On His Messenger (and taken
Away) from the people\textsuperscript{5380}
Of the townships,-belongs
To Allah,-to His Messenger,\textsuperscript{5381}
And to kindred and orphans,
The needy and the wayfarer;
In order that it may not
(Merely) make a circuit
Between the wealthy among you.
So take what the Messenger
Gives you, and
Refrain from what
He prohibits you.

\textsuperscript{5378} Allah accomplishes His purpose in various ways, according to His wise Will and Plan. In some cases a fight is necessary. In some cases the godly attain their objective and overawe the forces of evil without actual fighting.

\textsuperscript{5379} The Jews had originally come from outside Arabia, and seized on the land near Madinah. They refused to adapt themselves to the people of Arabia, and were in fact a thorn in the side of the genuine Arabs of Madinah. Their dispossession is therefore a restoration of the land to its original people. But the word "Fai" is here understood in a technical sense, as meaning property abandoned by the enemy or taken from him without a formal war. In that sense it is distinguished from "Anfāl", or spoils, taken after actual fighting, about which see viii. 1 and 41.

\textsuperscript{5380} "The people of the townships": the townships were the Jewish settlements round Madinah, of the Banū Nadhir, and possibly of other tribes. Cf. the "townships" mentioned in lix. 14 below. The reference cannot be to the Wādī-ul-Qurā (Valley of Towns), now Madāin Sālih, which was subjugated after Khaibar and Fadak in A.H. 7, unless this verse is later than the rest of the Sūra.

\textsuperscript{5381} "Belongs to Allah": i.e., to Allah's Cause; and the beneficiaries are further detailed. No shares are fixed; they depend upon circumstances, and are left to the judgement of the Leader. Compare a similar list of those entitled to Charity, in ii. 177, but the two lists refer to different circumstances and have different beneficiaries in addition to the portion common to both.
And fear Allah; for Allah
Is strict in Punishment.

8. (Some part is due)
To the indigent Muhājrīn,⁵³⁸²
Those who were expelled
From their homes and their
property,
While seeking Grace from Allah
And (His) Good Pleasure,
And aiding Allah and His Messenger:
Such are indeed
The truthful;—

9. And those who
Before them, had homes⁵³⁸³
(In Madinah)
And had adopted the Faith,—
Show their affection to such
As came to them for refuge,
And entertain no desire
In their hearts for things
Given to the (latter),
But give them preference
Over themselves, even though

⁵³⁸². The Muhājrīn are those who forsook their homes and property in Makkah in order to assist the holy Prophet in his migration to Madinah (Hijrat). Their devotion and sincerity were proved beyond doubt by their self-denial, and they were now to be rewarded.

⁵³⁸³. This refers to the Ansār (the Helpers), the people of Madinah who accepted Islam when it was persecuted in Makkah, and who invited the holy Prophet to join them and become their Leader in Madinah. The Hijrat was possible because of their goodwill and their generous hospitality. They entertained the Prophet and all the refugees (Muhājrīns) who came with him. The most remarkable ties of full brotherhood were established between individual members of the one group and the other. Until the Ummat got its own resources, the Helpers regularly gave and the Refugees regularly received. The Helpers counted it a privilege to entertain the Refugees, and even the poor vied with the rich in their spirit of self-sacrifice. When the confiscated land and property of the Banū Nadhir was divided, and the major portion was assigned to the refugees, there was not the least jealousy on the part of the Helpers. They rejoiced in the good fortune of their brethren. And incidentally they were themselves relieved of anxiety and responsibility on their behalf.
Poverty was their (own lot).
And those saved from
The covetousness of their own
Souls,—they are the ones
That achieve prosperity.

10. And those who came\textsuperscript{5384}
After them say: "Our Lord!
Forgive us, and our brethren
Who came before us
Into the Faith
And leave not,
In our hearts,
Rancour (or sense of injury)\textsuperscript{5385}
Against those who have believed.
Our Lord! Thou art
Indeed Full of Kindness,
Most Merciful."

SECTION 2.

11. Hast thou not observed
The Hypocrites say
To their misbelieving brethren
Among the People of the
Book?—\textsuperscript{5386}

\textsuperscript{5384.} Those that came after them: the immediate meaning would refer to later arrivals in Madinah or later accessions to Islam, compared with the early Muhājirs. But the general meaning would include all future comers into the House of Islam. They pray, not only for themselves, but for all their brethren, and above all, they pray that their hearts may be purified of any desire or tendency to disparage the work or virtues of other Muslims or to feel any jealousy on account of their successes or good fortune.

\textsuperscript{5385.} Cf. vii. 43, and n. 1021.

\textsuperscript{5386.} The Jews of the Banū Nadhir had been assured by the Hypocrites of Madinah of their support to their cause. They had thought that their defection from the Prophet's Cause, would so weaken that cause that they would save their friends. But they never intended to undertake any act involving self-sacrifice on their part; if they had helped their Jewish friends, it was not likely that they would have succeeded; and if they had actually gone to the fight; they had neither valour nor fervour to support them, and they would have fled ignominiously before the discipline, earnestness, and Faith of the men of Islam.
"If ye are expelled,
We too will go out
With you, and we will
Never hearken to any one
In your affair; and if
Ye are attacked (in fight)
We will help you".5387
But Allah is witness5387
That they are indeed liars.

12. If they are expelled,
Never will they go out
With them; and if they
Are attacked (in fight),
They will never help them;
And if they do help them,
They will turn their backs;
So they will receive no help.5388

13. Of a truth ye arouse
Greater fear,5389
In their hearts,
Than Allah.
This is because they are
Men devoid of understanding.

14. They will not fight you
(Even) together, except
In fortified townships,
Or from behind walls.5390

5387. For this actually happened. They never stirred a finger for the Jews, and they never intended to do so. And Allah knows all their motives and secrets: cf. xlvii. 26, n. 4850.

5388. All hopes founded on iniquity and treachery are vain and illusory. There may be honour among thieves. But there is no honour as between dishonest intriguers, and they are not likely to get any real help from any quarter.

5389. Being Unbelievers they fear you more than they fear Allah, because your valour they see, but in Allah they do not believe.

5390. They have not sufficient self-confidence or clan to sustain them in a fight except under material advantages or defences. Even if they join forces, they have not sufficient trust in each other to expose themselves to open fighting.
Strong is their fighting (spirit)  
Amongst themselves:  
Thou wouldst think  
They were united,  
But their hearts are divided:  
That is because they  
Are a people devoid  
Of wisdom.

15. Like those who lately  
Preceded them, they have  
Tasted the evil result  
Of their conduct; and  
(In the Hereafter there is)  
For them a grievous Chastisement;—

16. (Their allies deceived them),  
Like Satan  
When he says to man,  
"Disbelieve": but when  
(Man) disbelieves,

5391. 'It may be that they have a strong fighting spirit among themselves, but they have no Cause to fight for and no common objective to achieve. The Makkans want to keep their own unjust autocracy; the Madinan Hypocrites wish for their own domination in Madinah; and the Jews want their racial superiority established over the Arabs, of whose growing union and power they are jealous.' Their pretended alliance could not stand the strain of either a defeat or a victory. If they had been wise, they would have accepted the Cause of Unity, Faith, and Truth.

5392. The immediate reference was probably to the Jewish goldsmith tribe of the Qainuqa', who were also settled in a fortified township near Madinah. They were also punished and banished for their treachery, about a month after the battle of Badr, in which the Makkans had suffered a signal defeat, in Shawwāl, A.H. 2. The Nadhir evidently did not take that lesson to heart. The general meaning is that we must learn to be on our guard against the consequences of treachery and sin. No fortuitous alliances with other men of iniquity will save us.

5393. An apt simile. Evil tempts man in all sorts of ways, and presents seductive promises and alliances to delude him into the belief that he will be saved from the consequences. Satan says, "Deny Allah": which means not merely denial in words, but denial in acts, disobedience of Allah's Law, deviation from the path of rectitude. When the sinner gets well into the mire, Satan says cynically: "How can I help you against Allah? Don't you see I am afraid of Him? All our alliances and understandings were moonshine. You must bear the consequences of your own folly."
S.59, A.16-19

Satan says,
"I am free of thee:  
I do fear Allah,  
The Lord of the Worlds!"

17. The end of both will be  
That they will go  
Into the Fire, dwelling  
Therein for ever.  
Such is the reward  
Of the wrong-doers.

SECTION 3.

18. O ye who believe!  
Fear Allah,  
And let every soul look  
To what (provision) he has  
Sent forth for the morrow.  
Yea, fear Allah:  
For Allah is well-acquainted  
With (all) that ye do.

19. And be ye not like  
Those who forgot Allah;  
And He made them forget  
Themselves! Such  
Are the rebellious transgressors!

5394. The "fear of Allah" is akin to love; for it means the fear of offending Him or doing anything wrong that will forfeit His Good Pleasure. This is Taqwá, which implies self restraint, guarding ourselves from all sin, wrong, and injustice, and the positive doing of good. See ii. 2, and n. 26.

5395. The positive side of Taqwá, or "fear of Allah" (see last note) is here emphasised. It is not merely a feeling or an emotion; it is an act, a doing of things which become a preparation and provision for the Hereafter,—the next life, which may be described as "the morrow" in relation to the present Life, which is "to-day".

5395-A. The repetition emphasises both sides of Taqwá: "let your soul fear to do wrong and let it do every act of righteousness; for Allah observes both your inner motives and your acts, and in His scheme of things everything will have its due consequences."

5396. To forget Allah is to forget the only Eternal Reality.
20. Not equal are
The Companions of the Fire
And the Companions
Of the Garden:
It is the Companions
Of the Garden,
That will achieve Felicity.\textsuperscript{5397}

21. Had We sent down
This Qur-an on a mountain,\textsuperscript{5398}
Verily, thou wouldst have seen
It humble itself and cleave\textsuperscript{5399}
Asunder for fear of Allah.
Such are the similitudes
Which We propound to men,
That they may reflect.

22. Allah is He, than Whom
There is no other god;\textsuperscript{5400}
Who knows (all things)
Both secret and open;
He, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{5397} The others, the Companions of the Fire, will find their lives wasted and nullified. Their capacities will be rendered inert and their wishes will end in futility.

\textsuperscript{5398} There are two ideas associated in men's minds with a mountain: one is its height, and the other that it is rocky, stony, hard. Now comes the metaphor. The Revelation of Allah is so sublime that even the highest mountains humble themselves before it. The Revelation is so powerful and convincing that even the hard rock splits asunder under it. Will man then be so arrogant as to consider himself superior to such a tremendous Trust, or so hard-hearted as not to be affected by its powerful Message? The answer is "No" for unspoilt man; "Yes" for man when degraded by sin to be the vilest of creatures.

\textsuperscript{5399} Cf. vii. 143, and n. 1103, where, in the story of Moses, the Mount became as dust "when the Lord manifested His Glory". Also cf. xxxiii. 72, and n. 3778, where the mountains are mentioned as an emblem of stability, but as refusing to accept the Trust (\textit{Am\=i\=in\textit{i}lt}) because they felt themselves to be too humble to be equal to such a tremendous Trust.

\textsuperscript{5400} Here follows a passage of great sublimity, summing up the attributes of Allah. In this verse, we have the general attributes, which give us the fundamental basis on which we can form some idea of Allah. We start with the proposition that there is nothing else like Him. We think of His Unity; all the varying and conflicting forces in Creation are controlled by Him and look to Him, and we can never get a true idea of Him unless
23. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god; The Sovereign, the Holy One, The Source of Peace (and Perfection), The Guardian of Faith, The Preserver of Safety, The Exalted in Might, The Irresistible, the justly Proud
Glory to Allah! (High is He) Above the partners
They attribute to Him.

== we understand the meaning of Unity. His knowledge extends to everything seen and unseen, present and future, near and far, in being and not in being: in fact these contrasts, which apply to our knowledge, do not apply to Him. His Grace and His Mercy are unbounded: see i. 1, and n. 19; and unless we realise these, we can have no true conception of our position in the working of His Will and Plan.

5401. This phrase is repeated from the last verse in order to lead us to the contemplation of some other attributes of Allah, after we have realised those which form our fundamental conceptions of Allah. See the preceding and the following note.

5402. How can a translator reproduce the sublimity and the comprehensiveness of the magnificent Arabic words, which mean so much in a single symbol? (1) “The Sovereign” in our human language implies the one undisputed authority which is entitled to give commands and to receive obedience, and which in fact receives obedience; the power which enforces law and justice. (2) Human authority may be misused, but in the title “the Holy One”, we postulate a Being free from all stain or evil, and replete with the highest Purity. (3) “Sa/tim” has not only the idea of Peace as opposed to Conflict, but wholeness as opposed to defects: hence our paraphrase “Source of Peace and Perfection”. (4) Mù-min, one who entertains Faith, who gives Faith to others, who is never false to the Faith that others place in him: hence our paraphrase “Guardian of Faith”. (5) “Preserver of Safety”, guarding all from danger, corruption, loss, etc.; the word is used for the Qur-àn in v. 51. These are the attributes of kindness and benevolence: in the next note are described the attributes of power.

5403. See last note. (6) Allah is not only good, but He can carry out His Will. (7) And if anything resists or opposes Him, His Will prevails. (8) For He is Supreme, above all things and creatures. Thus we come back to the Unity with which we began in verse 22.

5404. Such being Allah’s attributes of Goodness and Power, how foolish is it of men to worship anything else but Him? Who can approach His glory and goodness?
24. He is Allah, the Creator,\textsuperscript{5405}  
The Originator,\textsuperscript{5406}  
The Fashione\textsuperscript{5407}  
To Him belong\textsuperscript{5408}  
The Most Beautiful Names:  
Whatever is in \nThe heavens and on earth,  
Doth declare\textsuperscript{5408}  
His Praises and Glory:  
And He is the Exalted  
In Might, the Wise.

\textsuperscript{5405} Allah's attributes of Goodness and Power having been referred to, we are now told of His creative energy, of which three aspects are here mentioned, as explained in the following note. The point is emphasised that He does not merely create and leave alone; He goes on fashioning, evolving new forms and colours, and sustaining all the energies and capacities which He has put into His Creation, according to various laws which He has established.

\textsuperscript{5406} The act or acts of creation have various aspects, and the various words used in this connection are summarised in n. 120 to ii. 117, as supplemented by n. 916 to vi. 94 and n. 923 to vi. 98. \textit{Khalaqa} is the general term for creation, and the Author of all Creation is \textit{Khaliq}. \textit{Baraa} implies a process of evolving from previously created matter or state: the Author of this process is \textit{Bari-u}, the Originator. \textit{Sawwara} implies giving definite form or colour, so as to make a thing exactly suited to a given end or object: hence the title \textit{Musawwir}, Fashioner for this shows the completion of the visible stage of creation.

\textsuperscript{5407} Cf. vii. 180, n. 1154; and xvii. 110, n. 2322.

\textsuperscript{5408} Thus the argument of the Sûra is rounded off on the same note as was struck at the beginning lix. 1. The first verse and the last verse of the Sûra are the same, except as regards the tense of the verb \textit{sabbaha}. In the first verse it is the optative form of the preterite \textit{sabbaha}: everything declares the Glory of Allah! After the illustrations given, the declaratory form of the aorist is appropriate, \textit{yusabbi}h\textit{u}: "everything doth declare the Glory of Allah."
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Mumtaḥana*, 60.

This is the fourth of the ten Madinah Surās, each dealing with a special point in the life of the Ummat.

Here the point is: what social relations are possible with the Unbelievers? A distinction is made between those who persecute you for your Faith and want to destroy you and your Faith, and those who have shown no such rancour. The question of women and cross-marriages is equitably dealt with.

The date is after the Pagans had broken the treaty of Ḥudaibīya, for which see Introduction to S. xlviii.,—say about A.H. 8, not long before the conquest of Makkah.

*Summary.*—The enemies of your Faith, who would exterminate you and your Faith, are not fit objects of your love: follow Abraham’s example: but with those Unbelievers who show no rancour, you should deal with kindness and justice: marriages between Believers and Unbelievers. (lx. 1-13).
Al-Mumtaḥana, or the Woman to be Examined. (lx. 10)

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O ye who believe!
   Take not My enemies And yours as friends (Or protectors),—offering them\(^{5409}\) (Your) love, even though They have rejected the Truth That has come to you, And have (on the contrary) Driven out the Messenger And yourselves (from your homes), (Simply) because ye believe In Allah your Lord\(^{5410}\)
   If ye have come out To strive in My Way And to seek My Good Pleasure, Showing friendship unto them In secret: for I know Full well all that ye Conceal and all that ye Reveal. And any of you That does this has strayed From the Straight Path.

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\(^{5409}\) The immediate occasion for this was a secret letter sent by one Ḥāṭib, a Muhājir, from Madinah, to the Pagans at Makkah, in most friendly terms, seeking for their protection on behalf of his children and relatives left behind in Makkah. The letter was intercepted, and he confessed the truth. He was forgiven as he told the truth and his motive did not appear to be heinous, but this instruction was given for future guidance. This was shortly before the conquest of Makkah, but the principle is of universal application. You cannot be on terms of secret intimacy with the enemies of your Faith and people, who are persecuting your Faith and seeking to destroy your Faith and you. You may not do so even for the sake of your relatives as it compromises the life and existence of your whole community.

\(^{5410}\) Such was the position of the Muslim community in Madinah after the Hijrat and before the conquest of Makkah.
2. If they overcome you

They would behave to you
As enemies, and stretch forth
Their hands and their tongues
Against you for evil;
And they desire that ye
Should reject the Truth.

3. Of no profit to you

Will be your relatives
And your children
On the Day of Judgment:
He will judge between you:
For Allah sees well
All that ye do.

4. There is for you
An excellent example (to follow)
In Abraham and those with him,
When they said
To their people:
“We are clear of you
And of whatever ye worship
Besides Allah: we have rejected

5411. Besides the question of your fidelity to your own people, even your own selfish interests require you to beware of secret intrigues with enemies. They will welcome you as cat’s paw. But what will happen when they have used you and got the better of you and your people! Then they will show you their hand. And a heavy hand it will be! Not only will they injure you with their hands but with their tongues! The only words they will use for you will be “Traitors to their own”! If they intrigue with you now, it is to prevent you from the Path of Truth and righteousness and win you over to their evil ways.

5412. The plea of children and relatives (see n. 5409 above) will be no excuse for treachery when the Day of Judgment comes. Your children and family will not save you. The Judgment will be in the hands of Allah, and He has full knowledge of all your overt and hidden acts and motives.

5413. See ix. 114. Abraham was tender-hearted, and loyal to his father and his people. He warned them against idolatry and sin, and prayed for his father, but when his father and his people became open enemies of Allah, Abraham entirely dissociated himself from them, and left his home, his father, his people, and his country. Those with him were his believing wife and nephew Lūṭ and any other Believers that went into exile with him.
You, and there has arisen,  
Between us and you, enmity
And hatred for ever,—unless  
Ye believe in Allah  
And Him alone":  
But not when Abraham  
Said to his father:  
"I will pray for forgiveness  
For thee, though I have  
No power (to get) aught  
On thy behalf from Allah."  
(They prayed): “Our Lord!  
In Thee do we trust,  
And to Thee do we turn  
In repentance: to Thee  
Is (our) final Return.  
5. “Our Lord! Make us not  
A (test and) trial  
For the Unbelievers,  
But forgive us, our Lord!  
For Thou art the Exalted  
In Might, the Wise.”  

5414. The enemies of Allah are enemies of the righteous, and they hate the righteous. Therefore the righteous must cut themselves off eternally from them, unless they repent and come back to Allah. In that case they receive Allah's mercy and are entitled to all the rights of love and brotherhood. This shows that our detestation is for evil, not for men as such long as there is a chance for repentance. See also verse 7 below. But we must give no chance to Evil for working evil on our Brotherhood at any time.

5415. Refer again to ix. 114, n. 1365: and n. 5413 above. Abraham's conduct is not condemned: it was a special case, and is not to be imitated by weaker men, who may fall into sin by thinking too much of sinners.

5416. This prayer indicates what our attitude should be. We must trust to Allah, and not to Allah's enemies to protect and befriend ourselves, our families, or those near and dear to us.

5417. In n. 1198 to viii. 25, I have explained the shades of meaning in the word Fitnat. In ii. 102 Hārūt and Mārūt were a trial to test the righteous who trusted in Allah from the unrighteous who resorted to evil and superstition. Here the prayer to Allah is that we should be saved from becoming so weak as to tempt the Unbelievers to try to attack and destroy us.
6. There was indeed in them\(^{5418}\) An excellent example for you To follow—for those Whose hope is in Allah And in the last Day. But if any turn away, Truly Allah is Free of all\(^{5419}\) Wants, Worthy of all Praise.

SECTION 2

7. It may be that Allah Will Establish friendship\(^{5420}\) Between you and those whom Ye (now) hold as enemies. For Allah has power (Over all things); And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

8. Allah forbids you not, With regard to those who Fight you not for (your) Faith Nor drive you out Of your homes, From dealing kindly and justly\(^{5421}\) With them: For Allah loveth Those who are just.

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5418. *In them*: i.e. in their attitude of prayer and reliance on Allah, and of dissociation from evil.

5419. If any one rejects Allah's Message or Law, the loss is his own. It is not Allah Who needs him or his worship or his sacrifice or his praise. Allah is independent of all wants, and His attributes are inherently deserving of all praise, whether the wicked give such praise or not, in word or deed.

5420. Apparent religious hatred or enmity or persecution may be due to ignorance or over-zeal in a soul, which Allah will forgive and use eventually in His service, as happened in the case of Hadhrat 'Umar, who was a different man before and after his conversion. As stated in n. 5414 above, we should hate evil, but not men as such.

5421. Even with Unbelievers, unless they are rampant and out to destroy us and our Faith, we should deal kindly and equitably, as is shown by our holy Prophet's own example.
9. Allah only forbids you,
With regard to those who
Fight you for (your) Faith,
And drive you out
Of your homes, and support
(Others) in driving you out,
From turning to them
(For friendship and protection).
It is such as turn to them
(In these circumstances),
That do wrong.

10. O ye who believe!
When there come to you
Believing women refugees,
Examine (and test) them:
Allah knows best as to
Their Faith: if ye ascertain
That they are Believers,
Then send them not back
To the Unbelievers.
They are not lawful (wives)
For the Unbelievers, nor are

5422. Under the treaty of Ḥudaibiya [see Introduction to S. xlviii, paragraph 4, condition (3)], women under guardianship (including married women), who fled from the Quraish in Makkah to the Prophet's protection at Madinah were to be sent back. But before this Ayat was issued, the Quraish had already broken the treaty, and some instruction was necessary as to what the Madinah Muslims should do in those circumstances. Muslim women married to Pagan husbands in Makkah were oppressed for their Faith, and some of them came to Madinah as refugees. After this, they were not to be returned to the custody of their Pagan husbands at Makkah, as the marriage of believing women with non-Muslims was held to be dissolved if the husbands did not accept Islam. But in order to give no suspicion to the Pagans that they were badly treated as they lost the dower they had given on marriage, that dower was to be repaid to the husbands. Thus helpless women refugees were to be protected at the cost of the Muslims.

5423. The condition was that they should be Muslim women. How were the Muslims to know? A non-Muslim woman, in order to escape from her lawful guardians in Makkah, might pretend that she was a Muslim. The true state of her mind and heart would be known to Allah alone. But if the Muslims, on an examination of the woman, found that she professed Islam, she was to have protection. The examination would be directed (among other things) to the points mentioned in verse 12 below.
The (Unbelievers) lawful (husbands) For them. But pay The Unbelievers what they Have spent (on their dower). And there will be no blame On you if ye marry them\(^{5424}\) On payment of their dower To them. But hold not To the ties (marriage contract) of\(^{5425}\) Unbelieving women: ask For what ye have spent On their dowers, and let The (Unbelievers) ask for What they have spent (On the dowers of women Who come over to you). Such is the command Of Allah: He judges (With justice) between you. And Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom.

11. And if any Of your wives deserts you To the Unbelievers,\(^{5426}\)

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5424. As the marriage was held to be dissolved (see n. 5422 above), there was no bar to the remarriage of the refugee Muslim woman with a Muslim man on the payment of the usual dower to her.

5425. Unbelieving women in a Muslim society would only be a clog and a handicap. There would be neither happiness for them, nor could they conduce in any way to a healthy life of the society in which they lived as aliens. They were to be sent away, as their marriage was held to be dissolved; and the dowers paid to them were to be demanded from the guardians to whom they were sent back, just as in the contrary case the dowers of believing women were to be paid back to their Pagan ex-husbands (n. 5422 above).

5426. A very unlikely contingency, considering how much better position the women occupied in Islam than under Pagan custom. But all contingencies have to be provided for equitably in legislation. If a woman went over to the Pagans, her dower would be recoverable from the Pagans and payable to the deserted husband. If a woman came over from the Pagans, her dower would be payable to the Pagans.
And ye have your turn
(By the coming over of
A woman from the other side).
Then pay to those
Whose wives have deserted
The equivalent of what they
Had spent (on their dower).
And fear Allah,
In Whom ye believe.

12. O Prophet!\(^{5427}\)
When believing women come
To thee to take the oath
Of fealty to thee, that they
Will not associate in worship
Any other thing whatever
With Allah, that they
Will not steal, that they
Will not commit adultery
(Or fornication), that they
Will not kill their children,
That they will not utter
Slander, intentionally forging

dowers were equal, the one would be set off against the other as between the two communities; but within the communities the deserted individual would be compensated by the individual who gains a wife. If the dowers were unequal, the balance would be recoverable as between the communities, and the adjustment would then be made as between the individuals.

\(^{5427}\). Now come directions as to the points on which women entering Islam should pledge themselves. Similar points apply to men, but here the question is about women, and especially such as were likely, in those early days of Islam, to come from Pagan society into Muslim society in the conditions discussed in notes 5422 and 5423 above. A pledge on these points would search out their real motives: (1) to worship none but Allah; (2) not to steal; (3) not to indulge in sex outside the marriage tie; (4) not to commit infanticide; (the Pagan Arabs were prone to female infanticide); (5) not to indulge in slander or scandal; and (6) generally, to obey loyally the law and principles of Islam. The last was a comprehensive and sufficient phrase, but it was good to indicate also the special points to which attention was to be directed in those special circumstances. Obedience was of course to be in all things just and reasonable: Islam requires strict discipline but not slavishness.
Falsehood, 5427-A and that they will not disobey thee in any just matter;—then do thou receive their fealty, and pray to Allah 5428 for the forgiveness of their sins: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

13. O ye who believe! Turn not (for friendship) to people on whom is the Wrath of Allah. 5429 Of the Hereafter they are already in despair, just as The Unbelievers are in despair about those (Buried) in graves. 5430

5427-A. “That they will not utter slander intentionally forging falsehood”. Literally, “...nor produce any lie that they have devised between their hands and feet,”. These words mean that they should not falsely attribute the paternity of their illegitimate children to their lawful husbands thereby adding to the monstrosity of their original sin of infidelity.

5428. If pledges are sincerely given for future conduct, admission to Islam is open. If there is anything in the past, for which there is evidence of sincere repentance, forgiveness is to be prayed for. Allah forgives in such cases: how can man refuse to give such cases a real chance?

5429. So we come back to the theme with which we started in this Sûra: that we should not turn for friendship and intimacy to those who break Allah’s Law and are outlaws in Allah’s Kingdom. The various phrases of this question, and the legitimate qualifications, have already been mentioned, and the argument is here rounded off. Cf. also lviii. 14.

5430. The Unbelievers, who do not believe in a Future Life, can therefore have no hope beyond this life. Miserable indeed is this life to them; for the ills of this life are real to them, and they can have no hope of redress. But such is also the state of others—People of the Book or not—who wallow in sin and incur the divine Wrath. Even if they believe in a Future Life, it can only be to them a life of horror, punishment, and despair. For those of Faith the prospect is different. They may suffer in this life, but this life to them is only a fleeting shadow that will soon pass away. The Reality is beyond; there will be full redress in the Beyond, and Achievement and Felicity such as they can scarcely conceive of in the terms of this life.
INTRODUCTION TO SURAT Aṣ-Ṣaḥḥ, 61.

This is the fifth Sūra of the series of short Madinah Sūras beginning with S. lvii. Its subject-matter is the need for discipline, practical work, and self-sacrifice in the case of the Ummat. Its date is uncertain, but it was probably shortly after the battle of Uḥud, which was fought in Shawwāl. A.H. 3.

Summary.—Allah’s Glory shines through all Creation: but what discipline can you show to back your words with action? What lessons can you learn from the stories of Moses and Jesus? Help the Cause, and Allah’s help will come with glorious results (lxi. 1-14).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, declares the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

2. O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? Grievously hateful is it in the sight of Allah that ye say that which ye do not.

3. Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.

5431. This verse is identical with lix. 1. The latter illustrated the theme of the wonderful working of Allah's providence in defeating the wiles of His enemies. Here the same theme is illustrated by showing the need for unshaken discipline if we are to receive the help of Allah.

5432. At Uhud there was some disobedience and therefore breach of discipline. People had talked much, but had failed to back up their resolution in words with firmness in action. See n. 442 to iii. 121. But on all occasions when men's deeds are not commensurate with their words, their conduct is odious in the sight of Allah, and it is only due to Allah's Mercy if they are saved from disaster.

5433. A battle array, in which a large number of men stand, march, or hold together against assault as if they were a solid wall, is a striking example of order, discipline, cohesion, and courage. "A solid cemented structure" is even a better simile than the usual "solid wall" as the "structure" or building implies a more diversified organisation held together in unity and strength, each part contributing strength in its own way, and the whole held together not like a mass but like a living organism. Cf. also xxxvii. I and n. 4031.
5. And remember, Moses said:
And remember, Moses said: "O my people! Why do ye vex and insult Me, though ye know That I am the messenger Of Allah (sent) to you?" Then when they went wrong, Allah let their hearts go wrong. For Allah guides not those Who are rebellious transgressors.

6. And remember, Jesus, The son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (Sent) to you, confirming The Taurat (which came) Before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a messenger To come after me, Whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them

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5434. The people of Moses often rebelled against him, vexed his spirit, and insulted him. See xxxiii. 69, n. 3774, and (in the Old Testament) Num xii. 1-13. They did it not through ignorance, but from a selfish, perverse, and rebellious spirit, for which they received punishment. The Ummat of Islam should remember and take note of it, and should avoid any deviation from the Law and Will of Allah.

5435. The sinner’s own will deviates, i.e., goes off from the right way, and he does wrong. That means that he shuts off Allah’s grace. Allah then, after his repeated rebellion, withdraws the protecting Grace from him, and the sinner’s heart is tainted: there is “a disease in his heart”, which is the centre of his being: his spiritual state is ruined. Allah’s guidance is withdrawn from him.

5436. The mission of Jesus was to his own people, the Jews. Cf. Matt. x. 5-6. See also Matt. xv. 24: “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel;” also Matt. xv. 26: “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.”


5438. “Ahmad”, or “Muhammad, the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word Periclytos. In the present Gospel of John, xiv. 16, xv. 26, and xvi. 7, the word “Comforter” in the English version is for the Greek word “Paracletos”, which means “Advocate”, “one called to the help of another, a kind friend”, rather than “Comforter”. =
With Clear Signs, 5439
They said, “This is Evident sorcery!”

7. Who doth greater wrong
   Than one who forges
   Falsehood against Allah,
   Even as he is being invited 5440
   To Islām? And Allah
   Guides not those
   Who do wrong.

8. Their intention is
   To extinguish Allah’s Light
   (By blowing) with their mouths: 5441
   But Allah will complete
   His Light,
   Even though the Unbelievers
   May detest (it).

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Our doctors contend that Paracleots is a corrupt reading for Periclytos, and that in their original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of our holy Prophet Ahmad by name. Even if we read Paraclete, it would apply to the holy Prophet, who is “a Mercy for all creatures” (xxi. 107) and “most kind and merciful to the Believers” (ix. 128). See also n. 416 to iii. 81.

5439. Our holy Prophet was foretold in many ways; and when he came, he showed forth many Clear Signs, for his whole life from beginning to end was one vast miracle. He fought and won against odds. Without learning from men he taught the highest wisdom. He melted hearts that were hard, and he strengthened hearts that were tender and required support. In all his sayings and doings men of discernment could see the working of Allah’s hand; yet the ignorant Unbelievers called it all Sorcery!—called that unreal which became the most solid fact of human history!

5440. It is wrong in any case to uphold falsehoods and debasing superstitions, but it is doubly wrong when these are put forward in rivalry or opposition to the light of eternal Unity and Harmony which is Islam. Allah sends His guidance freely, but withdraws His Grace from those who wilfully do wrong.

5441. Allah’s Light is unquenchable. A foolish, ignorant person who thinks of extinguishing it is like a rustic who wants to blow out electric light as he might blow out a rush candle! “With their mouths” also implies the babble and cackle of Ignorance against Allah’s Truth. The more the foolish ones try to quench Allah’s Light, the clearer it shines, to shame them!
9. It is He Who has sent
His Messenger with Guidance
And the Religion of Truth.
That He make it prevail
Over all religion,\textsuperscript{5442}
Even though the Pagans
May detest (it).

SECTION 2.

10. O ye who believe!
Shall I lead you
To a bargain\textsuperscript{5443} that will
Save you from
A grievous Chastisement?–

11. That ye believe in Allah
And His Messenger, and that
Ye strive (your utmost)
In the Cause of Allah,
With your wealth
And your persons:
That will be best for you,
If ye but knew!\textsuperscript{5444}

\textsuperscript{5442.} "Over all religion": in the singular: not over all other religions, in the plural. There is really only one true Religion, the Message of Allah submission to the Will of Allah: this is called Islam. It was the religion preached by Moses and Jesus; it was the religion of Abraham, Noah, and all the prophets, by whatever name it may be called. If people corrupt that pure light, and call their religions by different names, we must bear with them, and we may allow the names for convenience. But Truth must prevail over all. See also ix. 33, n. 1290, and lxviii. 28, n. 4912.

\textsuperscript{5443.} \textit{Tijârat}: bargain, trade, traffic, transaction: something given or done, in return for something which we desire to get. What we give or do on our part is described in verse 11 below, and what we get is described in verse 12. It is truly a wonderful bargain: what we are asked to give is so little; what we are promised in return is so much. There comes Allah's unbounded Bounty and Munificence. \textit{Cf.} also ix. 111, where the bargain is stated in another way.

\textsuperscript{5444.} It would indeed be a great and wonderful bargain to give so little and get so much, if we only knew and understood the comparative value of things—the sacrifice of our fleeting advantages for forgiveness, the love of Allah, and eternal bliss.
12. He will forgive you
Your sins, and admit you
To Gardens beneath which
Rivers flow, and to beautiful
Mansions in Gardens
Of Eternity: that is indeed
The supreme Triumph.

13. And another (favour
Will He bestow), which ye Do love,—help from Allah
And a speedy victory.
So give the Glad Tidings To the Believers.

14. O ye who believe!
Be ye helpers of Allah: As said Jesus the son of Mary To the Disciples, “Who will be
My helpers to (the work Of) Allah?” Said the Disciples, “We are Allah’s helpers!”
Then a portion of the Children Of Israel believed, and
A portion disbelieved:

5445. The supreme Achievement has already been mentioned *viz.;* the Gardens of Eternity with Allah. But lest that seem too remote or abstract for the understanding of men not strong in faith, another good news is mentioned which the men who first heard this Message could at once understand and appreciate—*which ye do love*: *viz.:* Help and Victory. For all striving in a righteous Cause we get Allah’s help: and however much the odds against us may be, we are sure of victory with Allah’s help. But all life is a striving or struggle,—the spiritual life even more than any other; and the final victory there is the same as the Garden of Eternity.

5446. If we seek Allah’s help, we must first help Allah’s Cause, *i.e.,* dedicate ourselves to Him entirely and without reserve. This was also the teaching of Jesus, as mentioned in this verse.

5447. See iii. 52, and n. 392; and for the Biblical reference, see the last note. The names of the twelve Disciples will be found in Matt. x. 2-4.
But We gave power
To those who believed
Against their enemies,
And they became
The ones that prevailed.

5448. A portion of the Children of Israel—the one that really cared for Truth—believed in Jesus and followed his guidance. But the greater portion of them were hard hearted, and remained in their beaten track of formalism and false racial pride. The majority seemed at first to have the upper hand when they thought they had crucified Jesus and killed his Message. But they were soon brought to their senses. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70 and the Jews have been scattered ever since. “The Wandering Jew” has become a bye-word in many literatures. On the other hand, those who followed Jesus permeated the Roman Empire, brought many new races within their circle, and through the Roman Empire, Christianity became the predominant religion of the world until the advent of Islam. So is it promised to the people of Islām: they must prevail if they adhere to the Truth. Badr (A.H. 2) was a landmark against Pagan Arabia; Qādisīya (A.H. 14) and Madā’in (A.H. 16) against the might of Persia; Yarmūk (A.H. 15) against the might of the Byzantine Empire in Christian Syria; and Heliopolis (A.H. 19) against the same Empire in Christian Egypt and Africa. These were symbols in external events. The moral and spiritual landmarks are less tangible, and more gradual, but none the less real. Mark how the arrogance and power of Priesthood have been quelled; how superstition and a belief in blind Fate have been checked; how the freedom of human individuals has been reconciled with the sanctity of marriage in the law of Divorce; how the civil position of women has been raised; how temperance and sobriety have been identified with religion; what impetus has been given to knowledge and experimental science; and how economic reconstruction has been pioneered by rational schemes for the expenditure and distribution of wealth.
INTRODUCTION TO SÚRAT Al-Jumu‘a, 62.

This is the sixth Súra in the Madinah series of short Súras which began with S. lvii.

The special theme here is the need for mutual contact in the Community for worship and understanding: for the spirit of the Message is for all, ignorant and learned, in order that they may be purified and may learn wisdom.

The date has no special significance: it may be placed in the early Madinah period, say between A.H. 2 and 5.

Summary.—The Revelation has come among unlearned men, to teach purity and wisdom not only to them but to others, including those who may have an older Message but do not understand it: meet solemnly for the Assembly (Friday) Prayer, and let not worldly interests deflect you therefrom. (lxii. 1-11).
Al-Jumu'a, or the Assembly (Friday) Prayer.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Whatever is
In the heavens and
On earth, doth declare\textsuperscript{5449}
The Praises and Glory
Of Allah,--the Sovereign,\textsuperscript{5450}
The Holy One, the Exalted
In Might, the Wise.

2. It is He Who has sent
Amongst the Unlettered\textsuperscript{5451}
A messenger from among
Themselves, to rehearse
To them His Signs,\textsuperscript{5452}
To purify them, and
To instruct them in The Book\textsuperscript{5453}

\textsuperscript{5449.} See n. 5408 to lix. 24, where I have explained the difference in signification between \textit{sabba} and \textit{yusabbi}u. The latter form is used here, to express an actual fact. 'Everything declares the Praises and Glory of Allah, because Allah's mercies extend to all His creatures: He sends His Revelation for the benefit of the ignorant and unlettered as well as for those who have learning in their midst, especially as the latter are apt, by the very weight of their ponderous learning, to miss the real point and spirit of Allah's Message.'

\textsuperscript{5450.} See lix. 23, and n. 5402. Here we have two of the divine attributes repeated from lix. 23 and two from the end of lix. 24, implying a reminiscence of all the beautiful divine attributes mentioned in that passage.

\textsuperscript{5451.} \textit{The Unlettered:} as applied to a people, it refers to the Arabs, in comparison with the People of the Book, who had a longer tradition of learning, but whose failure is referred to in verse 5 below. As applied to individuals, it means that Allah's Revelation is for the benefit of all men, whether they have worldly learning or not.

\textsuperscript{5452.} \textit{His Signs:} Allah's wonderful Signs in His Creation and in His ordering of the world. It may include the Verses of the Qur-\textasciitilde{an}, but they are more specifically referred to as "Book" in the next line but one.

\textsuperscript{5453.} Cf. ii. 129, and n. 129. Read again the attributes in the last verse. Allah is full Sovereign, and therefore cares for all His subjects, including the meanest and most ignorant, and sends His prophets or messengers to them. He is the Holy One, and therefore purifies and sanctifies those who were steeped in superstition and wickedness. =
And Wisdom,—although\textsuperscript{5454} They had been, before, In manifest error;—

3. Alongwith others of them,\textsuperscript{5455} who Have not already joined them: And He is Exalted In Might, Wise.

4. Such is the Bounty of Allah, Which He bestows On whom He will:\textsuperscript{5456} And Allah is the Lord Of the highest bounty.

5. The similitude of those Who were entrusted With the (obligations Of) Taurat, But who subsequently failed In those (obligations), is That of a donkey\textsuperscript{5457} = He is Exalted in Power, and therefore He can confer all these blessings on the most unlikely people (verse 3), and no one can stay His hand. He is wise, and therefore He instructs in wisdom, both through written Scriptures, and in other ways, \textit{e.g.,} by means of a knowledge of life and its laws, and an understanding of His wonderful universe.

\textsuperscript{5454} Previous ignorance or error is no bar to a person or nation receiving the blessings of Allah’s revelation, provided such person or nation has the will to come to Allah and the capacity to bear His Message. For an instance of incapacity through arrogance, see verse 6 below.

\textsuperscript{5455} \textit{Others of them: \textit{i.e.,}} others than those among whom the holy Prophet came as a messenger. In other words his Message is for his Arab people and his non-Arab contemporaries as well as those who live in other ages, and have no personal contact with him or his Companions.

\textsuperscript{5456} That is, according to His wise Will and Plan, and also as a result of His unbounded generosity to all.

\textsuperscript{5457} The Children of Israel were chosen as special vehicles for Allah’s Message early in history. When their descendants corrupted the Message and became guilty of all the abominations against which prophets like Isaiah inveighed with such zeal and fire, they merely became like beasts of burden that carry learning and wisdom on their backs but do not understand or profit by it.
Which carries huge tomes
(But understands them not).
Evil is the similitude
Of people who falsify
The Signs of Allah:
And Allah guides not
People who do wrong.

6. Say: “O ye of Jewry! If ye think that ye Are friends to Allah, To the exclusion of (Other) men, then express Your desire for Death, If ye are truthful!”

7. But never will they Express their desire (For Death), because of The (deeds) their hands Have sent on before them! And Allah knows well Those that do wrong!

8. Say: “The Death from which Ye flee will truly Overtake you: then will Ye be sent back To the Knower of things Secret and open: and He

5458. Of Jewry is a very different thing from following the Law and Will of Allah. An arrogant claim to be a chosen people, to be the exclusive possessors of divine teaching, to be exempt from any punishment for breaches of the divine law, (cf. ii. 88), is presumptuous blasphemy. It may be Judaism, but it is not in the spirit of Moses.

5459. Cf. ii. 94-96. If they claimed to be special friends of Allah, why do they not eagerly desire death, which would bring them nearer to Allah? But of all people they are the most tenacious of this life and the good things of this life! And they know that their grasping selfish lives have run up a score of sin against them, which will meet its recompense.
Will tell you. The things that ye did!

SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!
When the call is proclaimed
To prayer on Friday (The Day of Assembly),
Hasten earnestly to the Remembrance
Of Allah, and leave off
Business (and traffic).

5460. Before Allah’s Judgment-Seat, when Judgment is established, we shall see the full inwardness of all deeds in this world. The veil of illusion and delusion will be torn off. All our secret motives will be laid bare. The results of all our little plots and plans and their reactions on our eternal welfare will be clearly visible to us. All make-believe will disappear.

5461. Friday, is primarily the Day of Assembly, the weekly meeting of the Congregation, when we show our unity by sharing in common public worship, preceded by a Khutba, in which the Imam (or Leader) reviews the week’s life of the Community and offers advice and exhortation on good living. Notice the gradations of social contact for Muslims if they followed the wise ordinances of their Faith. (1) Each individual remembers Allah for himself or herself five or more times every day in the home or place of business, or local mosque, or open air, as the case may be. (2) On Friday in every week there is a local meeting in the central mosque of each local centre,—it may be a village, or town, or ward of a big city. (3) At the two ‘ids every year, there is a large local area meeting in one centre. (4) Once at least in a lifetime, where possible, a Muslim shares in the vast international assemblage of the world, in the centre of Islam, at the Makkah Pilgrimage. A happy combination of decentralisation and centralisation, of individual liberty and collective meeting, and contact at various stages or grades. The mechanical part of this ordinance is easy to carry out. Are we carrying out the more difficult part—the spirit of unity, brotherhood, mutual consultation, and collective understanding and action?

5462. The idea behind the Muslim weekly “Day of Assembly” is different from that behind the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) or the Christian Sunday. The Jewish Sabbath is primarily a commemoration of Allah’s ending His work and resting on the seventh day (Gen. ii. 2; Exod. xx. 11): we are taught that Allah needs no rest, nor does He feel fatigue (ii. 255). The Jewish command forbids work on that day but says nothing about worship or prayer (Exod. xx. 10); our ordinance lays chief stress on the remembrance of Allah. Jewish formalism went so far as to kill the spirit of the sabbath, and call forth the protest of Jesus: “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” =
That is best for you
If ye but knew.  

10. And when the Prayer
Is finished, then may ye
Disperse through the land,
And seek of the Bounty
Of Allah: and
Remember Allah frequently
That ye may prosper.

11. But when they see
Some bargain or some
Pastime, they disperse
Headlong to it, and leave
Thee standing. Say:
“That which Allah
Has is better than
Any pastime or bargain!
And Allah is the Best
To provide (for all needs).”

= (Mark. ii. 27). But the Christian Church, although it has changed the day from Saturday to Sunday, has inherited the Jewish spirit: witness the Scottish Sabbath; except in so far as it has been secularised. Our teaching says: ‘When the time for Jumu’a Prayer comes, close your business and answer the summons loyally and earnestly, meet earnestly, pray, consult and learn by social contact; when the meeting is over, scatter and go about your business’.

5463. The immediate and temporal worldly gain may be the ultimate and spiritual loss, and vice versa.

5464. Prosperity is not to be measured by wealth or worldly gains. There is a higher prosperity,—the health of the mind and the spirit.

5465. Do not be distracted by the craze for amusement or gain. If you lead a righteous and sober life, Allah will provide for you in all senses, better than any provision you can possibly think of.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Munāfiqūn, 63.

This is the seventh of the ten short Madinah Sūras dealing with a special feature in the social life of the Brotherhood.

The special feature here dealt with is the wiles and mischief of the Hypocrite element in any community, and the need of guarding against it and against the temptation it throws in the way of the Believers.

The battle of Uhud (Shawwāl A.H. 3) unmasked the Hypocrites in Madinah: see iii. 167, and n. 476. This Sūra may be referred to some time after that event, say about 4 A.H. or possibly 5 A.H. if the words reported in verse 8 were uttered in the expedition against the Banūl' Muṣṭaliq, A.H. 5. (See n. 5475 below).

Summary.—False are the oaths of the Hypocrites: they only seek selfish ends: Believers should beware of their wiles and strive devotedly always for the Cause (lxiii. 1-11).
Al-Munāfiqūn, or the Hypocrites

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. When the Hypocrites⁵⁴⁶⁶
   Come to thee, they say, "We bear witness that thou
   Art indeed the Messenger
   Of Allah." Yea, Allah
   Knoweth that thou art
   Indeed His Messenger.
   And Allah beareth witness
   That the Hypocrites are
   Indeed liars.

2. They have made their oaths⁵⁴⁶⁷
   A screen (for their misdeeds):
   Thus they obstruct (men)
   From the Path of Allah:
   Truly evil are their deeds.

3. That is because they believed,
   Then they rejected Faith:
   So a seal was set⁵⁴⁶⁸
   On their hearts: therefore
   They understand not.

⁵⁴⁶⁶. The hypocrite element, if one exists in any society, is a source of weakness and a danger to its health and its very existence. When the holy Prophet came to Madinah in Ḥijrat, his arrival was welcome to all the patriotic citizens: it not only united them in common life and healed their old differences, but it brought honour and light to them in the person of the greatest living Prophet. But there were some baser elements filled with envy. Such hopes as they had entertained of attaining power and leadership by playing on the animosities of the factions were now dashed to the ground. They now began to work underground. For fear of the majority they dared not oppose the new growing Brotherhood of Righteousness. They tried to undermine it by intriguing secretly with its enemies and swearing openly its loyalty to the holy Prophet. They were thoroughly unmasked and discredited at the battle of Uhud. See iii. 167, and n. 476.

⁵⁴⁶⁷. Cf. Iviii. 16 and n. 5358. When they say that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah, it is Allah's own truth: but what is in their hearts? Nothing but falsehood.

⁵⁴⁶⁸. Cf. ii. 7. Their double-dealing has fogged their understanding. In Arabic the heart is taken to be the seat of understanding as well as of affection.
4. When thou lookest
At them, their bodies ᵇ⁴⁶⁹
Please thee; and when
They speak, thou listonest
To their words. They are
As (worthless as hollow)
Pieces of timber propped up, ᵇ⁴⁷⁰
(Unable to stand on their own).
They think that every
Cry is against them. ᵇ⁴⁷¹
They are the enemies;
So beware of them.
The curse of Allah be
On them! How are they
Deluded (away from the Truth)!

5. And when it is said
To them, “Come, the Messenger
Of Allah will pray for your ᵇ⁴⁷²
Forgiveness”, They turn aside
Their heads, and thou wouldst
See them turning away
Their faces in arrogance.

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5469. The Hypocrites at all times are plausible people, and so were the Hypocrites of Madinah. They present a fine exterior; they dress well; they can usually afford fine equipages; they try to win the confidence of every one, as they have no scruples in telling lies, and apparently expressing agreement with every one. Their words are fair-spoken, and as truth does not check their tongues, their flattery and deception know no bounds. But all this is on the outside. As they have no sincerity, nothing that they say or do is worth anything.

5470. Good timber is strong in itself and can support roofs and buildings. Hollow timber is useless, and has to be propped up against other things. The Hypocrites are like rotten timber. They have no firm character themselves, and for others they are unsafe props to rely upon.

5471. Their conscience always troubles them. If any cry is raised, they immediately get alarmed, and think it is against themselves. Such men are worse than open enemies.

5472. Even hypocrisy like other sins can be forgiven by repentance and amendment, provided there is a will and earnest desire to turn from evil and seek the Grace of Allah. In this case there was none.
6. It is equal to them Whether thou pray for Their forgiveness or not.\(^{5473}\) Allah will not forgive them. Truly Allah guides not Rebellious transgressors.

7. They are the ones who say, “Spend nothing on those Who are with Allah’s Messenger,\(^{5474}\) Till they disperse (And quit Madinah).” But to Allah belong The treasures of the heavens And the earth; but The Hypocrites understand not.

8. They say, “If we\(^{5475}\) Return to Madinah, surely The more honourable (element) Will expel therefrom the meaner”. But honour belongs to Allah

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5473. The stiff-necked rejecters of Allah’s Truth have made a wide gulf between themselves and Allah’s Grace. No prayer for them will help them. In the attitude of rebellion and transgression they cannot obtain Allah’s forgiveness.

5474. The Muhājidūn, who had come to be with the holy Prophet in Madinah in exile, were received, helped, entertained by the Ansār (Helpers). The Hypocrites in Madinah did not like this, and tried in underhand ways to dissuade the good folk of Madinah from doing all they could for the exiles. But their tricks did not succeed. The small Muslim community grew from strength to strength until they were able to stand on their own resources and greatly to augment the resources of their hosts as well. It is goodness that produces strength and prosperity, and Allah holds the keys of the treasures of man’s well-being. It is not for Allah’s enemies to dole out or withhold the unbounded treasures of Allah.

5475. Words of this import were spoken by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubaī, the leader of the Madinah Hypocrites, to or about the Exiles, in the course of the expedition against the Banū Mustaʿlīq in the fourth or fifth year of the Hijra. He had hopes of leadership which were disappointed by the coming to Madinah of a man far greater than he. So he arrogated to himself and his clique the title of “the more honourable (element)” and slightly spoke of the Emigrants as the “meaner” element that had intruded from outside.
And His Messenger, and
To the Believers; but
The Hypocrites know not.

SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!
Let not your riches
Or your children divert you
From the remembrance of Allah.
If any act thus,
Surely they are the losers. 5476

10. And spend something (in charity)
Out of the substance 5477
Which We have bestowed
On you, before Death
Should come to any of you
And he should say,
"O my Lord! Why didst
Thou not give me
Respite for a little while?
I should then have given
(Largely) in charity, and I
Should have been one
Of the doers of good".

5476. Riches and human resources of all kinds are but fleeting sources of enjoyment. They should not turn away the good man from his devotion to Allah. “Remembrance of Allah” includes every act of service and goodness, every kind thought and kind deed, for this is the service and sacrifice which Allah requires of us. If we fail in this, the loss is our own, not any one else’s: for it stunts our own spiritual growth.

5477. “Substance” or “Sustenance”. Whatever good we enjoy comes from Allah, and it is our duty to use some of it in the service of others, for that is Charity and the service of Allah. Every unselfish act is Charity. And we must not postpone our good resolutions to the future. Death may come suddenly on us, and we cannot then be allowed to plead for more time. Every present moment calls urgently for its good deed.
11. But to no soul
Will Allah grant respite\footnote{5478}
When the time appointed
(For it) has come; and Allah
Is well acquainted
With (all) that ye do.

\footnote{5478. When our limited period of probation is over, we cannot justly ask for more time, nor will more time be given to us then. Procrastination is itself a fault, and Allah knows every hidden thought and motive in our minds.}
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *At-Tagābun*, 64.

This is the eighth of the short Madinah Sūras, each dealing with a special aspect of the life of the Community.

The special aspect spoken of here is the mutual gain and loss of Good and Evil, contrasted in this life and in the Hereafter.

It is an early Madinah Sūra, of the year 1 of the Hijra or possibly even of the Makkān period just before the Hijrat. (See n. 5494 below).

*Summary.*—Both the Unbelievers and the Believers were created by the One True God, Who created all and knows all: why should Unbelief and Evil exult in worldly gain when their loss will be as manifest in the Hereafter as will be the gains of the Believers? (lxiv. 1-18).
Tagābun, or Mutual Loss and Gain.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Whatever is
   In the heavens and
   On earth, doth declare\textsuperscript{5479}
   The Praises and Glory
   Of Allah: to Him belongs
   Dominion, and to Him belongs
   Praise: and He has power
   Over all things.

2. It is He Who has
   Created you; and of you
   Are some that are
   Unbelievers, and some\textsuperscript{5480}
   That are Believers:
   And Allah sees well
   All that ye do.

3. He has created the heavens
   And the earth
   With the truth,
   And has given you shape,\textsuperscript{5481}
   And made your shapes

\textsuperscript{5479} Cf. Lxii. 1, and n. 5449. All things by their very existence proclaim the Glory and the Praises of Allah. He has dominion over all things, but He uses His dominion for just and praiseworthy ends. He has power over all things: therefore He can combine justice with mercy, and His Plan and Purpose cannot be frustrated by the existence of Evil along with Good in His Kingdom.

\textsuperscript{5480} It is not that He does not see Rebellion and Evil, nor that He cannot punish them. He created all things pure and good, and if evil crept in by the grant of a limited free-will by Him, it is not unforeseen: it is in His wise and universal Plan, for giving man a chance of rising higher and ever higher.

\textsuperscript{5481} Cf. xl. 64, and n. 4440: also vii. 11 and n. 996. In addition to the beauty and grandeur of all God's Creation, He has endowed man with special aptitudes, faculties and capacities, and special excellencies which raise him at his best to the position of vicegerent on earth. "Beautiful" also includes the idea of "adapted to the ends for which they were created".
Beautiful: and to Him
Is the final Return.\textsuperscript{5482}

4. He knows what is
In the heavens
And on earth;
And He knows what\textsuperscript{5483}
Ye conceal and what
Ye reveal: yea, Allah
Knows well the (secrets)
Of (all) hearts.

5. Has not the story
Reached you, of those
Who rejected Faith aforetime?
So they tasted the evil
Result of their conduct;\textsuperscript{5484}
And they had
A grievous Chastisement.

6. That was because there
Came to them messengers
With Clear Signs,
But they said:
“Shall (mere) human beings\textsuperscript{5485}
Direct us?” So they rejected
(The Message) and turned away.
But Allah can do without (them):

\textsuperscript{5482} “The final Return”: not only of mankind, but of all things created, whether material or in the realm of ideas and events. All things return to Allah: as they derive their origin from Him, so is the return or destination of all of them to Allah.

\textsuperscript{5483} Not only does He create and develop and sustain all things; but all thoughts, motives, feelings, ideas, and events are known to Him. Therefore we must not imagine that, if some evil seems to go unpunished, it is not known to Him or has escaped His notice. His Plan is wise and good in its fullest compass: sometimes we do not see its wisdom and goodness because we see only a broken fragment of it, as our own intelligence is narrow.

\textsuperscript{5484} “The evil result of their conduct” begins to manifest itself in this very life, either in external events, or in internal restlessness and agonies of conscience. But its culminating force will be seen in the “grievous Penalty” of the Hereafter.

\textsuperscript{5485} This is referred to in a more expanded form in xiv. 9-11. which see.
And Allah is free of all needs
Worthy of all praise.

7. The Unbelievers think
That they will not be
Raised up (for Judgment). 5487
Say: “Yea, by my Lord,
Ye shall surely be
Raised up: then shall ye
Be told (the truth) of
All that ye did.
And that is easy for Allah.”

8. Believe, therefore, in Allah
And His Messenger, and
In the Light which We have sent down. And Allah is well acquainted
With all that ye do.

9. The Day that He assembles
You (all) for a Day
Of Assembly,—that will be

5486. Their obedience is not necessary to Allah, nor will their rejection of Truth affect the validity of Truth or injure the progress of Truth. Allah is free of all needs or dependence on any circumstance whatever. He sends His Message for the good of mankind, and it is man who suffers by ignoring, rejecting, or opposing it.

5487. In other words, they think that there is no future life, and no responsibility for our actions beyond what we see in the present life. If that were true, all the profits of fraud and roguery, which remain unpunished in this world—and many do remain unpunished in this world—will remain with the wicked; and all the losses and pain suffered by integrity and righteousness, if they find no compensation in this life, will never find any compensation. This would be an odd result in a world of justice. We are taught that this is not true,—that it is certain that the balance will be redressed in a better future world; that there will be a resurrection of what we call the dead; and that on that occasion the full import of all we did will be made plain to us, and our moral and spiritual responsibility will be fully enforced.

5488. “The Light which We have sent down”: i.e., the light of Revelation, the light of conscience, the light of reason, and every kind of true light by which we may know Allah and His Will. If we play false with any such lights, it is fully known to Allah.
A day of mutual loss
And gain (among you).
And those who believe
In Allah and work righteousness;
He will remove from them
Their ill, and He will admit
Them to gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein
For ever: that will be
The Supreme Triumph.

10. But those who reject Faith
And treat Our Signs
As falsehoods, they will be
Companions of the Fire,
To dwell therein for aye:
And evil is that Goal.

SECTION 2.

11. No kind of calamity
Can occur, except
By the leave of Allah:

5489. The Day of Judgment will truly be “a Day of Mutual Loss and Gain”, as the title of this Sura indicates. Men who thought they were laying up riches will find themselves paupers in the Kingdom of Heaven. Men who thought they were acquiring good by wrong-doing will find their efforts were wasted; xviii. 104. On the other hand the meek and lowly of this life will acquire great dignity and honour in the next; the despised ones doing good here will be the accepted ones there; the persecuted righteous will be in eternal happiness. The two classes will as it were change their relative positions.

5490. “Remove from them their ills”. The ills may be sins, faults, mistakes, or evil tendencies; Allah will of His grace cover them up, and blot out the account against them; or they may be sorrows, sufferings, or disappointments: Allah may even change the evil of such persons into good, their apparent calamities into opportunities for spiritual advancement: xxv. 70. This is because of their sincere Faith as evidenced by their repentance and amendment.

5491. “Gardens” the place of the highest Bliss, see ii. 25, n. 44; xiii. 35; xlvi. 15.
And if any one believes\textsuperscript{5492}  
In Allah, (Allah) guides his  
Heart (aright): for Allah  
Knows all things.

12. So obey Allah, and obey  
His Messenger: but if  
Ye turn back, the duty  
Of Our Messenger is but  
To deliver (the Message)\textsuperscript{5493}  
Clearly and openly.

13. Allah! There is no god  
But He: and on Allah,  
Therefore, let the Believers  
Put their trust.

14. O ye who believe!  
Truly, among your wives  
And your children are (some  
That are) enemies to\textsuperscript{5494}  
Yourselves: so beware  
Of them! But if ye

\textsuperscript{5492} What we consider calamities may be blessings in disguise. Pain in the body is often a signal of something wrong, which we can cure by remedial measures. So in the moral and spiritual world, we should in all circumstances hold firmly to the faith that nothing happens without Allah's knowledge and leave; and therefore there must be some justice and wisdom according to His great universal Plan. Our duty is to find out our own shortcomings and remedy them. If we try to do so in all sincerity of heart, Allah will give us guidance.

\textsuperscript{5493} The Messenger comes to guide and teach, not to force and compel. The Messenger's teaching is clear and unambiguous, and it is open and free to all. Cf. also v. 95.

\textsuperscript{5494} In some cases the demands of families, \textit{i.e.}, wife and children may conflict with a man's moral and spiritual convictions and duties. In such cases he must guard against the abandonment of his convictions, duties, and ideals to their requests or desires. But he must not treat them harshly. He must make reasonable provision for them, and if they persist in opposing his clear duties and convictions, he must forgive them and not expose them to shame or ridicule, while at the same time holding on to his clear duty. Such cases occurred when godly men undertook exile from their native city of Makkah to follow the Faith in Madinah. In some cases their families murmured, but all came right in the end.
Forgive and overlook,5495
And cover up (their faults),
Verily Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

15. Your riches and your children
May be but a trial:5496
Whereas Allah, with Him
Is the highest Reward.

16. So fear Allah5497
As much as ye can;
Listen and obey;
And spend in charity
For the benefit of
Your own souls.5498
And those saved from
The covetousness of their own

5495. For the different words for “forgiveness”, see n. 110 to ii. 109.

5496. Children may be a “trial” in many senses: (1) their different ways of looking at things may cause you to reflect, and to turn to the highest things of eternal importance; (2) their relationship with you and with each other may confront you with problems far more complicated than those in separate individual lives, and thus become a test of your own strength of character and sense of responsibility; (3) their conflict with your ideals (see n. 5494 above) may vex your spirit, but may at the same time search out your fidelity to Allah; and (4) their affection for you and your affection for them, may be a source of strength for you if it is pure, just as it may be a danger if it is based on selfish or unworthy motives. So also riches and worldly goods have their advantages as well as dangers.

5497. “Fear Allah” combined with “as much as you can” obviously means: “lead lives of self-restraint and righteousness”: the usual meaning of Taqwà: see n. 26 to ii. 2.

5498. Charity is meant to help and do good to other people who need it. But it has the highest subjective value for the person who gives it. Like mercy “it blesseth him that gives and him that takes”. It purifies the giver’s soul: the affection that he pours out is for his own spiritual benefit and progress. Cf. Coleridge: “He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small, for the Great God Who loveth us, Who made and loveth all”.

- 1761 -
Souls,—they are the ones
That achieve prosperity.\textsuperscript{5499}

17. If ye loan to Allah\textsuperscript{5500}
A beautiful loan, He
Will double it to
Your (credit), and He
Will grant you Forgiveness:
For Allah is All-Thankful,\textsuperscript{5501}
Most Forbearing,—

18. Knower of what is hidden
And what is open,
Exalted in Might,
Full of Wisdom.\textsuperscript{5502}

\textsuperscript{5499} Cf. lix. 9. Our worst enemy is within ourselves,—the grasping selfishness which would deprive others of their just rights or seize things which do not properly belong to it. If we can get over this covetous selfishness, we achieve real Prosperity in justice and truth.

\textsuperscript{5500} Cf. ii. 245 and n. 276. Our Charity or Love is called a loan to Allah, which not only increases our credit account manifold, but obtains for us the forgiveness of our sins, and the capacity for increased service in the future.

\textsuperscript{5501} Cf. xiv. 5, n. 1877; and xxxv. 30, n. 3917. Allah’s appreciation of our service or our love goes far deeper than its intrinsic merits or its specific expression on our side. His reward is beyond our deserts, and passes over our defects. He judges by our motives, which He can read through and through: see next verse.

\textsuperscript{5502} Allah’s Appreciation and Forbearing Kindness can reach so far beyond our merits, because (1) His universal knowledge comprehends hidden motives, which others cannot see in us; (2) His power is so great that He can afford to reward even the unworthy; and (3) His Wisdom is so great that He can turn even our weakness into our strength.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Ṭalāq, 65.

This is the ninth of the ten short Madinah Sūras dealing with the social life of the Community. The aspect dealt with here is Divorce, and the necessity or precautions to guard against its abuse. The relations of the sexes are an important factor in the social life of the Community, and this and the following Sūra deal with certain aspects of it. “Of all things permitted by Law”, said the Prophet, “divorce is the most hateful in the sight of Allah”. (Abū Dā-ūd, Sunan, xiii. 3). While the sanctity of marriage is the essential basis of family life, the incompatibility of individuals and the weaknesses of human nature require certain outlets and safeguards if that sanctity is not to be made into a fetish at the expense of human life. That is why the question of Divorce is in this Sūra linked with the question of insolent impiety and its punishment.

The date is somewhere about A.H. 6.

Summary.—Provision to be made for women in case of Divorce; insolent impiety always leads to punishment (lxv. 1-12).
At-Talâq, or Divorce.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. O Prophet! When ye Do divorce women, Divorce them at their Prescribed periods, And count (accurately) Their prescribed periods: And fear Allah your Lord: And turn them not out Of their houses, nor shall They (themselves) leave.

5503. Note that in the first instance the Prophet is himself addressed individually, as the Teacher and representative of the Community. Then the actual directions: "when ye......": are addressed to the Community collectively.

5504. "Of all things permitted by law, Divorce is the most hateful in the sight of Allah": see Introduction to this Sûra. The general directions and limitations of Divorce may be studied in ii. 228-232, 236-237, 241, and notes; also iv. 35.

5505. 'Iddat, as a technical term in divorce law, is explained in n. 254 to ii. 228. Its general meaning is "a prescribed period": in that general sense it is used in ii. 185 for a prescribed period for fasting.

5506. The prescribed period (see last note) is in the interests of the wife, of the husband, of an unborn child (if there is any), and of sex laws in nature, and therefore the elementary dictates of refined human society. In English Law the six months interval between the decree nisi and the decree absolute in divorce attains the same purpose in a round-about way. The Commentators suggest that the divorce should not be pronounced during the courses. Read with ii. 222, this implies that any incipient differences between husband and wife should not be forced to an issue at a time when sex is least attractive and almost repulsive. Everything should be done to strengthen the social and spiritual aspects of marriage and keep down stray impulses of animal instinct. The parties are to think seriously in a mood of piety, keeping the fear of Allah in their minds.

5507. As Islam treats the married woman as a full juristic personality in every sense of the term a married woman has a right, in the married state, to a house or apartment of her own. And a house or apartment implies the reasonable expenses for its upkeep and for her own and her children's maintenance. And this is obligatory not only in the married state, but during the 'iddat, which is necessarily a most trying period for the woman. During this period she must not only not be turned out, but it is not decent for her to leave of her own accord, lest the chances of reconciliation should be diminished: see the next note.
Except in case they are
Guilty of some open lewdness,
Those are limits
Set by Allah: and any
Who transgresses the limits
Of Allah, does verily
Wrong his (own) soul:
Thou knowest not if
Perchance Allah will
Being about thereafter
Some new situation. 5508

2. Thus when they fulfil
Their term appointed,
Either take them back
On equitable terms 5509
Or part with them
On equitable terms;
And take for witness
Two persons from among you,
Endued with justice,
And establish the evidence 5510
For the sake of Allah. Such
Is the admonition given
To him who believes
In Allah and the Last Day.

5508. A reconciliation is possible, and is indeed recommended at every stage. The first serious difference between the parties are to be submitted to a family council on which both sides are represented (iv. 35); divorce is not to be pronounced when mutual physical attraction is at an ebb (n. 5506); when it is pronounced, there should be a period of probationary waiting: dower has to be paid and due provision has to be made for many things on equitable terms; every facility has to be given for reconciliation till the last moment, and impediments are provided against hasty impulses leading to rupture. “Thou knowest not if perchance Allah will bring about thereafter some new situation.”

5509. Cf. ii. 231. Everything should be done fairly and squarely, and all interests should be safeguarded.

5510. Publicity and the establishment of proper evidence ensure that no one will act unjustly or selfishly. All should remember that these are matters of serious import, affecting our most intimate lives, and therefore our position in the next life.
And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares\textsuperscript{5511} A way out,

3. And He provides for him From (sources) he never Could expect. And if Any one puts his trust In Allah, sufficient is (Allah) For him. For Allah will Surely accomplish His purpose.\textsuperscript{5512}

Verily, for all things Has Allah appointed A due proportion.

4. Such of your women As have passed the age Of monthly courses, for them The prescribed period, if ye Have any doubts, is Three months, and for those Who have no courses (It is the same):\textsuperscript{5513}

For those who are pregnant,

\textsuperscript{5511.} In these very delicate and difficult matters, the wisdom of jurists provides a less satisfactory solution than a sincere desire to be just and true, which is described as the “fear of Allah”. Where such a desire exists, Allah often provides a solution in the most unexpected ways or from the most unexpected quarters; e.g., the worst enemies may be reconciled, or the cry or the smile of an infant baby may heal seemingly irreparable injuries or unite hearts seemingly alienated for ever. And Faith is followed at once by a psychological feeling of rest for the troubled spirit.

\textsuperscript{5512.} Our anger and our impatience have to be curbed. Our friends and our mates or associates may seem to us ever so weak and unreasonable, and the circumstances may be ever so disheartening; yet we must trust in Allah. How can we measure our own weakness or perhaps blindness? He knows all. His universal Purpose is always good. His Will must be accomplished, and we should wish for its accomplishment. His ordering of the universe observes a due, just, and perfect proportion.

\textsuperscript{5513.} Cf. ii. 228. For normal women, the ‘iddat is the three monthly courses after separation: if there are no courses or if the courses are in doubt, it is three calendar months. But that time it will be clear whether there is pregnancy: if there is, the waiting period is still after delivery.
Their period is until
They deliver their burdens:
And for those who
Fear Allah, He will
Make things easy for them.\textsuperscript{5514}

5. That is the Command
Of Allah, which He
Has sent down to you:
And if any one fears Allah,
He will remove his evil deeds\textsuperscript{5515}
From him, and will enlarge
His reward.

6. Let the women live
(In 'iddat) in the same
Style as ye live,
According to your means:
Annoy them not, so as
To restrict them.\textsuperscript{5516}
And if they are pregnant, then\textsuperscript{5517}

\textsuperscript{5514} Cf. n. 5511. If there is a true and sincere desire to obey the Will of Allah
and do right the difficulties will vanish, and these delicate matters will be settled for the
greatest happiness of all.

\textsuperscript{5515} Allah's ordinance is nothing arbitrary. "It is to help us, and to lead us on to
our highest good, temporal and spiritual. If we obey Allah. His wisdom will not only solve
our difficulties, but it will remove other ills that we may have, subjective and objective.
Like a good shepherd, He will lead us on to more and more luscious pastures. With each
step higher, our position becomes more and more sure and our reward more and more
precious.

\textsuperscript{5516} Cf. n. 5507 above. A selfish man, because he has divorced his wife, may, in
the probationary period before the divorce becomes absolute, treat her with contumely,
and while giving her residence and maintenance, may so restrict it as to make her life
miserable. This is forbidden. She must be provided on the same scale as he is, according
to his status in life. There is still hope of reconciliation, and if not, yet the parting must
be honourable.

\textsuperscript{5517} If there is pregnancy, a sacred third life comes on the scene, for which there
is added responsibility (perhaps added hope of reconciliation) for both parents. In any
case no separation is possible until after the child is born. Even after birth, if no
reconciliation between parents is possible, yet for the nursing of the child and for its
welfare the care of the mother remains the duty of the father, and there must be mutual
counsel between him and the mother in all truth and sincerity.
Spend (your substance) on them
Until they deliver
Their burden: and if
They suckle your (offspring),
Give them their recompense:
And take mutual counsel
Together, according to
What is just and reasonable.
And if ye find yourselves\textsuperscript{5518}
In difficulties, let another
Woman suckle (the child)
On the (father's) behalf.\textsuperscript{5519}

7. Let the man of means
Spend according to
His means: and the man
Whose resources are restricted,
Let him spend according
To what Allah has given him.
Allah puts no burden
On any person beyond
What He has given him.
After a difficulty, Allah
Will soon grant relief.\textsuperscript{5520}

\textsuperscript{5518} "If ye find yourselves in difficulties": e.g., if the mother's milk fails, or if her health fails, or if any circumstance arises which bars the natural course of the mother nursing her own child. There may be psychological difficulties also.

\textsuperscript{5519} That is, the father must stand all expenses.

\textsuperscript{5520} We must trust in Allah, and do whatever is possible for us in the interests of the young life for which we are responsible. We must not be frightened by difficulties. Allah will give us relief and provide a solution if we act with honest integrity. Cf. xciv. 5-6.
SECTION 2.

8. How many populations
   That insolently opposed\textsuperscript{5521}
The command of their Lord
   And of His messengers,
   Did We not then
   Call to account,—
   To severe account?—
   And We chastised them with
   A horrible Chastisement.\textsuperscript{5522}

9. Then did they taste
   The evil result of
   Their conduct, and the End
   Of their conduct
   Was Perdition.

10. Allah has prepared for them
    A severe Punishment\textsuperscript{5523}
    (In the Hereafter).
    Therefore fear Allah,
    O ye men of understanding—
    Who have believed!—
    For Allah hath indeed
    Sent down to you
    A Message,—\textsuperscript{5524}

\textsuperscript{5521.} Insolent impiety consists not only in the breach of the rites of religion. Even more vital is the defiance of the laws of nature which Allah has made for us. These laws, for us human beings include those which relate to our fellow-beings in society to whom kindness and consideration form the basis of our social duties. Our duties to our families and our children in intimate matters such as were spoken of in the last Section, are as important as any in our spiritual life. Peoples who forgot the moral law in marriage or family life perished in this world and will have no future in the Hereafter. The lessons apply not only to individuals but to whole nations or social groups.

\textsuperscript{5522.} This refers to the present life: apparently the Hereafter is implied in verse 10 below.

\textsuperscript{5523.} See last note.

\textsuperscript{5524.} There is no excuse for us to go astray, seeing that Allah in His infinite Mercy has explained to us His Message by His many Signs around us and clearly by means of the human Teachers and Messengers whom He has sent for our instruction: see next verse.
11. A Messenger, who rehearses
to you the Signs of Allah
Containing clear explanations,
That he may lead forth
Those who believe
And do righteous deeds
From the depths of Darkness\(^{5525}\)
Into Light. And those who
Believe in Allah and work
Righteousness, He will admit
To Gardens beneath which rivers
Flow, to dwell therein
For ever: Allah has indeed
Granted for them
A most excellent provision.

12. Allah is He Who
Created seven Firmaments\(^{5526}\)
And of the earth
A similar number,\(^{5527}\)
Through the midst
Of them (all) descends\(^{5528}\)
His Command: that ye may
Know that Allah has power
Over all things, and that
Allah comprehends all things
In (His) Knowledge.

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\(^{5525}\) Cf. xxiv. 40: the unbelievers' state is "like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by dark clouds; depths of darkness, one above another." Cf. ii. 257: "Allah is the Protector of those who have Faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light."

\(^{5526}\) "Seven Firmaments." (Cf. ii. 29; xvii. 44; xxiii. 86; and xli. 12.)

\(^{5527}\) Literally: they are seven in number, each one separate from the other.

\(^{5528}\) But in all spheres of life and Creation, whatever conception we are able to form of them, it is certain that the Command or Law of Allah runs through them all, for His knowledge and power extend through all things.
INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *At-Tahrīm*, 66.

This is the tenth and last of the series of short Madinah Sūras which began with S. lvii: see Introduction to that Sūra. The point dealt with here is: how far the turning away from sex or the opposition of one sex against another or a want of harmony between the sexes may injure the higher interests of society.

The date may be taken to be somewhere about A.H. 7.

*Summary.*—The failings of the weaker sex should not turn away men from normal social life: harmony and mutual confidence should be taught and enforced, and Allah's blessing will descend on the virtuous.
**At-Tahrîm**, or Holding (something) to be Forbidden.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. O Prophet! Why Holdest thou to be forbidden That which Allah has Made lawful to thee, Thou seekest to please Thy consorts? But Allah Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

5529. The Prophet’s household was not like other households. The Consorts of Purity were expected to hold a higher standard in behaviour and reticence than ordinary women, as they had higher work to perform. See n. 3706 to xxxiii. 28. But they were human beings after all, and were subject to the weaknesses of their sex, and they sometimes failed. The commentators usually cite the following incident in connection with the revelation of these verses. It is narrated from ʿĀisha, the wife of the holy Prophet (peace be on him) by Bukhāri, Muslim, Nasaʿī. Abu Dawud and others that the holy Prophet usually visited all his wives daily after ‘Asr Prayer. Once it so happened that he stayed longer than usual at the quarters of Zainab bint Jahsh, for she had received from somewhere some honey which the holy Prophet liked very much. “At this”, says ʿĀisha, “I felt jealous, and I, Ḥafṣa, Sawda and Ṣafiya agreed among ourselves that when he visits us each of us would tell him that a peculiar odour came from his mouth as a result of what he had eaten, for we knew that he was particularly sensitive to offensive smells”. So when his wives hinted at it, he vowed that he would never again use honey. Thereupon these verses were revealed reminding him that he should not declare to himself unlawful that which Allah had made lawful to him. The important point to bear in mind is that he was at once rectified by revelation, which reinforces the fact that the prophets are always under divine protection, and even the slightest lapse on their part is never left uncorrected.

5530. The tender words of admonition addressed to the Consorts in xxxiii. 28-34 explain the situation far better than any comments can express. If the holy Prophet had been a mere husband in the ordinary sense of the term, he could not have held the balance even between his private feelings and his public duties. But he was not an ordinary husband, and he abandoned his renunciation on his realisation of the higher duties with which he was charged, and which required conciliation with firmness.
2. Allah has already ordained\textsuperscript{5531} For you, the expiation Of your oaths (In some cases): and Allah Is your Protector, and He Is Full of Knowledge And Wisdom.

3. When the Prophet disclosed A matter in confidence\textsuperscript{5532} To one of his consorts, And she then divulged it (To another), and Allah made it Known to him, he confirmed\textsuperscript{5533} Part thereof and passed over A part. Then when he Told her thereof, she said, “Who told thee this?” He said, “He told me Who is the Knower, The Aware.”

4. If ye two turn in repentance\textsuperscript{5534} To Allah, your hearts

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\textsuperscript{5531} Cf. ii. 224. If your vows prevent you from doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons, you should expiate the vow, but not refrain from your good deed.

\textsuperscript{5532} Who these two consorts were, and what was the matter in confidence which was disclosed, we are not expressly told, but the facts mentioned in n. 5529 above will help us to understand this passage. The sacred words imply that the matter was of great importance as to the principle involved, but that the details were not of sufficient importance for permanent record. For the lessons to be drawn, see the notes following.

\textsuperscript{5533} The moral we have to draw is manifold. (1) If anything is told us in confidence, especially by one at the head of affairs, we must not divulge it to our closest friend. (2) If such divulgence is made in the most secret whispers, Allah’s Plan is such that it will come to light and expose those guilty of breach of confidence. (3) The breach of confidence must inevitably redound to the shame of the guilty party.

\textsuperscript{5534} There are further lessons. (4) Both the party betraying confidence and that encouraging the betrayal must purge their conduct by repentance. (5) Frank repentance would be what their hearts and conscience themselves would dictate and they must not resist such amends on account of selfish obstinacy. (6) If they were to resist frank repentance and amends, they are only abetting each other’s wrong, and they cannot prevail against all the moral forces which will be ranged on the side of the right.
Are indeed so inclined;
But if ye back up
Each other against him,
Truly Allah is his Protector,
And Gabriel, and (every)
Righteous one among those
Who believe,—and furthermore,5535
The angels—will back (him) up.

5. It may be, if he
Divorced you (all),5536
That Allah will give him
In exchange Consorts
Better than you,—
Who submit (their wills),
Who believe, who are devout;
Who turn to Allah in repentance,
Who worship (in humility),
Who fast,—5537
Previously married or virgins.

5535. Do not forget the dual meaning: immediate, in application to the holy Prophet, and general, being the lesson which we ought all to learn. The holy Prophet could not be injured by any persons doing anything against him even though they might unconsciously put him in great jeopardy: for Allah, the Angel Gabriel (who was the Messenger to him), and the whole Community, would protect him,—to say nothing of the army of angels or hidden spiritual forces that always guarded him. Cf. xxxiii. 56. The general lesson for us is that the good man’s protection is that of the moral forces around him; it is divine protection, against which human weakness or folly will have no power.

5536. From the case of two in verse 4, we now come to the case of all the Consorts generally, in verse 5. Cf. xxxiii. 28-30. Their duties and responsibilities were higher than those of other women, and therefore their failure would also be more serious. This is only hypothetical, in order to show us the virtues expected of them: faith and devotion, worship and service, readiness for travel or hijrat, whether they were young or old, new to married life or otherwise. From them again the more general application follows—to all women in Islam.

5537. Sā‘īhāt: literally, those who travel. Here it means those who fast. Note that the spiritual virtues are named in the descending order: submitting their wills (Islam), faith and devotion, turning ever to worship and faith, and performing other rites, or perhaps being content with asceticism. And this applies to all women, maiden girls or women of mature experience who were widows or separated from previous husbands by divorce.
6. O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your Families from a Fire Whose fuel is Men And Stones, over which Are (appointed) angels Stern (and) severe, Who flinch not (from Executing) the Commands They receive from Allah, But do (precisely) what They are commanded.

7. (It will be said) “O ye Unbelievers! Makes no excuses This Day! Ye are being But requited for All that ye did!”

5538. Note how we have been gradually led up in admonition from two Consorts to all consorts, to all women, to all Believers, and to all men and women. We must carefully guard not only our own conduct, but the conduct of our families, and of all who are near and dear to us. For the issues are most serious, and the consequences of a fall are most terrible.

5539. “A Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones.” Cf. ii. 24. This is a terrible Fire: not merely like the physical fire which burns wood or charcoal or substances like that, and consumes them. This Fire will have for its fuel men who do wrong and are as hard hearted as stones, or stone Idols as symbolical of all the unbending Falsehoods in life.

5540. Cf. lxxiv. 31. We think of the angel nature as gentle and beautiful, but in another aspect perfection includes justice, fidelity, discipline, and the firm execution of duty according to lawful Commands. So, in the attributes of Allah Himself, Justice and Mercy, Kindness and Correction are not contradictory but complementary. An earthly ruler will be unkind to his loyal subjects if he does not punish evil-doers.

5541. ‘This is no hardship or injustice imposed on you. It is all but the fruit of your own deeds; the result of your own deliberate choice.’
SECTION 2.

8. O ye who believe! Turn to Allah With sincere repentance: In the hope that Your Lord will remove From you your evil deeds, And admit you to Gardens Beneath which Rivers flow,— The Day that Allah Will not permit To be humiliated The Prophet and those Who believe with him. Their Light will run Forward before them And by their right hands, While they say, "Our Lord! Perfect our Light for us, And grant us Forgiveness: For Thou hast power Over all things."

5542. The opposition of sex against sex, individual or concerted, having been condemned, we are now exhorted to turn to the Light, and to realise that the good and righteous can retain their integrity even though their mates, in spite of all their example and precept, remain in evil and sin.

5543. Whatever may have been the faults of the past, unite in good deeds, and abandon petty sectional jealousies, and Allah will remove your difficulties and distresses, and all the evils from which you suffer. Indeed He will grant you the Bliss of Heaven and save you from any humiliation which you may have brought on yourselves by your conduct and on the revered Prophet and Teacher whose name you professed to take.

5544. See lvii. 12, and n. 5288. The darkness of evil will be dispelled, and the Light of Allah will be realised by them more and more. But even so they will not be content: for they will pray for the least taint of evil to be removed from them, and perfection to be granted to them. In that exalted state they will be within reach of perfection,—not by their own merits, but by the infinite Mercy and Power of Allah.
9. **O Prophet! Strive hard**

Against the Unbelievers
And the Hypocrites,
And be harsh with them.
Their abode is Hell,—
An evil refuge (indeed).

10. **Allah sets forth,**

For an example
To the Unbelievers,
The wife of Noah
And the wife of Lūt:
They were (respectively)
Under two of our righteous Servants but they betrayed
Their (husbands).

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5545. See ix. 73, where the same words introduce the argument against the Hypocrites. Here they introduce the argument against wickedness, which, though given the privilege of association with goodness and piety, persisted in wicked deeds, and in favour of those noble souls, which, though tied to wickedness; retained their purity and integrity. Two examples of each kind are given—of women, as this Sūra is mainly concerned with women.

5546. Read Noah’s story in xi. 36-48. Evidently his contemporary world had got so corrupt that it needed a great Flood to purge it. “None of the people will believe except those who have believed already. So grieve no longer over their evil deeds.” But there were evil ones in his own family. A foolish and undutiful son is mentioned in xi. 42-46. Poor Noah tried to save him and pray for him as one “of his family”; but the answer came: “he is not of thy family; for his conduct is unrighteous”. We might expect such a son to have a mother like him, and here we are told that it was so. Noah’s wife was also false to the standards of her husband, and perished in this world and in the Hereafter.

5547. The wife of Lūt has already been mentioned more than once. See xi. 81, and n. 1577; vii. 83, and n. 1051; etc. The world around her was wicked, and she sympathised with and followed that wicked world, rather than her righteous husband. She suffered the fate of her wicked world.

5548. “Betrayed their husbands”: not in sex, but in the vital spiritual matters of truth and conduct. They had the high privilege of the most intimate relationship with the noblest spirits of their age: but if they failed to rise to the height of their dignity, their relationship did not save them. They could not plead that they were the wives of pious husbands. They had to enter Hell like any other wicked women. There is personal responsibility before Allah. One soul cannot claim the merits of another, any more than one pure soul can be injured by association with a corrupt soul. The pure one should keep its purity intact. See the next two examples.
And they profited nothing
Before Allah on their account,
But were told: "Enter ye
The Fire along with
(Others) that enter!"

11. And Allah sets forth,
As an example
To those who believe
The wife of Pharaoh:5549
Behold she said:
"O my Lord! build
For me, in nearness5550
To Thee, a mansion
In the Garden,
And save me from Pharaoh
And his doings,
And save me from
Those that do wrong";

12. And Mary the daughter5551
Of 'Imrân, who guarded
Her chastity; and We

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5549. Traditionally she is known as 'Âsiya, one of the four perfect women, the other three being Mary the mother of Jesus, Khadija the wife of the holy Prophet, and Fátima his daughter. Pharaoh is the type of arrogance, godlessness, and wickedness. For his wife to have preserved her Faith, her humility, and her righteousness was indeed a great spiritual triumph. She was probably the same who saved the life of the infant Moses: xxviii. 9.

5550. Her spiritual vision was directed to Allah, rather than to the worldly grandeur of Pharaoh's court. It is probable that her prayer implies a desire for martyrdom, and it may be that she attained her crown of martyrdom.

5551. 'Imrân was traditionally the name of the father of Mary the mother of Jesus: see n. 375 to iii. 35. She was herself one of the purest of women, though the Jews accused her falsely of unchastity: cf. xix. 27-28.
Breathed into (her body)\textsuperscript{5552} Of Our spirit; and she Testified to the truth Of the words of her Lord And of his Revelations, And was one of the Devout (servants).\textsuperscript{5553}

\textsuperscript{5552} Cf. xxi. 91. As a virgin she gave birth to Jesus: xix. 16-29. In xxxii. 9, it is said of Adam’s progeny, man, that Allah “fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit”. In xv. 29, similar words are used with reference to Adam. The virgin birth should not therefore be supposed to imply that Allah was the father of Jesus in the sense in which Greek mythology makes Zeus the father of Apollo by Latona or of Minos by Europa. And yet that is the doctrine to which the Christian idea of “the only begotten Son of God” leads.

\textsuperscript{5553} Mary had true faith and testified her faith in the prophet Jesus and in his revelation as well as in the revelations which he came to confirm (and to foreshadow). She was of the company of the Devout of all ages. The fact that \textit{Qānūtīn} (devout) is not here in the feminine gender implies that the highest spiritual dignity is independent of sex. And so we close the lesson of this Sūra, that while sex is a fact of our physical existence, the sexes should act in harmony and co-operation for in the highest spiritual matters we are all one. “We made her and her son a Sign for all peoples. Verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me and no other” (xxi. 91-92).
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Mulk, 67.

We have now done fourteen-fifteenths of the Qurān, and have followed step by step the development of its argument establishing the Ummat or Brotherhood of Islam.

There is a logical break here. The remaining fifteenth consists of short Lyrics, mostly of the Makkān period, dealing mainly with the inner life of man, and in its individual aspects. They may be compared to Hymns or Psalms in other religious literature. But these short Quranic Sūras have a grandeur, a beauty, and a force of earnestness under persecution, all their own. With their sources in the sublimest regions of heaven; their light penetrates into the darkest recesses of life, into the concrete facts which are often mistaken for the whole of Reality, though they are but an insignificant portion and on the surface and fleeting.

It is the contrast between the shadows of Reality here and the eternal Reality, between the surface world and the profound inner World, that is urged on our attention here.

This Sūra of 30 verses belongs to the Middle Makkān period, just before S. lxix. and S. lxx. Allah is mentioned here by the name Rahmān (Most Gracious), as He is mentioned by the names of Rabb (Lord and Cherisher) and Rahmān (Most Gracious) in S. xix.
Al-Mulk, or Dominion.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Blessed be He In Whose hands Is Dominion; And He over all things Hath Power;--

2. He Who created Death And Life, that He May try which of you Is best in deed:

5554. What do we mean when we bless the name of Allah, or proclaim (in the optative mood) that the whole Creation should bless the name of the Lord? We mean that we recognise and proclaim His beneficence to us; for all increase and happiness is through Him, “in His hands”, in the hands of Him Who also holds Dominion or Power. In our human affairs, we sometimes see the separation of Dominion or Power from Goodness or Beneficence: in the divine nature we recognise that there is no separation or antithesis.

5555. *Mulk*: Dominion, Lordship, Sovereignty, the Right to carry out His Will, or to do all that He wills. *Power* (in the clause following) is the Capacity to carry out His Will, so that nothing can resist or neutralise it. Here is beneficence completely identified with Lordship and Power; and it is exemplified in the verses following. Note that "Mulk" here has a different shade of meaning from *Malakūt* in xxxvi. 83. Both words are from the same root, and I have translated both by the word “Dominion”. But *Malakūt* refers to Lordship in the invisible World, while *Mulk* to Lordship in the visible World. Allah is Lord of both.

5556. “Created Death and Life.” Death is here put before Life, and it is created. Death is therefore not merely a negative state. In ii. 28 we read: “Seeing that ye were without life (literally, *dead*), and He gave you life: then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return.” In liii. 44, again, Death is put before Life. Death, then, is (1) the state before life began, which may be non-existence or existence in some other form: (2) the state in which Life as we know it ceases, but existence does not cease; a state of *Barzakh* (xxiii. 100), or Barrier or Partition, after our visible Death and before Judgment; after that will be the new Life, which we conceive of under the term Eternity.

5557. Creation, therefore, is not in mere sport, or without a purpose with reference to man. The state before our present Life, or the state after, we can scarcely understand. But our present Life is clearly given to enable us to strive by good deeds to reach a nobler state.
And He is the Exalted\textsuperscript{5558} in Might, Oft-Forgiving;-

3. He Who created
The seven heavens\textsuperscript{5559} One above another: No want of proportion Wilt thou see In the Creation Of The Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again: Seest thou any flaw?

4. Again turn thy vision\textsuperscript{5560} A second time: (thy) vision Will come back to thee Dull and discomfited, In a state worn out.

5. And We have, (From of old), Adorned the lowest heaven\textsuperscript{5561} With Lamps, and We

\textsuperscript{5558} All this is possible, because Allah is so Exalted in Might that He can perfectly carry out His Will and Purpose, and that Purpose is Love, Mercy, and Goodness to His creatures.

\textsuperscript{5559} Cf. lxxv. 12, and n. 5526-27. The heavens as they appear to our sight seem to be arranged in layers one above another, and ancient astronomy accounted for the motions of the heavenly bodies in an elaborate scheme of spheres. What we are concerned with here is the order and beauty of the vast spaces and the marvellous bodies that follow regular laws of motion in those enormous spaces in the visible world. From these we are to form some conception of the vastly greater Invisible World, for which we want special spiritual vision.

\textsuperscript{5560} Reverting to the indication of the external or visible world, we are asked to observe and study it again and again, and as minutely as our powers will allow. However closely we observe it, we shall find no flaw in it. Indeed the region of enquiry is so vast and stretches so far beyond our ken, that our eyes, aided with the most powerful telescopes, will confess themselves defeated in trying to penetrate to the ultimate mysteries. We shall find no defect in Allah's handiwork: it is our own powers that we shall find fail to go beyond a certain compass.

\textsuperscript{5561} "Lowest (or nearest) heaven": see n. 4035 to xxxvii. 6.
Have made such (Lamps) (As) missiles to drive\(^{5562}\) Away Satans, And have prepared for them The Chastisement Of the Blazing Fire.

6. For those who reject Their Lord (and Cherisher)\(^{5563}\) Is the Chastisement of Hell: And evil is (such) destination.

7. When they are cast therein, They will hear The (terrible) drawing in of its breath Even as it blazes forth.

8. Almost bursting with fury: Every time a Group

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\(^{5562}\) The phenomenon of the shooting stars has been explained in xv. 16-18, notes 1951-54; and in xxxvii. 6-10, and notes thereon.

\(^{5563}\) We have seen how the fire in the stars can suggest the beauty and order of the external world; and yet, when it meets with resistance and disharmony, it can burn and destroy. So in the moral and spiritual world. What can be a greater sign of evil, disharmony, and rebellion than to reject the Cherisher and Sustainer, on Whom our life depends, and from Whom we receive nothing but goodness? The Punishment, then, is Fire in its fiercest intensity, as typified in the next two verses.

\(^{5564}\) For shahiq see n. 1607 to xi. 106. There shahiq (sobs) was contrasted with zafir (sighs): in the one case it is the drawing in of breath, and in the other the emission of a deep breath. Here the former process is represented by the verb \(\text{f\=a}\), to swell, to blaze forth, to gush forth. In xi. 40, the verb \(\text{f\=a}\) was applied to the gushing forth of the waters of the Flood; here the verb is applied to the blazing forth of the Fire of Punishment. Fire is personified: in its in-take it has a fierce appetite; in the flames which it throws out, it has a fierce aggressiveness. And yet in ultimate result evil meets the same fate, whether typified by water or fire.
Is cast therein, its Keepers\textsuperscript{5565}
Will ask, “Did no Warner
Come to you?”

9. They will say: “Yes indeed;
A Warner did come to us,
But we rejected him
And said, ‘Allah never
Sent down any (Message):
Ye are in nothing but
A grave error!’”\textsuperscript{5566}

10. They will further say:
“Had we but listened
Or used our intelligence,\textsuperscript{5567}
We should not (now)
Be among the Companions
Of the Blazing Fire!”

11. They will then confess\textsuperscript{5568}
Their sins: but far

\textsuperscript{5565} Cf. xxxix. 71, n. 4348. “Every time”: it may not be the same angels who are guarding the gates of Hell every time new inmates come in. The pure, innocent angel nature does not know the crookedness of human evil, and is surprised at so many human beings coming in for punishment: it wonders if no warning was conveyed to men, whereas in fact men have a warning in Clear Signs during all the period of their probation. The Clear Signs come from Revelation, from their own conscience, and from all nature around them.

\textsuperscript{5566} Allah’s Signs were not only rejected or defied, but their very existence was denied. Nay, more, even their possibility was denied, and alas! righteous people and Prophets were persecuted or mocked (xxxvi. 30). They were called fools or madmen, or men under a delusion!

\textsuperscript{5567} Man has himself the power given to him to distinguish good from evil, and he is further helped by the teachings of the great Messengers or World Teachers. Where such Teachers do not come into personal contact with an individual or a generation, the true meaning of their teaching can be understood by means of the Reason which Allah has given to every human soul to judge by. It is failure to follow a man’s light sincerely that leads to his degradation and destruction.

\textsuperscript{5568} The will then have passed through the fire of Judgment and will now be in the fire of Punishment. The Reality will not only now be clear to them, but after the questionings of the angels they cannot even pretend to make any excuses. They will freely confess, but that is not repentance, for repentance implies amendment, and the time for repentance and amendment will have long been past.
From Allah's mercy
Are the Companions
Of the Blazing Fire!

12. As for those who
Fear their Lord unseen,\textsuperscript{5569} For them is Forgiveness And a great Reward.

13. And whether ye hide
Your word or make it known, He certainly has (full) knowledge, Of the secrets of (all) hearts.

14. Should He not know,— He that created?\textsuperscript{5570} And He is The Subtle The Aware.

**SECTION 2**

15. It is He Who has Made the earth manageable\textsuperscript{5571}

\textsuperscript{5569} See n. 3902 to xxxv. 18. Read “unseen” adverbially. To fear the Lord is to love Him so intensely that you fear to do anything which is against His Will, and you do it because you realise Him intensely in your hearts, though you do not see Him with your bodily senses. Nor is it of any consequences whether other people see your love or the consequences that flow from your love, for your good deeds are for the love of Allah and not for show in the eyes of men. Such intensity of love obtains forgiveness for any past, and is indeed rewarded with Allah's love, which is immeasurably precious beyond any merits you may possess.

\textsuperscript{5570} He Who creates must necessarily know His own handiwork. But lest we should measure His knowledge by such imperfect knowledge as we possess. His knowledge is further characterised as understanding the finest mysteries and being well acquainted with them (\textit{Laṣṭif} and \textit{Khabīr}): see xxii. 63. n. 2844.

\textsuperscript{5571} \textit{Zalūl} is used in ii. 71 for an animal trained and tractable: here it is used to qualify the earth, and I have translated 'manageable'. Man has managed to make paths through deserts and over mountains: through rivers and seas by means of ships; through the air by means of airways; he has made bridges and tunnels and other means of communication. But this he has only been able to do because Allah has given him the necessary intelligence and has made the earth tractable to that intelligence.
For you, so traverse
Ye through its tracts
And enjoy of the Sustenance
Which He furnishes: but
Unto Him is the Resurrection. 5572

16. Do ye feel secure that
He Who is in Heaven
Will not cause you
To be swallowed up 5573
By the earth when it
Shakes (as in an earthquake)?

17. Or do ye feel secure
That He Who is in Heaven
Will not send against you
A violent tornado 5574
(With showers of stones),
So that ye shall
Know how (terrible)
Was My warning?

18. But indeed men before them
Rejected (My warning):
Then how (terrible) was
My punishment (of them)? 5575

5572. In describing Allah's gifts and mercies and watchful care in this our temporary sojourn on this earth, it is made clear that the ultimate end is the Hereafter. The real Beyond, which is the goal, is the life after the Resurrection.

5573. Cf. xvii. 68 and n. 2263. Also cf. the story of Qarūn in xxviii. 76-82. If we feel safe on land, it is because Allah has made this earth amenable, manageable and serviceable to us (verse 15 above). But if we defy Allah and break His Law, have we any security, that even this comparatively unimportant safety in a fleeting world will last? Looking at it from a purely physical point of view, have there not been dreadful earthquakes, typhoons, and tornadoes?

5574. Cf. xvii. 68; and xxix. 40, n. 3462. Such a violent wind destroyed the wicked Cities which defied Lūt's warning.

21. Or who is there that can provide you with sustenance if He were to withhold His provision?

19. Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except the Most Gracious: truly it is He that watches over all things.

20. Nay, who is there that can help you, (even as) an army, besides the Most Merciful? In nothing but delusion are the Unbelievers.

5576. The flight of birds is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things in nature. The make and arrangement of their feathers and bones, and their stream-line shapes, from beak to tail, are instances of purposive adaptation. They soar with outstretched wings; they dart about with folded wings; their motions upwards and downwards, as well as their stabilisation in the air, and when they rest on their feet, have given many ideas to man in the science and art of aeronautics. But who taught or gave to birds this wonderful adaptation? None but Allah, Whose infinite Mercy provides for every creature just those conditions which are best adapted for its life.

5577. In the Arabic, there is an artistic touch which it is not possible to reproduce in the translation. Saffat (spreading their wings) is in the form of the active participle, suggesting the continuous soaring on outspread wings; while yaqbidhna (folding them in) is in the Aorist form, suggesting the spasmodic flapping of wings.

5578. Not the greatest army that man can muster is of any use against the Wrath of Allah; while the constant watchful care of Allah is all-in-all to us, and we can never do without it. If the godless wander about in search for blessings otherwise than in the Mercy and Grace of Allah, they are wandering in vain delusions.

5579. "Sustenance" here, as elsewhere, (e.g., in xvi. 73, n. 2105), refers to all that is necessary to sustain and develop life in all its phases. Allah Most Gracious is the Source of all our Sustenance, and if we persist in looking to Vanities for our Sustenance, we are pursuing a mirage, and, if we examine the matter, we are only following obstinate impulses of rebellion and impiety.
Nay, they obstinately persist
In insolent impiety
And flight (from the Truth).

22. Is then one who
Walks headlong, with his face
Groveling, better guided,—
Or one who walks
Evenly on a Straight Way?

23. Say: “It is He Who
Has created you,
And made
For you the faculties
Of hearing, seeing,
And understanding:
Little thanks it is ye give.

24. Say: “It is He Who
Has multiplied you
Through the earth,
And to Him shall ye
Be gathered together.”

5580. Cf. xxvii. 90, and n. 3320. The man of probity is the man who walks evenly on a Straight Way, his feet guided by Allah's Light and his heart sustained by Allah's Mercy. The man who chooses evil grovels, with his face down, in paths of Darkness, stumbling on the way, and in constant distrust and fear, the fear of Evil. The two kinds of men are poles apart, although they live on the same earth, see the same Signs, and are fed with the same Mercies from Allah.

5581. Like Abraham trying to guide his unbelieving father: Cf. xix. 43.

5582. The Prophet is asked to draw constant attention to Allah, the source of all growth and development, the Giver of the faculties by which we can judge and attain to higher and higher spiritual dignity. And yet, such is our self-will, we use our faculties for wrong purposes and thus show our ingratitude to Allah.

5583. For anshaa see n. 923 to vi. 98.

5584. Mankind, from one set of parents, has been multiplied and scattered through the earth. Men have not only multiplied in numbers but they have developed different languages and characteristics, inner and outer. But they will all be gathered together at the End of Things, when the mischief created by the wrong exercise of man's will be cancelled, and the Truth of Allah will reign universally.
25. They ask: When will this promise be (fulfilled)? If ye are telling, the truth.

26. Say: "As to the knowledge of the time, it is with Allah alone. I am a plain warner."

27. At length, when they see it close at hand, griefed will be the faces of the Unbelievers, and it will be said (to them): "This is the promise fulfilled, which ye were calling for!"

28. Say: "See ye? If Allah were to destroy me, and those with me, or if He bestows, your sins must bring on you suffering, and nothing can ward it off. If we get any sorrows or sufferings, we take them as a mere trial to make us better, for we believe in Allah's goodness and we put our trust in Him."

5585. The Unbelievers are sceptical, but they are answered in the next two verses.

5586. The Judgment is certain to come. But when it will exactly come, is known to Allah alone. The Prophet's duty is to proclaim that fact openly and clearly. It is not for him to punish or to hasten the punishment of evil. Cf. xxii. 47-49.

5587. "It", i.e., the fulfilment of the promise, the Day of Judgment. When it is actually in sight, then the Unbelievers realise that those whom they used to laugh at for their Faith were in the right, and that they themselves, the sceptics, were terribly in the wrong.

5588. They had defiantly asked for it. Now that it has come near, and it is too late for repentance, there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

5589. The sceptics might say and do say to the righteous: "Ah well! if calamities come, they involve the good with the bad, just as you say that Allah showers His mercies on both good and evil!" The answer is: "Don't you worry about us: even supposing we are destroyed, with all who believe with us, is that any consolation to you? Your sins must bring on you suffering, and nothing can ward it off. If we get any sorrows or sufferings, we take them as a mere trial to make us better, for we believe in Allah's goodness and we put our trust in Him." See next verse.
His Mercy on us,—
Yet who can deliver
The Unbelievers from
A grievous Chastisement?

29. Say: “He is The
Most Gracious: we have
Believed in Him,
And on Him have we
Put our trust:
So, soon will ye know5590
Which (of us) it is
That is in manifest error.”

30. Say. “See ye?—
If your stream be
Some morning lost,5591
(In the underground earth),
Who then can supply you
With clear-flowing water?”

5590. See the end of the last note. “Our Faith tells us that Allah will deliver us from all harm if we sincerely repent and lead righteous lives. You, Unbelievers, have no such hope. When the real adjustment of values is established, you will soon see whether we were in the wrong or you!”

5591. The Sûra is closed with a parable, taken from a vital fact of our physical life, and leading up to the understanding of our spiritual life. In our daily life, what would happen if we woke up some fine morning to find that the sources and springs of our water-supply had disappeared and gone down into the hollows of the earth? Nothing could save our life. Without water we cannot live, and water cannot rise above its level, but always seeks a lower-level. So in spiritual life. Its sources and springs are in the divine wisdom that flows from on high. Allah is the real source of that life, as He is of all forms of life. We must seek His Grace and Mercy. We cannot find grace or mercy or blessing from anything lower. His Wisdom and Mercy are like, fresh clear-flowing spring-water, not like the muddy murky wisdom and goodness of this lower world which is only relative, and which often hampers life rather than advances it.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Qalam, 68.

This is a very early Makkah revelation. The general Muslim opinion is that a great part of it was second in order to revelation, the first being S. xcvi. (Iqraa), verses 1-5: see Itqān, Chapter 7.

The last Sūra having defined the true Reality in contrast with the false standards set up by men, this illustrates the theme by an actual historical example. Our holy Prophet was the sanest and wisest of men: those who could not understand him called him mad or possessed. So, in every age, it is the habit of the world to call Truth Falsehood and Wisdom Madness, and, on the other hand, to exalt Selfishness as Planning, and Arrogance as Power. The contrast is shown up between the two kinds of men and their real inner worth.

Summary.—Let the good carry on their work, in spite of the abuse of the Companions of Evil: let all remember Allah, before Whom all men are on trial (lxviii. 1-33).

True Judgment comes from Allah, and not from the false standards of men (lxviii. 34-52).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Nun.\textsuperscript{5592} By the Pen\textsuperscript{5593}
And by the (Record)
Which (men) write,—

2. Thou art not,
By the grace of thy Lord,
Mad or possessed.\textsuperscript{5594}

3. Nay, verily for thee
Is a Reward unfailing:\textsuperscript{5595}

4. And surely thou hast
Sublime morals.

\textsuperscript{5592} Nun is an Abbreviated Letter: see Appendix I at the end of S. ii.

Nun may mean a fish, or an ink-holder, or it may be just the Arabic letter of the alphabet, N. In the last case, it may refer to either or both of the other meanings. Note also that the Arabic rhyme in this Sûra ends in N. The reference to ink would be an appropriate link with the Pen in verse 1. The reference to the fish would be appropriate with reference to the story of Jonah in verses 48-50. Jonah’s title is “the Companion of the Fish”, (Zun-Nun, xxi. 87), as he was, in the story, swallowed by the Fish.

\textsuperscript{5593} The Pen and the Record are the symbolical foundations of the Revelation to man. The adjuration by the Pen disposes of the flippant charge that Allah’s Messenger was mad or possessed. For he spoke words of power, not incoherent, but full of meaning, and through the Record of the Pen, that meaning unfolds itself, in innumerable aspects to countless generations. Muhammad was the living Grace and Mercy of Allah, and his very nature exalted him above abuse and persecution.

\textsuperscript{5594} People usually call any one mad whose standards are different from their own. And madness is believed to be due to demoniacal possession, an idea distinctly in the minds of the New Testament writers: for Luke speaks of a man from whom the “devils” were cast out, as being then “clothed, and in his right mind” (Luke, viii. 35).

\textsuperscript{5595} Instead of being out of his right mind, the Prophet of Allah had been raised to a great spiritual dignity, a reward that was not like an earthly reward that passes away, but one that was in the very core of his being, and would never fail him in any circumstances. He was really granted a nature and character far above the shafts of grief or suffering, slander or persecution.
5. Soon with thou see, 5596
    And they will see,
6. Which of you is
    Afflicted with madness.
7. Verily it is thy Lord
    That knoweth best,
    Which (among men)
    Hath strayed from His Path:
    And He knoweth best
    Those who receive
    (True) Guidance.
8. So obey not
    To those who
    Deny (the Truth). 5598
9. Their desire is that
    Thou shouldst be pliant:
    So would they be pliant.

5596. Though Al-Mustafā's nature raised him above the petty spite of his contemporaries, an appeal is made to their reason and to the logic of events. Was it not his accusers that were really mad? What happened to Walid ibn Mugaira, or Abū Jahl, or Abū Lahab?—and to Allah's Messenger and those who followed his guidance? The world's history gives the answer. And the appeal is not only to his contemporaries, but for all time.

5597. Men set up false standards of judgment. The right standard is that of Allah. For His knowledge is complete and all-embracing; He reads hidden motives as well as things that appear before men's sight; and He knows the past history in which the roots of present actions are embedded, as well as the future consequences of present actions.

5598. The enemies of Allah's truth are sometimes self-deceived. But quite often they have a glimmering of the truth in spite of their desire to shut their eyes. Then they compromise, and they would like the preachers of inconvenient truths to compromise with them. On those terms there would be mutual laudation. This easy path of making the best of both worlds is a real danger or temptation to the best of us, and we must be on our guard against it if we would really enter into the company of the Righteous who submit their wills to the Will of Allah. Abū Jahl freely offered impossible compromises to the holy Prophet.
10. Obey not Every mean,  
    Swearer,  

11. A slanderer, going about 
    With calumnies, 

12. (Habitually) hindering (all) good, 
    Transgressing beyond bounds, 
    Deep in sin, 

13. Violent (and cruel),  
    With all that, 
    Of a doubtful birth, 

14. Because he possesses 
    Wealth and (numerous) sons. 

5599. The type of each of these hateful qualities is not uncommon, though the combination of all in one man makes him peculiarly despicable, as was Wālīd ibn Mugaira, who was a ringleader in calumniating our Prophet and who came to an evil end not long after the battle of Badr, in which he received injuries. 

5600. It is only liars who swear on all occasions, small or great, because their ordinary word is not believed in. The true man’s word, according to the proverb, is as good as his bond. 

5601. Besides the self-deceiver and the easy-going man, there is a third type, even more degraded. He has no idea of truth or sincerity. He is ready to swear friendship with every one and fidelity to every cause. But at the same moment he will slander and backbite, and cause mischief even between good but credulous persons. Evil seems to be his good, and good his evil. He will not only pursue evil courses himself but prevent other people from doing right. When checked, he resorts to violence. In any case, he will intrude where he has no right, claiming relationship or power or consideration in circles which would gladly disown him. He is vain of his wealth or because he has a large following at his beck and call. Religion is to him merely old-fashioned superstition. 

5602. “Because” may connect with heed not in verse 10, or with violent and cruel in verse 13. In the former case, we construe: ‘Pay no attention to despicable men of the character described, simply because they happen to have wealth or influence, or much backing in man-power’. In the latter case, we construe: the fellow is violent and cruel, because he is puffed up with his wealth or riches or backing in man-power’. In the eyes of Allah such a man is in any case branded and marked out as a sinner.
15. When to him are rehearsed
   Our Signs,5603
   "Tales of the Ancients",5604
   He cries!

16. Soon shall We brand
   (The beast) on the snout!5605

17. Verily We have tried them
   As We tried the People
   Of the Garden,5606
   When they resolved to gather
   The fruits of the (garden)
   In the morning,

18. But made no reservation,
   ("If it be Allah's Will").5607

5603. Allah's Signs, by which He calls us, are everywhere—in nature and in our very
   heart and soul. In Revelation, every verse is a Sign, for it stands symbolically for far
   more than it says. "Sign" (Ayat) thus becomes a technical term for a verse of the Qur-an.

5604. Cf. vi. 25.

5605. Literally, proboscis, the most sensitive limb of the elephant. The sinner makes
   himself a beast and can only be controlled by his snout.

5606. "Why do the wicked flourish?" is a question asked in all ages. The answer is
   not simple. It must refer to (1) the choice left to man's will, (2) his moral responsibility,
   (3) the need of his tuning his will to Allah's Will, (4) the patience of Allah, which allows
   the widest possible chance for the operation of (5) His Mercy, and (6) in the last resort,
   to the nature of the Punishment, which is not a merely abrupt or arbitrary act, but a
   long, gradual process, in which there is room for repentance at every stage. All these
   points are illustrated in the remarkable Parable of the People of the Garden, which also
   illustrates the greed, selfishness, and heedlessness of man, as well as his tendency to throw
   the blame on others if he can but think of a scapegoat. All these foibles are shown, but
   the Mercy of Allah is boundless, and even after the worst sins and punishments, there
   may be hope of an even better orchard than the one lost, if only the repentance is true,
   and there is complete surrender to Allah's Will. But if, in spite of all this, there is no
   surrender of the will, then, indeed, the punishment in the Hereafter is something
   incomparably greater than the little calamities in the Parable.

5607. We must always remember, in all our plans, that they depend for their success
   on how far they accord with Allah's Will and Plan. His universal Will is supreme over
   all affairs. These foolish men had a secret plan to defraud the poor of their just rights,
   but they were put into a position where they could not do so. In trying to frustrate others,
   they were themselves frustrated.
19. Then there came
On the (garden)
A visitation from thy Lord,5608
(Which swept away) all around,
While they were asleep.

20. So the (garden) became,
By the morning, like
A dark and desolate spot,
(Whose fruit had been gathered).

21. As the morning broke,
They called out,
One to another,—

22. “Go ye to your tith
(Betimes) in the morning,5609
If ye would gather
The fruits.”

23. So they departed, conversing
In secret low tones, (saying)—

24. “Let not a single indigent5610
Person break in upon you
Into the (garden) this day.”

25. And they opened the morning,
Strong in an (unjust) resolve.

5608. It was a terrible storm that blew down and destroyed the fruits and the trees. The whole place was changed out of all recognition.

5609. Awaking from sleep, they were not aware that the garden had been destroyed by the storm overnight. They were in their own selfish dreams: by going very early, they thought they could cheat the poor of their share. See next note.

5610. The poor man has a right in the harvest—whether as a gleaner or as an artisan or a menial in an Eastern village. The rich owners of the orchard in the Parable wanted to steal a march at an early hour and defeat this right, but their greed was punished, so that it led to a greater loss to themselves. They wanted to cheat but had not the courage to face those they cheated, and by being in the field before any one was up they wanted to make it appear to the world that they were unconscious of any rights they were trampling on.
26. But when they saw
   The (garden), they said:
   "We have surely lost our way."  
27. "Indeed we are deprived
   (Of the fruits of our labour)!"  
28. Said one of them,
   More just (than the rest):
   "Did I not say to you,"
   "Why not glorify (Allah)?"
29. They said: "Glory
   To our Lord! Verily we
   Have been doing wrong!"
30. Then they turned, one
   Against another, in reproach.
31. They said: "Alas for us!
   We have indeed transgressed!
32. "It may be that our Lord
   Will give us in exchange
   A better (garden) than this:
   For we do turn to Him
   (In repentance)!"

5611. Their fond dreams were dispelled when they found that the garden had been changed out of all recognition. It was as if they had come to some place other than their own smiling garden. Where they had expected to reap a rich harvest, there was only a howling wilderness. They reflected. Their first thought was of their own personal loss, the loss of their labour and the loss of their capital. They had plotted to keep out others from the fruits: now, as it happened, the loss was their own.

5612. Cf. lvi. 67. Also see last note.

5613. This was not necessarily a righteous man, but there are degrees in guilt. He had warned them, but he had joined in their unjust design.

5614. When greed or injustice is punished people are ready to throw the blame on others. In this case, one particular individual may have seen the moral guilt of defying the Will of Allah and the right of man, but if he shared in the enterprise in the hope of profit, he could not get out of all responsibility.

5615. If the repentance was true, there was hope. For Allah often turns a great evil to our good. If not true, they only added hypocrisy to their other sins.
33. Such is the Punishment
(In this life); but greater
Is the Punishment\(^{5616}\)
In the Hereafter,—
If only they knew!

SECTION 2.

34. Verily, for the Righteous,
Are Gardens of Delight,\(^{5617}\)
With their Lord.

35. Shall We then treat
The People of Faith
Like the People of Sin?\(^{5618}\)

36. What is the matter
With you? How judge ye?

37. Or have ye a Book
Through which ye learn—

The Parable presupposes that the garden came into the possession of selfish men, who were so puffed up with their good fortune that they forgot Allah. That meant that they also became harsh to their fellow-creatures. In their arrogance they plotted to get up early and defeat the claims of the poor at harvest time. They found their garden destroyed by a storm. Some reproached others, but those who sincerely repented obtained mercy. The “better garden” may have been the same garden, flourishing in a future season under Allah’s gift of abundance.

\(^{5616}\) Even in this life the punishment for heedless or selfish arrogance and sin comes suddenly when we least expect it. But there is always room for Allah’s Mercy if we sincerely repent. If the Punishment in this life seems to us so stupefying, how much worse will it be in the Hereafter, when the Punishment will not be only for a limited time, and the time for repentance will have passed?

\(^{5617}\) The Garden is a joy, but the joy of this Garden is the sense of nearness to Allah.

\(^{5618}\) The spiritual arrogance which rejects faith in Allah is perhaps the worst Sin, because it makes itself impervious to the Mercy of Allah, as a bed of clay is impervious to the absorption of water. It sets up its own standards and its own will, but how can it measure or bind the Will of Allah? It sets up its own fetishes,—idols, priests, gods, or godlings. The fetishes may be even God-given gifts or faculties. Intellect or Science, if pushed up to the position of idols. If they are made rivals to Allah, question them: Will they solve Allah’s mysteries, or even the mysteries of Life and Soul?
38. That ye shall have,
Through it whatever
Ye choose?\textsuperscript{5619}

39. Or have ye Covenants
With Us on oath,\textsuperscript{5620}
Reaching to the Day
Of Judgment, (providing)
That ye shall have
Whatever ye shall demand?

40. Ask thou of them,
Which of them will stand
Surety for that!

41. Or have they some
"Partners" (in Godhead)?\textsuperscript{5621}
Then let them produce
Their "partners"
If they are truthful!

42. The Day that the Shin\textsuperscript{5622}
Shall be laid bare,

\textsuperscript{5619} It is clearly against both logic and justice that men of righteousness should have the same End as men of sin. Even in this life, man cannot command whatever he chooses, though he is allowed a limited freedom of choice. How can he expect such a thing under a reign of perfect Justice and Truth?

\textsuperscript{5620} Nor can the Pagans plead that they have any special Covenants with Allah which give them a favoured position above other mortals. The "Chosen Race" idea of the Jews is also condemned. It is quite true that a certain race or group, on account of special aptitude may be chosen by Allah to uphold His truth and preach it. But this is conditional on their following Allah's Law. As soon as they become arrogant and selfish, they lose that position. They cannot have a perpetual and unconditional lease till the Day of Judgment.

\textsuperscript{5621} "Partners" in Godhead: as in the doctrine of the Trinity, or indeed in any form of polytheism. Such a doctrine destroys the cardinal doctrine of the Unity of Allah.

\textsuperscript{5622} "The Day that the Shin shall be laid bare", that is, when men are confronted with the stark reality of the Day of Judgment. On that occasion men will be summoned to adoration, not necessarily in words, but by the logic of facts, when the Reality will be fully manifest: the Glory will be too dazzling for the Unbelievers, whose past deliberate refusal, when they had freedom to choose, and yet rejected, will stand in their way.
And they shall be summoned
To prostrate,
But they shall not be able,—

43. Their eyes will be\textsuperscript{5623} Cast down,—ignominy will Cover them; seeing that They had been summoned Aforetime to bow in adoration, While they were whole,\textsuperscript{5624} (And had refused).

44. Then leave Me\textsuperscript{5625} alone With such as reject This Message: by degrees Shall We draw them On little by little From directions they perceive not.\textsuperscript{5626}

45. A (long) respite will I Grant them: truly Powerful is My Plan.

\textsuperscript{5623}. Their past memories, combined with their present position, will then fill them with a sense of the deepest dismay and humiliation. See last note.

\textsuperscript{5624}. \textit{Sālimūn}: whole, in full possession of the power of judgment and will; not constrained, as they now will be, by the Punishment staring them full in the face.

\textsuperscript{5625}. Notice the transition between “Me” and “We” in this verse, and again to “I” and “My” in the next verse. The first person plural ordinarily used in the holy Qur'ān as Allah’s Word, is the plural of respect. In Royal decrees the first person plural is similarly used. When the first person singular is used, it marks some special personal relation, either of Mercy or favours (as in ii. 38 or ii. 150) or of punishment, as here. (Cf. n. 56. to ii. 38).

\textsuperscript{5626}. Cf. vii. 182. and n. 1154-A. We must not be impatient if we see the wicked flourish. It may be that the very appearance of flourishing here may be a part of the Punishment. There may be an eventual punishment by a sort of Cataclysm; but evolutionary punishment is gradual and sure. Allah may punish wicked people by granting them respite and providing them worldly benefits in abundance, which encourages them in sin and transgression. So when they are finally seized by the Wrath of Allah they are caught suddenly and utterly unprepared, as it were, red handed while engrossed in disbelief, a life of impiety and open revolt against their Lord!
46. Or is it that thou dost
   Ask them for a reward,⁵⁶²⁷
   So that they are burdened
   With a load of debt?—

47. Or that the Unseen⁵⁶²⁸
   Is in their hands, so that
   They can write it down?

48. So wait with patience
   For the Command
   Of thy Lord, and be not
   Like the Companion⁵⁶²⁹
   Of the Fish,—when he
   Cried out in agony.

49. Had not Grace
   From His Lord
   Reached him, he
   Would indeed have been
   Cast off on the naked⁵⁶³⁰
   Shore, in disgrace.

⁵⁶²⁷. Cf. l. iv. 40, n. 5074. It costs the Unbelievers nothing to hear the Prophet, for
the Prophet asks for no reward, and indeed suffers for their benefit. Al-Muṣṭafā is
addressed in the first instance, but there is always a universal interpretation. The righteous
man asks for no reward for his preaching or example: if he did, the value would be too
great for the world to pay for. The Unbelievers behave as if they had the secret of the
Unseen, but they are empty triflers, for, if they only tried to formulate spiritual laws,
they would fail.

⁵⁶²⁸. Cf. l. iv. 41, n. 5075. The Unseen is certainly not within their knowledge or
control. If it were, they could clearly write it down for their own guidance or the guidance
of others. They should listen to the words of inspiration, sent by the Knower of all things.

⁵⁶²⁹. This was Zūn-Nūn, or Jonah, for whom see n. 2744 to xxii. 87-88. Cf. also
xxxvii. 139-148 and the notes there. Jonah was asked to preach to the people of Nineveh,
a wicked city. He met with hostility and persecution, fled from his enemies, and took
a boat. He was caught in a storm and thrown into the sea. He was swallowed by a fish
or whale, but he repented in his living prison, and was forgiven. But the people of
Nineveh were also forgiven, for they, too, repented. Here is a double allegory of Allah's
mercy and forgiveness, and a command to patience, and complete and joyful submission
to the Will of Allah.

⁵⁶³⁰. Cf. xxxvii. 145-146, and n. 4126.
50. Thus did his Lord\(^{5631}\)  
Choose him and make him  
Of the company  
Of the Righteous.\(^{5632}\)

51. And the Unbelievers  
Would almost trip thee up\(^{5633}\)  
With their eyes when they  
Hear the Message; and they  
Say: "Surely he is possessed!"

52. But it is nothing less  
Than a Message\(^{5634}\)  
To all the worlds.

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5631. Jonah was chosen by Allah's Grace and Mercy to be Allah's Prophet to Nineveh. If in his human frailty he lost a little patience, he suffered his punishment, but his true and sincere repentance and recognition of Allah's goodness and mercy restored him from his physical and mental distress, and from the obscuration of the spiritual Light in him.

5632. Cf. iv. 69, n. 586. In the beautiful Company of the Righteous there is room for all, of every grade of spiritual advancement, from the highest to the most ordinary. But as in democratic politics every citizen's rights and status have complete recognition, so, in this Company, the badge of Righteousness is the bond, even though there may be higher degrees of knowledge or experience.

5633. The eyes of evil men look at a good man as if they would "eat him up", or trip him up, or disturb him from his position of stability or firmness. They use all sorts of terms of abuse—"madman" or "one possessed by an evil spirit", and so on. Cf. lxxviii. 2 above, and n. 5594. But the good man is unmoved, and takes his even course. The Message of Allah is true and will endure, and it is a Message to all Creation.

5634. This is the extreme antithesis to madness or demoniacal possession. So far from the holy Prophet uttering words disjointed or likely to harm people, he was bringing the Message of true Reality, which was to be the cure of all evil, in every kind of world. For the different kinds of worlds see n. 20 to i. 2.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Ḥāqqat, 69.

This Sūra belongs to the early middle period of Makkānic Revelation. The eschatological argument is pressed home: 'the absolute Truth cannot fail; it must prevail; therefore be not lured by false appearances in this life; it is Revelation that points to the sure and certain Reality'.

Intro. to S. 69.
Al-Hāqqa, or the Sure Reality.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful._

1. The Sure Reality: the sure Truth: the Event that must inevitably come to pass; the state in which all falsehood and pretence will vanish, and the absolute Truth will be laid bare. The questions in the three verses raise an air of wonder. The solution is suggested in what happened to the Thamūd and the ‘Ad, and other people of antiquity, who disregarded the Truth of Allah and came to violent end, even in this life,—symbolically suggesting the great Cataclysm of the Hereafter, the Day of Doom.

2. What is the Sure Reality?

3. And what will make Thee realise what The Sure Reality is?

4. The Thamūd
   And the ‘Ad people Disbelieved in The day of Noise and Clamour!

5. But the Thamūd,— They were destroyed By a terrible Storm Of thunder and lightning!

6. And the ‘Ad,— They were destroyed By a furious Wind, Exceedingly violent;

5635. _Al-hāqqa:_ the sure Truth: the Event that must inevitably come to pass; the state in which all falsehood and pretence will vanish, and the absolute Truth will be laid bare. The questions in the three verses raise an air of wonder. The solution is suggested in what happened to the Thamūd and the ‘Ad, and other people of antiquity, who disregarded the Truth of Allah and came to violent end, even in this life,—symbolically suggesting the great Cataclysm of the Hereafter, the Day of Doom.

5636. For these two peoples of antiquity, see n. 1043 to vii. 73, and n. 1040 to vii. 65.

5637. Another description of the terrible Day of Judgment. This word Qāriʿa also occurs as the title of S. ci.

5638. The Thamūd were addicted to class arrogance. They oppressed the poor. The prophet Sāliḥ preached to them, and put forward a wonderful she-camel as symbol of the rights of the poor, but they ham-strung her. See n. 1044 to vii. 73. They were destroyed in a mighty calamity, an earthquake accompanying a terrible thunderstorm.

5639. The ‘Ad were an unjust people spoilt by their prosperity. The prophet Hūd preached to them in vain. They were apparently destroyed by a terrible blast of wind. See n. 1040 to vii. 65. See also xlii. 15-16, n. 4483, and liv. 19, n. 5144.
7. He made it rage  
Against them seven nights  
And eight days in succession:  
So that thou couldst see  
The (whole) people lying  
Overthrown in its (path),  
As if they had been  
Roots of hollow palm-trees  
Tumbled down!

8. Then seest thou any  
Of them left surviving?  
And Pharaoh,  
And those before him,  
And the Cities Overthrown,  
Committed habitual Sin,  
And disobeyed (each)  
The messenger of their Lord  
So He punished them  
With an abundant Penalty.

5640. A graphic simile. Dead men all lying about like hollow trunks of palm-trees, with their roots exposed! The 'Ad were reputed to be of a tall stature.

5641. The calamity was thorough. The 'Ad were destroyed, and then the Thamūd, and only the tradition of them was left behind. See the references in n. 5636.

5642. Pharaoh’s Messenger was Moses. See the story in vii. 103-137 and the notes there. Pharaoh was inordinately proud, and his fall was proportionately great: it gradually extended to his dynasty and his people.

5643. If we follow the sequence of peoples whose sins destroyed them, as mentioned in vii. 59-158, we begin with Noah, then have the 'Ad and the Thamūd, then the Cities of the Plain, then Midian, then the people whose prophet was Moses (who occupies a central place in the canvas), and then the Pagan Quraish, to whom came the last and greatest of the prophets, our holy Prophet Muhammad. This is the chronological sequence. Here there is no details, nor even complete mention. But Noah is alluded to last, and the 'Ad and the Thamūd mentioned first, because the latter two belong to Arab tradition, and this is specially addressed to the Pagans of Makkah. Pharaoh is mentioned rather than Moses for the same reason, and any others are “those before Pharaoh”.

5644. The Cities Overthrown: Sodom and Gomorrah, Cities of the Plain, to whom Lot preached: see ix. 70, n. 1330; and vii. 80-84, n. 1049.
11. We, when the water
   (Of Noah's Flood) overflowed
   Beyond its limits,\textsuperscript{5645}
   Carried you (mankind),
   In the floating (Ark),

12. That We might
   Make it a Reminder\textsuperscript{5646}
   Unto you, and that ears
   (That should hear the tale
   And) retain its memory
   Should bear its (lessons)
   In remembrance.\textsuperscript{5647}

13. Then, when one
   Blast is sounded
   On the Trumpet,\textsuperscript{5648}

14. And the earth is moved,
   And its mountains,\textsuperscript{5649}
   And they are crushed
   At one stroke,—

\textsuperscript{5645}. It was a widespread Flood. Cf. vii. 59-64; also xi. 25-49. Noah was ridiculed for his preparations for the Flood: see xi. 38, n. 1531. But Allah had commanded him to build an Ark, in order that mankind should be saved from perishing in the Flood. But only those of Faith got into the Ark and were saved. As the Ark was built to Allah's command, Allah "carried you (mankind) in the floating (Ark)".

\textsuperscript{5646}. It was a memorial for all time, to show that evil meets with its punishment, but the good are saved by the mercy of Allah.

\textsuperscript{5647}. Cf. the biblical Phrase, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. xi. 15). But the phrase used here has a more complicated import. An ear may hear, but for want of will in the hearer the hearer may not wish, for the future or for all time, to retain the memory of the lessons he had heard, even though for the time being he was impressed by it. The penetration of the truth has to be far deeper and subtler, and this is desired here.

\textsuperscript{5648}. We now come to the Inevitable Event, the Day of Judgment, the theme of this Sura. This is the first Blast referred to in xxxix. 68, n. 4343.

\textsuperscript{5649}. The whole of our visible world, as we now know it, will pass away, and a new world will come into being. The mountains are specially mentioned, because they stand as the type of hardness, size, and durability. They will be "crushed", i.e., lose their form and being at one stroke.
15. On that Day
   Shall the (Great) Event
   Come to pass,

16. And the sky will be
    Rent asunder, for it will
    That Day be flimsy,

17. And the angels will be
    On its sides,5650
    And eight will, that Day,
    Bear the Throne5651
    Of thy Lord above them.

18. That Day shall ye be
    Brought to Judgment:
    Not an act of yours
    That ye hide will be hidden.

19. Then he that will be
    Given his Record
    In his right hand5652
    Will say: “Ah here!
    Read ye my Record!

5650. The whole picture is painted in graphic poetical images, to indicate that which
       cannot be adequately described in words, and which indeed our human faculties with their
       present limited powers are not ready to comprehend. The angels will be on all sides,
       arrayed in ranks upon ranks, and the Throne of the Lord on high will be borne by eight
       angels (or eight rows of angels). That will be the Day when Justice will be fully
       established and man be mustered to his Lord for reckoning.

5651. The number eight has perhaps no special significance, unless it be with
       reference to the shape of the Throne or the number of the angels. The Oriental Throne
       is often octagonal, and its bearers would be one at each corner.

5652. Cf. xvii. 71, where the righteous are described as those who are given their
       record in their right hand at Judgment. In lvi. 27, 38, and other passages, the righteous
       are called “Companions of the Right Hand”.

- 1807 -
20. “I did really think\textsuperscript{5653}
That my Account would
(One Day) reach me!”

21. And he will be
In a life of Bliss,

22. In a Garden on high,

23. The Fruits whereof\textsuperscript{5654}
(Will hang in bunches)
Low and near.

24. “Eat ye and drink ye,
With full satisfaction;
Because of the (good)
That ye sent before you,\textsuperscript{5655}
In the days that are gone!”\textsuperscript{5656}

25. And he that will
Be given his Record
In his left hand,\textsuperscript{5657}
Will say: “Ah! would
That my record had not
Been given to me!

\textsuperscript{5653} The righteous one rejoices that the faith he had during this world’s life was fully justified, and is now actually realised before him. He quite understood and believed that good and evil must meet with their due consequences in the Hereafter, however much appearances may have been against it in the life in the lower world, “in the days that are gone”.

\textsuperscript{5654} The description is that of ripe, luscious grapes, hanging low in heavy bunches, so near that they could be gathered and enjoyed in dignified ease. Cf. also lv. 54; lxxvi. 14.

\textsuperscript{5655} Cf. ii. 110: “Whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that ye do.”

\textsuperscript{5656} It will be a wholly new world, a new earth and a new heaven, when the blessed might well think with calm relief of “the days that are gone”. Cf. xiv. 48, and n. 1925. Even Time and Space will be no more, so that any ideas that we may form here will be found to have become wholly obsolete by then.

\textsuperscript{5657} This is in contrast to the righteous ones who will receive their record in their right hand. Cf. lxix. 19, n. 5652. The righteous are glad when they remember their past: their memory is itself a precious possession. The unjust are in agony when they remember their past. Their memory is itself a grievous punishment.
26. "And that I had never
Realised how
My account (stood)!

27. "Ah! would that (Death)\textsuperscript{5658}
Had made an end of me!

28. "Of no profit to me
Has been my wealth!

29. "My power has
Perished from me!" \textsuperscript{5659}

30. (The stern command will say):
"Seize ye him,
And bind ye him,\textsuperscript{5660}

31. "And burn ye him
In the Blazing Fire.

32. "Further, insert him
In a chain, whereof\textsuperscript{5661}
The length is seventy cubits!

33. "This was he that
Would not believe\textsuperscript{5662}
In Allah Most High,

\textsuperscript{5658} The death as from this life was but a transition into a new world. They would wish that that death had been the end of all things, but it will not be.

\textsuperscript{5659} The intensest agony is when the soul loses power over itself, when the personality tries to realise itself in new conditions and cannot: this is life in death.

\textsuperscript{5660} Perhaps the word for 'bind' should be construed: 'bind his hands round his neck, to remind him that his hands when they were free were closed to all acts of charity and mercy': Cf. xvii. 29.

\textsuperscript{5661} The sinful men who will be given their record on the Day of Judgment in their left hands will be in utter despair. Their power and authority which they misused to perpetrate injustice and oppression will be gone. The wealth that had made them turn a deaf ear to the call of Truth will be no more. They will cry out in agony: "O would that we were never raised again! O would that death had obliterated us once for all". But these cries will be of no avail. They will be seized, bound in chains and thrown into the Blazing Fire for their crimes against Allah and man.

\textsuperscript{5662} The grip of sin was fastened on sinners because they forsook Allah. They ran after their own lusts and worshipped them, or they ran after Allah's creatures, ignoring Him Who is the cause and source of all good.
34. “And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent!

35. “So no friend hath he Here this Day.

36. “Nor hath he any food Except the foul pus From the washing of wounds,

37. “Which none do eat But those in sin.”

SECTION 2.

38. So I do Call to witness What ye see

39. And what ye see not,

40. That this is Verily the word Of an honoured messenger;

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5663. Cf. cvii. 3; lxxxix. 18. The practical result of their rebellion against the God of Mercy was that their sympathies dried up. Not only did they not help or feed those in need, but they hindered others from doing so. And they have neither friend nor sympathy (food) in the Hereafter.

5664. They wounded many people by their cruelty and injustice in this life, and it is befitting that they should have no food other than “the foul pus from the washing of wounds.”

5665. This is an adjuration in the same form as that which occurs in lvi. 75, lxx. 40, xc. 1, and elsewhere. Allah’s Word is the quintessence of Truth. But what if someone doubts whether a particular Message is Allah’s Word communicated through His Messenger, or merely an imaginary tale presented by a poet, or a soothsayer’s vain prophecy? Then we have to examine it in the light of our highest spiritual faculties. The witness to that Word is what we know in the visible world, in which falsehood in the long run gives place to truth, and what we know in the invisible world, through our highest spiritual faculties. We are asked to examine and test it in both these ways.

5666. Honoured messenger: one that is worthy of honour on account of the purity of his life, and may be relied upon not to invent things but to give the true word of revelation which he received.
41. It is not the word
   Of a poet: Little it is
   Ye believe!

42. Nor is it the word
   Of a soothsayer: Little admonition it is
   Ye receive.

43. (This is) a Message
   Sent down from the Lord
   Of the Worlds.

44. And if the messenger
   Were to invent
   Any sayings in Our name,

45. We should certainly seize him
   By his right hand

46. And We should certainly
   Then cut off the artery
   Of his heart.

47. Nor could any of you
   Withhold him (From Our wrath).

5667. A poet draws upon his imagination, and the subjective factor is so strong that though we may learn much from him, we cannot believe as facts the wonderful tales he has to tell. And the poet who is not a Seer is merely a vulgar votary of exaggerations and falsehoods.

5668. A soothsayer merely pretends to foretell future events of no profound spiritual consequence. Most of his prophecies are frauds, and none of them is meant to teach lessons of real admonition. Such admonition is the work of an honoured prophet.

5669. The right hand is the hand of power and action. Any one who is seized by his right hand is prevented from acting as he wishes or carrying out his purpose. The argument is that if an impostor were to arise, he would soon be found out. He could not carry out his fraud indefinitely. But the prophets of Allah, however much they are persecuted, gain more and more power every day, as did the holy Prophet, whose truth, earnestness, sincerity, and love for all, were recognised as his life unfolded itself.

5670. This would effectually stop the functioning of his life.

5671. The protection which the prophets of Allah enjoy in circumstances of danger and difficulty would not be available for impostors.
48. But verily this
   Is a Message for
   The God-fearing.

49. And We certainly know
   That there are amongst you
   Those that reject (it).

50. But truly (Revelation)
   Is a cause of sorrow
   For the Unbelievers.

51. But verily it is Truth
   Of assured certainty.

52. So glorify the name
   Of thy Lord Most High.

5672. The Message of Allah is glad tidings for those who believe in Him and follow
   His Law, for it is a message of Mercy and Forgiveness through repentance and
   amendment. But in the case of the wicked it is a cause of sorrow, for it denounces sin
   and proclaims the punishment of those who do not turn from evil.

5673. All Truth is in itself certain. But as received by men, and understood with
   reference to men's psychology, certainty may have certain degrees. There is the
   probability or certainty resulting from the application of man's power of judgment and
   his appraisement of evidence. This is 'ilm-ul-yaqin, certainty by reasoning or inference.
   Then there is the certainty of seeing something with our own eyes. “Seeing is believing.”
   This is 'ain-ul-yaqin, certainty by personal inspection. See cii. 5, 7. Then, as here, there
   is the absolute Truth, with no possibility of error of judgment or error of the eye, (which
   stands for any instrument of sense-perception and any ancillary aids, such as microscopes,
   etc.). This absolute Truth is the haqq-ul-yaqin spoken of here.

5674. As Allah has given us this absolute Truth through His Revelation, it behoves
   us to understand it and be grateful to Him. We must celebrate His praises in thought,
   word and deed.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Ma‘ārij, 70.

This is another eschatological Sūra closely connected in subject-matter with the last one. Patience and the Time will show the ways that climb to Heaven. Sin and Goodness must each eventually come to its own.

Chronologically it belongs to the late early or early middle Makkan period, possibly soon after S. lxxix.
Al-Ma'ārij, or the Ways of Ascent.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful._

1. A questioner asked\(^{5675}\) About a Chastisement To befall—

2. The Unbelievers, The which there is none To ward off,—

3. (A Penalty) from Allah, Lord of the Ways Of Ascent.\(^{5676}\)

4. The angels and The Spirit\(^{5677}\) ascend Unto Him in a Day\(^{5678}\) The measure whereof Is (as) fifty thousand years:

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5675. Any one might ask. When will Judgment come? That question usually implies doubt. The answer is: the knowledge of Time is beyond man's comprehension. But there is something which touches him closely and concerns his conduct and his future welfare; and that is explained in four propositions. (1) Judgment is sure to come, and none can ward it off; (2) it will exact a dreadful Penalty from Unbelievers, but the righteous have nothing to fear; (3) it will be a Penalty from Allah, the Lord of both Justice and Mercy; it will not be merely a blind calamity of fate; and (4) further we are reminded of another title of Allah, “Lord of the Ways of Ascent”; which means that though He sits high on His Throne of Glory, He is not inaccessible, but in His infinite Mercy has provided ways of ascent to Him; see next note.

5676. *Ma'ārij:* stair-ways, ways of ascent. In xliii. 33, the word is used in its literal sense: “silver stair-ways on which to go up”. Here there is a profound spiritual meaning. Can we reach up to Allah Most High? In His infinite grace He gives that privilege to angels. But the way is not easy, nor can it be travelled in a day. See the next two notes.

5677. *Rūḥ:* “The Spirit”. Cf. lxviii. 38, “the Spirit and the angels”; and xcvi. 4, “the angels and the Spirit”. In xvi. 2, we have translated *Rūḥ* by “inspiration”. Some Commentators understand the angel Gabriel by “the Spirit”. But I think a more general meaning is possible, and fits the context better.

5678. Cf. xxxii. 4-5, and notes 3632 and 3634.
5. Therefore do thou hold Patience,—a Patience Of beautiful (contentment). 5679

6. They see the (Day) indeed As a far-off (event):

7. But We see it (Quite) near. 5680

8. The Day that The sky will be like Molten brass, 5681

9. And the mountains will be Like wool, 5682

10. And no friend will ask After a friend, 5683

11. Though they will be put In sight of each other,—

5679. The prophet of Allah, persecuted and in trouble with the world, should yet hold Patience—not the sort of patience which goes with complaints expressed or suppressed, but the sort of patience that is content with the ordering of Allah's world, for he believes and knows it to be good, as did the holy Prophet Muhammad. Such a patience is akin to Good pleasure, for it arises from the purest faith and trust in Allah.

5680. The men of evil may see the just retribution for their sins so far off that they doubt whether it would ever come. But in Allah's sight, and on the scale of the Universal Plan, it is quite near; for time as we know it hardly exists in the next world. It may come even in this life: but it is bound to come eventually.

5681. Cf. xviii. 29 (where the wrong-doer will have a drink like melted brass in Hell); and xlv. 45, (where his food will be like molten brass). Here the appearance of the sky is compared to molten brass, or, as some understand it, like the dregs of oil. What is conveyed by the metaphor is that the beautiful blue sky will melt away.

5682. Cf. ci. 5. where the metaphor of carded wool is used. The mountains which seem so solid will be like flakes of wool driven by the carder's hand.

5683. The world as we know it will have so completely passed away that the landmarks in the heavens and on earth will also have vanished. Not only that, but the human relationships of mind and heart will have been transformed by sin into something ugly and dreadful. The sinners will be so overcome with terror at the realisation of their personal responsibility that they will desert their most intimate friends, and indeed their very sight of each other will add to their agony.
The sinner's desire will be:
Would that he could
Redeem himself from
The Chastisement of that Day\textsuperscript{5684}
By his children,

12. His wife and his brother,

13. His kindred who sheltered him.

14. And all, all that is
On earth,—so it could
Deliver him:\textsuperscript{5685}

15. By no means!
For it would be
The Blazing Fire—

16. Plucking out (his being)
Right to the skull!—\textsuperscript{5686}

17. Inviting (all) such
As turn their backs\textsuperscript{5687}
And turn away their faces
(From the Right),

\textsuperscript{5684} The sinner will offer his children, his family, his kinsmen, who had sheltered and protected him,—in fact everything on earth that he could—as a ransom for himself. Such would be his selfishness and his agony.

\textsuperscript{5685} What would not the sinner give for his own deliverance! But nothing could save him. The Fire of Hell would be roaring for him!

\textsuperscript{5686} It would be a Fire not only burning his body, but reaching right up to his brains and his understanding and—as is said in civ. 7—his heart and affections also. In other words the Fire will burn into his inmost being.

\textsuperscript{5687} The analysis of sin is given in four master-strokes, of which the first two refer to the will or psychology of the sinner, and the last two to the use he makes of the good things of this life. (1) Sin begins with turning your back to the Right, refusing to face it squarely, running away from it whether from cowardice or indifference. (2) But Conscience and the sense of Right will try to prevent the flight; the Grace of Allah will meet the sinner at all corners and try to reclaim him; the hardened sinner will deliberately turn away his face from it, insult it, and reject it. (3) The result of this psychology will be that he will abandon himself to greed, to the collection of riches, and the acquisition of material advantages to which he is not entitled; this may involve hypocrisy, fraud, and crime. (4) Having acquired the material advantages, the next step will be to keep others out of them, to prevent hoarded wealth from fructifying by circulation, to conceal it from envy or spite. This is the spiritual Rake's Progress.
18. And collect (wealth)
   And hide it (from use)!
19. Truly man was created,
    Very impatient;\textsuperscript{5688}
20. Fretful when evil
    Touches him;
21. And niggardly when
    Good reaches him;\textsuperscript{5689}
22. Not so those devoted
    To Prayer:\textsuperscript{5690}
23. Those who remain steadfast
    To their prayer;
24. And those in whose wealth
    Is a recognised right
25. For the (needy) who asks
    And him who is deprived
    (For some reason from asking);\textsuperscript{5691}

\textsuperscript{5688} Man, according to the Plan of Allah, was to be in the best of moulds (xcv. 4). But in order to fulfil his high destiny he was given free-will to a limited extent. The wrong use of this free-will makes his nature weak (iv. 28), or hasty (xvii. 11), or impatient, as here. That becomes his nature by his own act, but he is spoken of as so created because of the capacities given to him in his creation.

\textsuperscript{5689} In adversity he complains and gets into despair. In prosperity he becomes arrogant and forgets other people's rights and his own shortcomings. Cf. xli. 49-50.

\textsuperscript{5690} The description of those devoted to Prayer is given in a number of clauses that follow, introduced by the words "Those who...". "Devoted to Prayer" is here but another aspect of what is described elsewhere as the Faithful and the Righteous. Devotion to prayer does not mean merely a certain number of formal rites or prostrations. It means a complete surrender of one's being to Allah. This means an earnest approach to and realisation of Allah's Presence ("steadfastness in Prayer"); acts of practical and real charity; and attempt to read this life in terms of the Hereafter; the seeking of the Peace of Allah and avoidance of His displeasure; chastity; probity true and firm witness; and guarding the prayer. (verse 34).

\textsuperscript{5691} See n. 5001 to li. 19. True charity consists in finding out those in real need, whether they ask or not. Most frequently those who ask are idle men who insolently wish to live upon others. But all cases of those who ask should be duly investigated, in case a little timely help may set the erring on the way. But the man with wealth or talent =
26. And those who hold
   To the truth of the Day
   Of Judgment;

27. And those who fear⁵⁶⁹²
   The punishment of their Lord,-

28. For their Lord's punishment
   Is not a thing
   To feel secure from:-⁵⁶⁹³

29. And those who guard
   Their chastity,

30. Except with their wives
   And the (captives) whom⁵⁶⁹⁴
   Their right hands possess,-
   For (then) they are not
   To be blamed,

31. But those who trespass
   Beyond this are transgressors;-⁵⁶⁹⁵

32. And those who respect
   Their trusts and covenants;⁵⁶⁹⁵

= or opportunity has the further responsibility of searching out those in need of his assistance, in order to show that he holds all gifts in trust for the service of his fellow-creatures.

⁵⁶⁹². A true fear of Allah is the fear of offending against His holy Will and Law, and is therefore akin to the love of Allah. It proceeds from the realisation that all true peace and tranquillity comes from attuning our will to the universal Will and that sin causes discord, disharmony, and displeasure,—another name for the Wrath of Allah.

⁵⁶⁹³. *I.e.*, that the punishment of sin may come suddenly at any time, when you least expect it.


⁵⁶⁹⁵. For obligations of trusts and covenants, express or implied, see n. 682 to v. 1. They are just as sacred in ordinary everyday life as they are in special spiritual relationships. In addition, our life itself, and such reason and talents as we possess, as well as our wealth and possessions are trusts, of which we must fulfill the duties punctiliously.
33. And those who stand firm
   In their testimonies; $^{5696}$
34. And those who (strictly) guard
   Their worship; $^{5697}$
35. Such will be
   The honoured ones
   In the Gardens (of Bliss).

SECTION 2.

36. Now what is
   The matter with the Unbelievers
   That they rush madly
   Before thee—$^{5698}$
37. From the right
   And from the left,
   In crowds?
38. Does every man of them
   Long to enter
   The Garden of Bliss?
39. By no means!
   For We have created them
   Out of the (base matter)
   They know!$^{5699}$

5696. If we know any truth of any kind, to that we must bear witness, as affecting the lives or interests of our fellow-beings—firmly, not half-heartedly, without fear or favour, even if it causes loss or trouble to us, or if it loses us friends or associates.

5697. We began with “steadfastness in prayer” in verse 23 above, and after a review of various aspects of the good man’s life, close with the guarding of worship.

5698. Before thee. The Unbelievers did not believe in a Hereafter. When the Bliss of the Hereafter was described, as in the last verse, they ridiculed it and pretended to be running in for it as in a race. They are here rebuked in the same tone of sarcasm.

5699. The animal part of man is nothing to be proud of, and they know it. It is by spiritual effort, and long preparation through a good life that a man can rise above the mere animal part of him to his high dignity as a spiritual being, and his noble destiny in the Hereafter.
40. Now I do
   Call to witness\textsuperscript{5700}
   The Lord of all points
   In the East and the West\textsuperscript{5701}
   That We can certainly\textsuperscript{5702}

41. Substitute for them
   Better (men) than they;
   And We are not
   To be defeated
   (In Our Plan).

42. So leave them
   To plunge in vain talk
   And play about,\textsuperscript{5703}
   Until they encounter
   That Day of theirs which
   They have been promised!–

43. The Day whereon
   They will issue
   From their sepulchres
   In sudden haste
   As if they were
   Rushing to a goal-post
   (Fixed for them),\textsuperscript{5704}

\textsuperscript{5700} For the form of adjuration, cf. lxix. 38, n. 5665; also lvi. 75. Here the witness placed before us by Allah is His own power and glory manifested in the splendour of sunrise and sunset at different points through the solar year.

\textsuperscript{5701} See n. 4034 to xxxvii. 5. If Allah has such power in the wonderful phenomena of the rising of the sun at varying points, repeated year after year, can you not see that He can easily substitute better men than you Unbelievers and blasphemers?

\textsuperscript{5702} The transition from the singular “I” to the plural “We” may be noted. See n. 56 to ii. 38.

\textsuperscript{5703} Their talk, their scepticism, is vain, because all spiritual evidence is against it; it is like the foolish play of people who do not think seriously. But the tremendous Day of Judgment and Reality will come, as described in the next two verses.

\textsuperscript{5704} Now there will be a definite Goal-post or Banner or Standard of Truth fixed, which all must acknowledge. But they will acknowledge it in shame and dejection. For the time for their repentance and amendment will then have passed.
44. Their eyes lowered
    In dejection,
Ignominy covering them
(All over)!
Such is the Day
The which they
Are promised!
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Nuḥ, 71.

This is another early Makkān Sūra, of which the date has no significance. The theme is that while Good must uphold the standard of Truth and Righteousness, a stage is reached when it must definitely part company with Evil, lest Evil should spread its corruption. The story of Noah’s agony is almost a Parable for the holy Prophet’s persecution in the Makkān period.
Nūh, or Noah.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. We sent Noah\(^{5705}\) To his People
(With the Command):
“Do thou warn thy People
Before there comes to them
A grievous Chastisement.”

2. He said: “O my People!
I am to you
A Warner, clear and open:\(^{5706}\)

3. “That ye should worship
Allah, fear Him,
And obey me:\(^{5707}\)

4. “So He may forgive you
Your sins and give you
Respite for a stated Term:
For when the Term given
By Allah is accomplished,
It cannot be put forward:\(^{5708}\)
If ye only knew.”

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5705. Noah’s mission is referred to in many places. See specially xi. 25-49 and notes. His contemporaries had completely abandoned the moral law. A purge had to be made, and the great Flood made it. This gives a new starting point in history for Noah’s People,—i.e., for the remnant saved in the Ark.

5706. His Warning was to be both clear (i.e., unambiguous) and open (i.e., publicly proclaimed). Both these meanings are implied in Mubīn. Cf. lxvii. 26. The meaning of the Warning was obviously that if they had repented, they would have obtained mercy.

5707. Three aspects of man’s duty are emphasized: (1) true worship with heart and soul; (2) God-fearing recognition that all evil must lead to self-deterioration and Judgment; (3) hence repentance and amendment of life, and obedience to good men’s counsels.

5708. Allah gives respite freely; but it is for Him to give it. His command is definite and final; neither man nor any other authority can alter or in any way modify it. If we could only realise this to the full in our inmost soul, it would be best for us and lead to our happiness.
5. He said: “O my Lord!
I have called to my People
Night and day:

6. “But my call only
Increases (their) flight
(From the Right).”

7. “And every time I have
Called to them, that Thou
Mightest forgive them,
They have (only) thrust
Their fingers into their ears,
Covered themselves up with
Their garments, grown obstinate,
And given themselves up
To arrogance.

8. “So I have called to them
Aloud;

9. “Further I have spoken
To them in public
And secretly in private,

10. “Saying, ‘Ask forgiveness
From your Lord,
For He is Oft-Forgiving;

5709. When convincing arguments and warnings are placed before sinners, there are
two kinds of reactions. Those who are wise receive admonition, repent, and bring forth
fruits of repentance, i.e., amend their lives and turn to Allah. On the other hand, those
who are callous to any advice take it up as a reproach, fly farther and farther from
righteousness, and shut out more and more the channels through which Allah’s healing
Grace can reach them and work for them.

5710. The literal meaning would be that, just as they thrust their fingers into their
ears to prevent the voice of the admonisher reaching them, so they covered their bodies
with their garments that the light of truth should not penetrate to them and that they
should not even be seen by the Prophet.

5711. Noah used all the resources of the earnest preacher: he dinned the Message
of Allah into their ears; he spoke in public places; and he took individuals into his
confidence, and appealed privately to them; but all in vain.
11. “He will send rain\textsuperscript{5712}
To you in abundance;

12. “Give you increase
In wealth and sons;
And bestow on you
Gardens and bestow on you
Rivers (of flowing water).\textsuperscript{5713}

13. “What is the matter
With you, that ye
Are not conscious
Of Allah’s majesty,—\textsuperscript{5713-A}

14. “Seeing that it is He
That has created you
In diverse stages?\textsuperscript{5714}

15. “See ye not
How Allah has created
The seven heavens
One above another,\textsuperscript{5715}

\textsuperscript{5712}. They had perhaps been suffering from drought or famine. If they had taken
the message in the right way, the rain would have been a blessing to them. They took
it in the wrong way, and the rain was a curse to them, for it flooded the country and
drowned the wicked generation. In the larger Plan, it was a blessing all the same; for
it purged the world, and gave it a new start, morally and spiritually.

\textsuperscript{5713}. Each of these blessings—rain and crops, wealth and man-power, flourishing
gardens, and perennial streams—are indications of prosperity, and have not only a material
but also a spiritual meaning. Note the last point, “rivers of flowing water”. The perennial
springs make the prosperity as it were permanent: they indicate a settled population,
honest and contented, and enjoying their blessings here on earth as the foretaste of the
eternal joys of heaven.

\textsuperscript{5713-A}. I.e., why don’t you fear Allah’s Majesty, His greatness and consequent
punishment for your sinfulness, and hope for His mercy, kindness and reward for your
faith and good deeds. The words of the verse contain the twin strands—fear and hope—
simultaneously.

\textsuperscript{5714}. Cf. xxii. 5, and notes 2773-2777; also xxiii. 12-17, and notes 2872-2875. The
meaning here may be even wider. Man in his various states exhibits various wonderful
qualities or capacities, mental and spiritual, that may be compared with the wonderful
workings of nature on the earth and in the heavens. Will he not then be grateful for
these Mercies and turn to Allah, Who created all these marvels?

\textsuperscript{5715}. See n. 5559 to lxvii. 3.
16. "And made the moon
   A light in their midst,
   And made the sun
   As a (Glorious) Lamp?5716

17. "And Allah has produced
   You from the earth,
   Growing (gradually), 5717

18. "And in the End
   He will return you
   Into the (earth),
   And raise you forth
   (Again at the Resurrection)?

19. "And Allah has made
   The earth for you
   As a carpet (spread out), 5718

20. "That ye may go about
   Therein, in spacious roads." 5719

SECTION 2.

21. Noah said: "O my Lord
   They have disobeyed me,

5716. Cf. xxv. 61, where the sun is referred to as the glorious Lamp of the heavens:
"Blessed is He Who made the Constellations in the skies, and placed therein a lamp,
and a moon giving light."

5717. Cf. iii. 37, where the growth of the child Mary the Mother of Jesus is described
by the same word nabāt, ordinarily denoting the growth of plants and trees. The simile
is that of a seed sown, that germinates, grows, and dies, and goes back to the earth.
In man, there is the further process of the Resurrection. Cf. also xx. 55.

5718. Cf. xx. 53.

5719. Fījāj implies valley-roads or passes between mountains. Though there are
mountain chains on the earth, Allah's artistry has provided even in such regions, valleys
and channels by which men may go about. Mountain roads usually follow the valleys.
5719-A. Sinners always resent it as a reproach that righteous men should speak to them for their own good. They prefer smooth flatterers, and they worship power even though the depositaries of power are selfish men, who neither profit themselves nor profit others by the wealth and man-power that they collect round themselves. They forget that mere material things may be a delusion and a snare unless the moral and spiritual factor behind them sanctifies them.

5720. Having got material resources the wicked devise plots to get rid of the righteous whose presence is a reproach to them. For a time their plots may seem tremendous and have the appearance of success, but they can never defeat Allah's Purpose.

5721. For an account of how these Pagan gods and superstitions connected with them originated, and how they became adopted into the Arabian Pagan Pantheon.

5722. Such Pagan superstitions and cults do not add to human knowledge or human well-being. They only increase error and wrong-doing. For example, how much lewdness resulted from the Greek and Roman Saturnalia! And how much lewdness results from ribald Holi songs! This is the natural result, and Noah in his bitterness of spirit prays that Allah's grace may be cut off from men who hug them to their hearts. They mislead others: let them miss their own mark! See also verse 28 below.
(In the flood),
And were made to enter
The Fire
And they found—
In lieu of Allah—
None to help them.

26. And Noah said:
"O my Lord! Leave not
Of the Unbelievers,
A single one on earth!
"For, if Thou dost leave
(Any of) them, they will
But mislead Thy devotees,
And they will breed none
But wicked ungrateful ones.

27. "For, if Thou dost leave
(Any of) them, they will
But mislead Thy devotees,
And they will breed none
But wicked ungrateful ones.

28. "O my Lord! Forgive me,
My parents, all who
Enter my house in Faith,
And (all) believing men
And believing women:
And to the wrong-doers
Grant Thou no increase
But in Perdition!"

5723. The Punishment of sin seizes the soul from every side and in every form. Water (drowning) indicates death by suffocation, through the nose, ears, eyes, mouth, throat, and lungs. Fire has the opposite effects: it burns the skin, the limbs, the flesh, the brains, the bones, and every part of the body. So the destruction wrought by sin is complete from all points of view. And yet it is not death (xx. 74); for death would be a merciful release from the Penalty, and the soul steeped in sin has closed the gates of Allah's Mercy on itself. There they will abide, unless and "except as Allah willeth" (vi. 128). For time and eternity, as we conceive them now, have no meaning in the wholly new world.

5724. The Flood was sent in order to purge all sin. The prayer of Noah is not vindictive. It simply means, "Cut off all the roots of sin". See next note.

5725. Indeed he prays for himself, his parents, his guests, and all who in earnest faith turn to Allah, in all ages and in all places. Praying for their forgiveness is also praying for the destruction of sin.

5726. This is slightly different in form from verse 24 above, where see n. 5722. See also last note.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Jinn, 72.

This is a late Makkah Sūra, of which we can be tolerably certain of the date. It was two years before the Hijrat, when the Prophet, despised and rejected in his native city of Makkah went to evangelise the lordly men of Ṭāif. They maltreated him and nearly killed him; what caused him even greater pain was the maltreatment of the humble and lowly men who went with him. Ṭabari has handed down that memorable Prayer of faith and humility which he offered in the midst of his suffering. On his return journey to Makkah, jinns not known to him accepted his mission while his own people were still rejecting him. Within two months some strangers from Madinah had privately met him and laid the foundations of that Hijrat which was to change the fate of Arabia and the course of world-history.
**Al-Jinn: The Jinn.**

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful._

1. **Say:** It has been Revealed to me that A company of Jinns Listened (to the Qur'an). They said, 'We have Really heard a wonderful Recital!

2. 'It gives guidance To the Right, And we have believed therein: We shall not join (in worship) Any (gods) with our Lord,

3. 'And exalted is the Majesty Of our Lord: He has Taken neither a wife Nor a son.

4. 'There were some foolish ones Among us, who used To utter extravagant lies Against Allah;

5. 'But we do think That no man or jinn

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5727. Cf. xlvi. 29-32, n. 4809. The Jinns had evidently heard of previous revelations, that of Moses (xlvi. 30), and the error of Trinitarian Christianity (lxiii. 3). The community from which they come have all sorts of good and bad persons, but they are determined to preach the good Message of Unity which they have heard and believed in.

5728. For Jinns, see n. 929 to vi. 100.

5729. The Holy Qur'an would be to them a wonderful Recital—both in subject-matter and in the circumstance that it had come in Arabia among a pagan and ignorant nation.

5730. They abjure paganism and also the doctrine of a son begotten by Allah, which would also imply a wife of whom he was begotten. Cf. vi. 101.
Should say aught that is Untrue against Allah.

6. 'True, there were persons Among mankind who took shelter With persons among the Jinns, But they increased them Into further error.'

7. 'And they (came to) think As ye thought, that Allah Would not raise up Any one (to Judgment).

8. 'And we pried into The (secrets of) heaven; But we found it filled With stern guards And flaming fires.'

9. 'We used, indeed, to sit there In (hidden) stations, to (steal) A hearing; but any

5731. No one ought to entertain false notions about Allah. For by joining false gods in our ideas of worship, we degrade our conception of ourselves and the duty we owe to our Creator and Cherisher, to Whom we have to give a final account of life and conduct. If we worship idols or heavenly bodies, or human beings, or any creatures, or false fancies born of self or foolish abstractions, or the lusts and desires of our own hearts, we are not only doing violence to Truth, but we are causing discord in the harmony of the world.

5732. If human beings think that by a resort to some spirits they can shelter themselves from the struggles and actualities of their own lives, they are sadly mistaken. They must "dree their own weird", as the Scots would say. It is folly to try to escape from the duties which they can understand in their own natural surroundings, or to try to avoid the consequences of their own acts. Only such persons do so as do not realise that they will ultimately have to answer at the Judgment-Seat of Allah, whose first outpost is in their own conscience.

5733. See notes 1951, 1953, and 1954 to xv. 17-18. See also n. 5562 to lxvii. 5. The speakers here have repented of sin and evil; but they recognise that there are evil ones among them, who love stealth and prying, but their dark plots will be defeated by vigilant guardians of the Right, whose repulse of the attacks of evil is figured by the shafts of meteoric light in the heavens.
Who listens now\textsuperscript{5734}  
Will find a flaming fire  
Watching him in ambush.

10. ‘And we understand not  
Whether ill is intended  
To those on earth,\textsuperscript{5735}  
On whether their Lord  
(Really) intends to guide  
Them to right conduct.

11. ‘There are among us  
Some that are righteous,  
And some the contrary:  
We follow divergent paths.

12. ‘But we think that we  
Can by no means frustrate  
Allah throughout the earth,  
Nor can we escape Him  
By flight.\textsuperscript{5736}

13. ‘And as for us,  
Since we have listened  
To the Guidance, we have

\textsuperscript{5734} What is the force of “now”? It refers to the early Makkakan period of Revelation. It means that whatever excuse there may have been before, for people to try to seek out the hidden truths of the Unseen World through jinns, there was none now, as the perspicuous Qur-\textsuperscript{ān} had restored the Message of Unity and cleared religion of all the cobwebs, mysteries, and falsehoods with which priestcraft and pious fraud had overlaid it. The result is that such seekers after false hidden knowledge will find themselves confronted now by the flaming fire, which, like the shafts of meteoric light (see note), will lie in wait for and nip such priestcraft and black magic in the bud.

\textsuperscript{5735} To these jinns this gospel is yet new, and appears like a flaming sword which destroys falsehood while it protects Truth. They frankly confess that they do not clearly understand whether on the whole it will be a mercy to mankind or a punishment for mankind forsaking the paths of Allah. But they rightly feel that it must be a blessing if all seek right Guidance.

\textsuperscript{5736} See last note. In any case, they know that Allah’s Truth and Allah’s Plan must prevail, and no one can frustrate Allah’s purpose; or escape from it. Why not then bring their will into conformity with it, and find Peace, as they have found, by the acceptance of Faith?
Accepted it: and any
Who believes in his Lord
Has no fear, either of a short (account)
Or of any injustice.

14. 'Amongst us are some
That submit their wills
(To Allah), and some
That swerve from justice.
Now those who submit
Their wills—they have Sought out (the path)
Of right conduct:

15. 'But those who swerve,—
They are (but) fuel
For Hell-fire'.

16. (And Allah's Message is):
"If they (the Pagans)
Had (only) remained
On the (right) Way,
We should certainly have
Bestowed on them Rain
In abundance.

5737. Possibly, from this world's standards, it may be that a believer suffers for his Faith. He may be laughed at, persecuted, and actually hurt, "in mind, body, or estate". But he is not perturbed. He takes it all cheerfully, because he knows that when his full account is made up—real gain against apparent loss,—he is a gainer rather than a loser. And his Faith tells him that Allah is a just God, and will never allow him to suffer any injustice, or permit the account of his merit to appear one whit shorter than it is.

5738. Any one who responds to true Guidance, and submits his will to Allah, finds that he makes rapid progress in the path of right conduct and right life. He gets more and more assurance that his destination is the Garden of Bliss.

5739. An unjust life carries its own condemnation. It does no good to itself or to any one else. It bears no fruit. It becomes merely fuel for the Fire of Punishment.

5740. Rain: literally, water: stands for all kinds of blessings, material, moral, and spiritual. All blessings come by way of trial: the more we have, the more is expected of us. A man of gifts, talents, or insight is expected to show a higher standard of love and unselfishness than one less gifted, just as a rich man is expected to give more in charity than a poor man.
5741. To remember Allah is to realise His presence, acknowledge His Goodness, and accept His guidance. If we fail to do so, by deliberately turning away, He will withdraw His Grace, and that will be a severe Penalty indeed.

5742. This is a Makkah Sura, and Masjid must be understood, not in the later technical sense of a Mosque, but in the root meaning, of any place, or occasion of worship or humble prostration in the service of Allah, or any limbs or faculties or accessories used in such worship, e.g., hands and feet, lips and voice, understanding or organisation. A number of meanings therefore follow. (1) No place of worship whatever should be used for the worship of any other but Allah the true God. The Ka’ba was then full of idols, but the idols and their votaries were usurpers. (2) Worship should not be mixed up with vain objects, but should be reserved for the sincere service of Allah. (3) All our gifts are for Allah’s service, which includes the service of His creatures, and not for our vainglory.

5743. The Devotee of Allah: the holy Prophet Muhammad.

5744. They. The immediate reference was to the Pagan Quraysh who were then in possession of the Ka’ba and who put all sorts of obstacles and indignities in the way of the holy Prophet for preaching the One True God and denouncing idol-worship. They used to surround him and mob him and to treat him as if he was guilty of some dreadful crime. But the wider application refers to the habit of the world to make a marked man of any who diverges from the beaten paths of their favourite sins and who pleads earnestly for the cause of Truth and righteousness. They ridicule him; they surround him with jeers and obloquy; and they try to make the physical condition of his life as difficult for him as possible.
20. Say: "I do
No more than invoke
My Lord, and I join not
With Him any (false god)."

21. Say: "It is not
In my power to cause
You harm, or to bring
You to right conduct."

22. Say: "No one can
Deliver me from Allah
(If I were to disobey Him),
Nor should I find refuge
Except in Him,

23. "Unless I deliver what
I receive from Allah
And His Messages:
For any that disobey Allah
And His Messenger,—for them
Is Hell: they shall dwell
Therein for ever."

24. At length, when they
See (with their own eyes)
That which they are promised,—

5745. 'Do not suppose that I am going to harm you individually or socially; the very opposite is my wish; but I cannot force you to right conduct; that must depend upon the purification of your own faith and will'.

5746. 'My mission is from Allah. I cannot choose but obey. He has charged me to deliver the Message, and if I were to disobey him, I would myself be worthy of His punishment, and no one can save me. From every kind of trouble and difficulty my only refuge is in Him. I must proclaim His Message: otherwise I am false to the mission He has entrusted to me.'

5747. When the Hereafter arrives, and true values are restored, they will see clearly that the Promise of Allah was true, and that death on this earth was not the end of all things. Then they will see that those who were accounted weak on this earth will, in the realm of Reality, be the strong ones; those who seemed to have no following here will have, there, all the great and true ones with them, to help them and welcome them to their own ranks.
Then will they know
Who it is that is
Weakest in (his) helper
And least important
In point of numbers.

25. Say: “I know not whether
The (Punishment) which ye
Are promised is near,5748
Or whether my Lord
Will appoint for it
A distant term.

26. “He (alone) knows the Unseen,
Nor does He make any one
Acquainted with His Secrets.—5749

27. “Except a messenger5750
Whom He has chosen:
And then He makes

5748. The coming of Judgment is certain. But the exact time, relatively to our
standards on this earth, no one can tell. Allah alone knows it. Even a Prophet of Allah,
as such, does not know the Mysteries of the Unseen World, except in so far as they have
been revealed to him by Allah’s Revelation. Cf. vi. 50, and notes 867-68.

5749. The Unseen has two aspects. The relative Unseen is so with reference to a
particular person, because of the intervention of Time, Space, or particular circumstances.
For example, I cannot see to-day a house which I saw last year, because it has since
been pulled down. Or I cannot in Lahore see the “Gateway of India” in Bombay,
although any one in Bombay can see it. Or I cannot see the satellites of Jupiter with
the naked eye, though I can through a telescope. But the Absolute Unseen, the Absolute
Mystery, is something which no creature can know or see, except in so far as Allah
reveals it to him. And Allah reveals such things to the extent that is good for men,
through His chosen messengers, among whom the greatest is Muhammad. The exact time
of the Hour of Judgment has not been so shown, because we must not wait for it, but
live as if it is to be at this minute. See last note and next note, and the references there.

5750. Cf. iii. 179, and n. 482. See also last note.
A band of watchers\textsuperscript{5751}
March before him
And behind him,

28. “That He may know
That they have (truly)\textsuperscript{5751-A}
Brought and delivered
The Messages of their Lord
And He encompasses\textsuperscript{5752}
All that is
With them, and takes account
Of every single thing.”\textsuperscript{5753}

\textsuperscript{5751.} Revelation is not a mechanical or material thing. It has to be safeguarded from being distorted or corrupted by ignorance, selfishness, or the powers of evil. How can its precious and subtle worth and the spiritual safeguards against its misuse by human folly or the perversity of evil be expressed in plain human words? We can imagine a very great treasure, which has to be transmitted. To guard it against evilly-disposed persons, a strong escort is required, to march in front and behind, so as to protect it from all sides. When it reaches its destination, the escort presents its credentials and an Invoice showing the Treasure being transmitted. Then the destined receiver knows that it has come intact and feels satisfied. So about spiritual Revelation. The Prophet recognises the credentials and checks the contents on the tablets of his own heart and insight. He has then no doubt that it is a true Message from Allah, and that those who bring it are the true messengers “of their Lord”.

\textsuperscript{5751-A.} They: the band of watchers. In “he may know” it is better to construe “he” to refer to the prophet who receives the Message from the “watchers”.

\textsuperscript{5752.} \textit{Ahātā}: surrounds, encompasses, encloses, guards on all sides, keeps under his own possession and control, and does not allow to be corrupted or debased. See last note but one.

\textsuperscript{5753.} In the spiritual Kingdom,—as indeed, in all things,—Allah’s knowledge, wisdom, and Plan comprehend all things, great and small. There is nothing which we do, nothing which happens that is outside His account.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Muzzammil, 73.

This is one of the earliest Sūras to have been revealed. The first was S. xcvi. 1-5 (Iqraa), in the fortieth year of the Prophet’s life, say about 12 years before the Hijra. Then there was an interruption (Fatra), of which the duration cannot be exactly ascertained, as there was no external history connected with it. The usual estimate puts it at about six months, but it may have been a year or two years. The years were then counted by the luni-solar calendar: see Appendix No. 6. The second Sūra in chronological order was probably a great portion of S. lxviii. (Al-Qalam), which came after the Fatra was over. About the same time came this Sūra (say third) and S. lxxiv., which follows (say fourth), and the remainder of xcvi. We may roughly put the date of this Sūra at about 11 to 10 years before the Hijra.

The subject-matter is the significance of Prayer and Humility in spiritual life and the terrible fate of those who reject Faith and Revelation.
1. O thou folded
   In garments.\footnote{Muzzammil: Some Commentators understand by this, “properly dressed for prayer”, or “folded in a sheet, as one renouncing the vanities of this world. Muzzammil is one of the titles of our holy Prophet. But there is a deeper meaning in this and the address “Thou wrapped up” of the next Sûra. Human nature requires warm garments and wrappings to protect the body from cold or heat or rain. But in the spiritual world these wrappings are useless: the soul must stand bare and open before Allah, in the silence of the night, but not too austerely, as the following verses show.}

2. Stand (to prayer) by night,
   But not all night,\footnote{The Prophet was prone to austerities in the cave of Hirā, both before and after he received his mission, spending days and nights in prayer and contemplation. Midnight and after-midnight prayers have technically received the name of Tahajjud. See also verse 20 below; also xvii. 79.}

3. Half of it,—
   Or a little less,

4. Or a little more;
   And recite the Qur-ān\footnote{At this time there was only S. xcvi., S. lxxvi, and possibly S. lxxiv, and the opening Sûra (Al-Hamd). For us, now, with the whole of the Qur-ān before us, the injunction is specially necessary. The words of the Qur-ān must not be read hastily, merely to get through so much reading. They must be studied, and their deep meaning pondered over. They are themselves so beautiful that they must be lovingly pronounced in rhythmic tones.}
   In slow, measured rhythmic tones.

5. Soon shall We send down
   To thee a weighty Word.\footnote{The Qur-ān as completed by degrees, after the Fatra (see Introduction to this Sûra).}

6. Truly the rising by night
   Is a time when impression
Is more keen and speech 5758
More certain.

7. True, there is for thee
By day prolonged occupation
With ordinary duties. 5759

8. But keep in remembrance
The name of thy Lord,
And devote thyself
To Him whole-heartedly.

9. (He is) Lord of the East
And the West: there is
No god but He:
Take Him therefore
For (thy) Disposer of Affairs. 5760

10. And have patience with what
They say, and leave them
With noble (dignity).

11. And leave Me
(Alone to deal with)
Those in possession of
The good things of life, 5761

5758. For contemplation, prayer, and praise, what time can be so suitable as the night, when calm and silence prevail, the voices of the market-place are still, and the silent stars pour forth their eloquence to the discerning soul.

5759. A prophet of Allah, as a man, a member of a family, or a citizen, has many ordinary duties to perform; and his work may be made difficult and irksome in protecting those who listen to his preaching and are therefore molested and persecuted by the world. But while discharging all his ordinary duties, he should work as in the presence of Allah, and in all matters and at all times retain the sense of Allah's nearness. His work may be on earth, but his heart is in Heaven.

5760. Allah is Lord of all places. He rules the world. Therefore be not discouraged by the plots or enmity of wicked men. Leave all things to Allah; trust Him; He is just and will do justice. Only turn away from the unjust, but in a worthy and noble way; i.e., to show them clearly that you do not fear them, but that you leave all affairs in Allah's hands. If we divide the world into hemispheres from north to south, "East and West" will cover all directions.

5761. Men who enjoy the good things of life have special cause for gratitude to Allah, Who bestowed them. When they are in the ranks of Allah's enemies, none but Allah can adequately deal with them.
(Who yet deny the Truth;)
And bear with them
For a little while.

12. With Us are Fetters\(^\text{5762}\) (To bind them), and a Fire\(^\text{5763}\) (To burn them),

13. And a Food that chokes,\(^\text{5764}\) And a Chastisement Grievous.\(^\text{5765}\)

14. The Day the earth
And the mountains
Will be in violent commotion.
And the mountains will be
As a heap of sand
Poured out and flowing down.\(^\text{5766}\)

15. We have sent to you,
(O men!) a Messenger,
To be a witness concerning you,\(^\text{5767}\)

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5762. Cf. xiii. 5; xxxiv. 33; xl. 71 and lxix. 30-32.
5763. Cf. xlv. 47 and lvi. 94.
5764. Cf. xlv. 43; lvi. 52; lxix. 36-37, and lxxxviii. 6.
5765. In general terms, the Penalty of sin may be described as a Penalty Grievous, an Agony. It may come in this very life, but that in the Hereafter is certain! See next verse.

We can also consider punishments from another aspect. The first object of punishment is to protect the innocent from the depredations of the criminal: we have to bind him. The next object is to produce in his heart the fire of repentance, to consume his evil proclivities and to light his conscience. Where that is not enough, a more drastic punishment for the callous is something which causes him pain in things which ordinarily cause him pleasure, such as food, drink, and the satisfaction of physical needs. People in whom the higher spiritual faculties are dead may perchance be awakened through the lower physical features of their life, which appeal to them. Where this also fails, there is finally the complete Agony, a type too terrible to contemplate.

5766. The Judgment is described as a violent commotion which will change the whole face of nature as we know it. Even the hard rock of mountains will be like loose sand running without any cohesion.

5767. Our holy Prophet has to warn his age, i.e., the present age, reclaim it from sin, and be a witness for the righteous and against evil, as Moses did his office in his age. For Pharaoh, his arrogance, and his punishment, see x. 75-92.
Even as We sent
A messenger to Pharaoh.

16. But Pharaoh disobeyed\(^{5768}\)
The messenger; so We
Seized him with
A heavy Punishment.

17. Then how shall ye,
If ye deny (Allah),
Guard yourselves against
A Day that will make
Children hoary-headed? \(^{5769}\)

18. Whereon the sky will be
Cleft asunder?
His Promise needs must
Be accomplished.

19. Verily this is an Admonition: \(^{5770}\)
Therefore, whoso will, let him
Take a (straight) path
To his Lord!

5768. Pharaoh the earthly king faces Moses the prophet of Allah. In earthly eyes it was Moses who disobeyed Pharaoh. In spiritual relations, it was Pharaoh who disobeyed Moses. Pharaoh represented an ancient and mighty kingdom, with a long history behind it, and a pride in its learning and science, art, organisation, and power. Moses led a depressed people, hewers of wood and drawers of water. But the might of Allah was behind him. What became of the wisdom, power, and armies of Pharaoh? They were rent asunder when the day came, and the terror and surprise must have been the same as if the heavens had been rent asunder, and children's hair had turned grey! But formidable revolutions turn children grey-haired in another way. Nations that were as children became wise before they in their turn decayed, and from similar disobedience to the laws of Allah. For Allah's law must stand and be fulfilled when all else is swept away.

5769. If already you deny and disobey Allah in this life of probation, how can you stand up to the Day of Judgment, the Day of the terrible Reality? That Day is described in two metaphors: (1) It will be a time of such stress that even children will become like hoary-headed men; (2) What we look upon as the eternal sky, ever the same, will be cleft asunder; cf. lxxxii. 1. In other words, the shape of things will be completely altered, both within man and in outer nature, and all true values will be restored. For the Promise of Allah, in this as in all other respects, cannot but be fulfilled.

5770. This is no empty threat. It is an admonition for your good. If you have the will, you can at once come for the Grace and Mercy of Allah, and obtain it. For Repentance and Amendment are the straight Way to the nearness of Allah.
20. Thy Lord doth know
That thou standest forth
(To prayer) nigh two-thirds
Of the night, or half
The night, or a third of
Of the night, and so doth
A party of those with thee.
But Allah doth appoint Night
And Day in due measure.
He knoweth that ye are
Unable to keep count thereof.
So He hath turned to you
(In mercy): read ye,
Therefore, of the Qur'an
As much as may be
Easy for you. He knoweth
That there may be (some)
Among you in ill-health;

5771. Cf., above, lxxiii. 2-4. The Prophet, and a zealous band of his disciples, were often up, two-thirds of the night, or a half, or a third, rejecting sleep and giving themselves up to Prayer and Praise and the reading of the Qur'an. They are told that this was too severe a tax on them, especially if their health was affected, or they were on a journey, or they were striving, with might and main, in other ways, for the cause of Allah. See the lines following.

5772. The usual meaning taken is that the counting of the exact hours of night and day may not be possible for ordinary people, in order to determine exactly the half, or the third, or the two-thirds of a night. The length of the night and the day varies every day of the solar year, and the precise hour of midnight can only be determined by exact observation in clear skies or by chronometers, which is not possible for everyone. But I understand it in a wider meaning. Allah fixes night and day in due proportions; for rest and work, and according to seasonal variations. For prayer and praise no meticulous observations of that kind are necessary or possible. Allah's service can be done in many ways as detailed below. But we must give some time to devotion, as may be most easy and convenient to us, in various circumstances of health, travel, and the performance of various duties.

5773. The reading of the Qur'an here is a part of Prayer and religious devotion. This is not to be made into an obsession or a burden. Cf. xx. 2: "We have not sent down the Qur'an to thee to be an occasion for thy distress." We must do it whole-mindedly, but not by formal mechanical computations.
Others travelling through the land,
Seeking of Allah's bounty;
Yet others fighting
In Allah's Cause. Read ye,
Therefore, as much of the Qur-an
As may be easy (for you);
And establish regular Prayer
And give zakat;
And loan to Allah
A Beautiful Loan.
And whatever good
Ye send forth
For yourselves,
Ye shall find it
With Allah.
Yea, better and
Greater, in Reward,
And seek ye the Grace
Of Allah: for Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

5774. This refers to Jihād. The better opinion is that this particular verse was revealed in Madinah, long after the greater part of the Sūra. The reference, further on, to canonical Prayers and regular Charity (Zakāt), points to the same conclusion.

5775. Cf. ii. 2456, and n. 276, where the meaning of “a Beautiful Loan” is explained. See also lvii. 18. The “Beautiful Loan” should be that of our own souls. We should expect no returns in kind, for that is not possible. But the reward we shall find with Allah will be infinitely greater and nobler. Cf. the biblical phrase, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. vi. 20).

5776. Any good that we do raises our own spiritual status and dignity. We must not think that when we speak of Allah's service or Allah's Cause, we are doing anything for His benefit: He is independent of all needs whatsoever.

5777. This emphasizes the need of Allah's Grace. Whatever good we do, our own merits are comparatively small. Allah's Grace must lift us up and blot out our shortcomings. Even in piety there may be an arrogance which may become a sin. We should always seek Allah's Mercy in all humility.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT Al-Muddaththir, 74.

This Sûra dates from about the same time as the last one. Its subject-matter is also similar: Prayer and Praise, and the need of patience in a period of great spiritual stress: the unjust who cause sorrow and suffering now will themselves experience agony in the Hereafter.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. O thou wrapped up
   (In a mantle)!

2. Arise and deliver thy warning!

3. And thy Lord
   Do thou magnify!

4. And thy garments
   Keep free from stain!

5. And all abomination shun!

6. Nor expect, in giving,
   Any increase (for thyself)!

5778. In these wonderful early verses there is a double thread of thought: (1) A particular occasion or person is referred to; (2) a general spiritual lesson is taught. As to (1), the Prophet was now past the stage of personal contemplation, lying down or sitting in his mantle; he was now to go forth boldly to deliver his Message and publicly proclaim the Lord: his heart had always been purified, but now all his outward doings must be dedicated to Allah, and conventional respect for ancestral customs or worship must be thrown aside; his work as a Messenger was the most generous gift that could flow from his personality, but no reward or appreciation was to be expected from his people, but quite the contrary; there would be much call on his patience, but his contentment would arise from the good pleasure of Allah. As to (2), similar stages arise in a minor degree in the life of every good man, for which the Prophet’s life is to be a universal pattern.

5779. Possibly, in its immediate application, there is a reference to the dirt and filth which the Pagans used to throw at the Prophet to insult and persecute him.

5780. Rujz or Rijz: abomination: usually understood to refer to idolatry. It is even possible that there was an idol called Rujz. But it has a wider signification, as including a mental state opposed to true worship, a state of doubt or indecision.

5781. The legal and commercial formula is that you give in order to receive. And usually you expect to receive what is worth to you a little more than you give. The spiritual consideration is that you give, but expect nothing from the receiver. You serve Allah and Allah’s creatures.
7. But, for thy Lord's (Cause)⁵⁷⁸²
   Be patient and constant!

8. Finally, when the Trumpet
   Is sounded,

9. That will be—that Day—
   A Day of Distress,—⁵⁷⁸³

10. Far from easy
    For those without Faith.

11. Leave Me alone, (to deal)⁵⁷⁸⁴
    With the (creature) whom
    I created (bare and) alone!—⁵⁷⁸⁵

12. To whom I granted
    Resources in abundance,

13. And sons to be
    By his side!—⁵⁷⁸⁶

14. To whom I made
    (Life) smooth and comfortable!

⁵⁷⁸². Our zeal for Allah's Cause itself requires that we should not be impatient, and
that we should show constancy in our efforts for His Cause. For we have faith, and we
know that He is All-Good, All-Wise, and All-Powerful, and everything will ultimately be
right.

⁵⁷⁸³. The Sinner's course is now shown in contrast to the Seeker's. The Sinner may
be self-complacent now: but what will be his position when the Reckoning comes? Not
easy, indeed a Day of Distress!

⁵⁷⁸⁴. The question of Justice and Punishment to men is for Allah alone. For man
at his best can see only one side of truth, and only Allah is All-Knowing. He alone can
judge the limits of Justice and Mercy.

⁵⁷⁸⁵. Man's adventitious advantages—wealth, power, position, talents—are not due to
his own merits. They are gifts from Allah, Who created him. In himself he came bare
and alone.

⁵⁷⁸⁶. The great ones of the earth may have wealth, a large following, sons by their
side to defend them and do their bidding and man-power to help them in their battles.
Life may be smooth and agreeable to them. But their responsibility is to Allah.
15. Yet is he greedy—
   That I should add
   (Yet more); 5787

16. By no means!
   For to Our Signs
   He has been refractory!

17. Soon will I visit him
   With a mount of calamities! 5788

18. For he thought
   And he determined;—

19. And woe to him! 5789
   How he determined!—

20. Yea, woe to him:
   How he determined!—

21. Then he reflected;

22. Then he frowned
   And he scowled;

23. Then he turned back
   And was haughty;

24. Then said he; 5790
   "This is nothing but magic,
   Derived from of old;

5787. The Sinner takes Allah's gifts as if they were his right. The more he gets, the more is he greedy. Yet to Allah's Signs and revelations he is wilfully deaf or even openly rebellious. But he is only preparing the way for his own undoing.

5788. "A mount of calamities" or disasters: may be understood as a phrase for cumulative disasters.

5789. Cf. li. 10: "Woe to the falsehood-mongers!"

5790. The Commentators understand the reference to be to Walid ibn Mugaira, who was a wealthy Sybarite, Pagan to the core, and an inveterate enemy to the holy Prophet. He and Abū Jahl did all they could, from the beginning of the preaching of Islam, to abuse and persecute the Preacher, to run down his doctrine, and to injure those who believed in it. But the meaning for us is much wider. There are Walids in all ages. They cannot understand divine inspiration, and seek to explain its wonderful influence over the lives of men by some such unmeaning formula as "magic". The eternal Hope is to them mere human delusion!
25. “This is nothing but
The word of a moral!”

26. Soon will I
Cast him into Hell-Fire!5791

27. And what will explain
To thee what Hell-Fire is?

28. Naught doth it permit
To endure, and naught5792
Doth it leave alone!–

29. Darkening and changing
The colour of man!

30. Over it are Nineteen.5793

31. And We have set none5794
But angels as guardians
Of the Fire; and We

5791. The Sinner’s perversity can only end in the Fire of Punishment. It enters his very being. See next note.

5792. He is in a state in which he neither lives nor dies (Ixxxvii. 13). Looked at in another way, the things that in a good man are meant to last and grow, are for the sinner destroyed, and no part of his nature is left untouched. The brightness of his very manhood is darkened and extinguished by sin.

5793. The figure nineteen refers to angels appointed to guard Hell. See verse 31 below and the corresponding note.

5794. Cf. lxvi. 6, and n. 5540.

There was a great volume of angelology in the religious literature of the People of the Book (i.e., the Jews and Christians) to whom (among others) an appeal is made in this verse. The Essenes, a Jewish brotherhood with highly spiritual ideas; to which perhaps the prophet Jesus himself belonged, had an extensive literature of angelology. In the Midrash also, which was a Jewish school of exegesis and mystical interpretation, there was much said about angels. The Eastern Christian sects contemporary with the birth of Islam had borrowed and developed many of these ideas, and their mystics owed much to the Gnostics and the Persian apocalyptic systems. In the New Testament the relation of the angels with Fire is referred to more than once. In Rev. ix. 11 we have “the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon”. In Rev. xiv. 18 there is an “angel which had power over fire”, and in Rev. xvi. 8 an angel has “power...given unto him to scorch men with fire”. In the Old Testament (Daniel vii. 9-10) the essence of all angels is fire: thousand thousands of them issued as a fiery stream from before the Ancient of Days, whose “throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.”
Have fixed their number\(^{5795}\)
Only as a trial
For Unbelievers,—in order
That the People of the Book
May arrive at certainty,
And the Believers may increase
In Faith,—and that no doubts
May be left for the People
Of the Book and the Believers,
And that those in whose hearts
Is a disease and the Unbelievers
May say, "What
Doth Allah intend by this?"\(^{5796}\)
Thus doth Allah leave to stray
Whom He pleaseth, and guide
Whom He pleaseth: and none
Can know the forces
Of thy Lord, except He,\(^{5797}\)
And this is no other than
A Reminder to mankind.

5795. The significance of numbers is a favourite theme with some writers, but I lay no stress on it. In Christian theology the number of the Beast, 666, in Rev. xiii. 18 has given rise to much controversy, and may refer only to the numerical value of the letters in the name of the Roman Emperor Nero. In our own literature I think that we ought to avoid too much insistence on speculative conjectures.

5796. There are four classes of people mentioned here. (1) The Muslims will have their faith increased, because they believe that all revelation is from Allah Most Merciful, and all His forces will work in their favour. (2) The People of the Book, those who had received previous revelations of an analogous character, the Jews and Christians, had numerous sects disputing with each other on minute points of doctrine; but they will now, if they believe, find rest from controversies in a broad understanding of scripture. (3) Those in whose hearts is a disease (see ii. 8-10, notes 33-34), the insincere ones, the hypocrites, will only be mystified, because they believe nothing and have rejected the grace and mercy of Allah. (4) The Unbelievers have frankly done the same and must suffer similar consequences.

5797. It is a necessary consequence of moral responsibility and freedom of choice in man, that he should be left free to stray if he chooses to do so, in spite of all the warning and the instruction he receives. Allah’s channels of warning and instruction—His spiritual forces—are infinite, as are His powers. No man can know them. But this warning or reminder is addressed to all mankind.

All things are referred to Allah. But we must not attribute evil to Him. In iv. 79 we are expressly told that the good comes from Allah, and the evil from ourselves.
SECTION 2

32. Nay, verily:
   By the Moon.\(^{5798}\)

33. And by the Night\(^{5799}\)
   As it retreateth,

34. And by the Dawn
   As it shineth forth,—

35. This is but one\(^{5800}\)
   Of the mighty (Portents),

36. A warning to mankind,—

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5798. An oath in human speech calls in evidence something sacred in the heart of man. In Allah's Message, also, when delivered in human language, solemn emphasis is indicated by an appeal to something striking among the Signs of Allah, which will go straight to the human heart which is addressed. In each case the symbol of the appeal has reference to the particular point enforced in the argument. Here we are asked to contemplate three wonderful phenomena, and they lead up to the conclusion in verse 38. (1) The moon, next after the sun, is the most striking luminary to our sight. Its reflected light has for us even a greater mystery than the direct light of the sun, which looks to us like pure fire. The moon was worshipped as a deity in times of darkness. But in reality, though she rules the night, her rays are only reflections, and are wanting in warmth and vitality. So every soul which looks up to a mere creature of Allah for a sort of vicarious salvation is in spiritual darkness or error; for the true source of spiritual light and life is Allah, and Allah alone. For (2) the Night and (3) the Dawn, see the following note.

5799. (2) The Night when it is illuminated by the Moon is light in a sense, but it is really dark and must give place to (3) the Dawn when it comes, as the harbinger of the Sun. So in spiritual matters, when every soul realises its own responsibility, it will look less and less to reflected lights, and through the beauty of a dawn-like awakening, will be prepared more and more for the splendour of the light of Allah Himself, the goal of the Heaven of our dreams.

5800. "This is but one," etc. There are numerous Signs of Allah, of which Judgment is one, and one of the mightiest portents. Or the reference may be to the waning of the Moon, the decline of the night, and the glorious sunrise, as tokens or symbols of the world renewed when the present transitory world passes away. According to some commentators "This" here refers to Hell.
37. To any of you that chooses to press forward, 
   Or to follow behind;—

38. Every soul will be (held) 
   In pledge for its deeds.

39. Except the Companions 
   Of the Right Hand,

40. (They will be) in Gardens 
   (Of Delight): they will 
   Question each other,

41. And (ask) of the Sinners: 
   “What led you 
   Into Hell-Fire?”

42. They will say: 
   “We were not of those 
   Who prayed;

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5801. Three interpretations are possible. (1) Those pressing forward may be the Righteous, and those following behind may be the laggards, the Unbelievers, who reject Allah's love, care, and mercy. (2) Men of two kinds of temperament may be referred to: those who are always in the van and those who are always in the rear. Allah's Message is open to both. But there may be a danger to both: in the one case, overconfidence, or hope in wrong things: in the other case missing great opportunities so that their spiritual lives may be "bound in shallows and in miseries". Extremes should be avoided. (3) Or it may mean that the warning is effective only for those willing to move forwards or backwards, as the case may be, but is lost on the inert or the lethargic. For our moral and spiritual progress, we have in some cases to go forwards, but in some cases we have to retreat from false positions. The hopeless case is that of the obstinate man, whose heart is so dead that he dares not advance to the right or withdraw from the wrong.

5802. Cf. lli. 21. Man cannot shift his responsibility to vicarious saviours or saints. His redemption depends upon the grace of Allah, for which he should constantly and whole-heartedly strive by means of right conduct. If he does so he will be redeemed and he will join the Companions of the Right Hand.

5803. Cf. n. 5223 to lvi. 3, and see lvi. 27-38. The Companions of the Right Hand will be the Righteous or the Blessed in the Hereafter. Their grounds of merit will be Prayer, Charity, Earnestness, and Faith in Allah's just Judgment: all of which are within the reach of the humblest Seeker. They are not separate acts or virtues, but are all interconnected. At Judgment, the pledge of their soul will be redeemed by Allah's Grace at the Taking of the Account.
44. "Nor were we of those who fed the indigent;
45. "But we used to talk vanities with vain talkers;
46. "And we used to deny the Day of Judgment,
47. "Until there came to us (The Hour) that is certain.
48. Then will no intercession of (any) intercessors profit them.
49. Then what is the matter with them that they turn away from admonition?
50. As if they were affrighted asses,
51. Fleeing from a lion!
52. Forsooth, each one of them wants to be given scrolls (of revelation) spread out!
53. By no means! But they fear not the Hereafter.

5804. Cf. xv. 99, and n. 2018. The Hour that is Certain is usually taken to the Death.
5805. If the Day of Judgment is inevitable, it is strange that men should not heed a plain warning, but go on as if they were thoughtless and obstinate asses stampeding from a lion. Instead of heeding the warning, they try to avoid it. They are frightened at Allah's Word.
5806. Cf. xvii. 93: "Until thou send down to us a book, that we could read." The Unbelievers pretend in ridicule that they would believe if a special message written on open scrolls and addressed to them severally were brought to them by a miracle! There is a disease in their hearts and understandings. The Teacher's warning is plain, and enough for any reasonable man who has the will to seek Allah.
54. Nay, this surely
   Is an admonition:

55. Let any who will, \(^{5807}\)
   Keep it in remembrance!

56. But none will keep it
   In remembrance except
   As Allah wills: He\(^{5808}\)
   Is the Lord of Righteousness,
   And the Lord of Forgiveness.

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5807. The Qur-an itself is the admonition—the latest among the revealed Books of Allah. If man has the will to learn, he will keep the Message always before Him, and Allah’s grace will help him to carry it out in his conduct.

5808. Righteousness as well as Forgiveness have their source in Allah’s Will. Man’s Righteousness has no meaning except in relation to the universal Will. For Taqwâ see n. 26 to ii. 2. If we take the word here in the sense of “the fear of Allah”, the translation would be: “He alone is worthy to be feared, and He alone is entitled to grant Forgiveness.”
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SURA AL-QIYAMAT, 75.

This Sura belongs to the early Makkah period, but comes chronologically a good deal later than the last two Suras.

Its subject-matter is the Resurrection, viewed from the point of view of Man, especially unregenerate Man, as he is now, and as he will be then,—his inner and psychological history.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. I do swear by the Resurrection Day;
2. And I do swear by the self-reproaching soul.
3. Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?
4. Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.
5. But man wishes to do wrong (even) in the time in front of him.
6. He questions: "When is the Day of Resurrection?"

5809. Cf. lxx. 40, and n. 5700. Here the point to be enforced is understood. The appeal is made to two considerations: (1) That every act has to be accounted for, and evil must have its recompense at the Resurrection; and (2) that man's own spirit has a conscience which would reproach him for sin, if he did not suppress that inner voice.

5810. Our doctors postulate three states or stages of the development of the human soul: (1) Ammāra (xii. 53), which is prone to evil, and, if not checked and controlled, will lead to perdition; (2) Lawwāma, as here, which feels conscious of evil, and resists it, asks for Allah's grace and pardon after repentance and tries to amend; it hopes to reach salvation; (3) Mūma'ina (lxxxix 27), the highest stage of all, when it achieves full rest and satisfaction. Our second stage may be compared to Conscience, except that in English usage Conscience is a faculty and not a stage in spiritual development.

5811. The Unbelievers' usual cry is: "What! when we are reduced to bones and dust, how can our personality be called to account?" (xvii. 49). The answer is: Allah has said so, and He will do it; for the death here is not the end of all things.

5812. An idiom for the most delicate parts of his body.

5813. It is bad enough not to repent of past sins. But the evil-doer who rejects a Day of Reckoning and has no conscience wants to go on in his career of sin and jeopardise his future also.

5814. The question is sceptical or derisive. He does not believe that there is any chain of consequences in the Hereafter. He does not believe in a Hereafter.
At length, when the Sight is dazed, 5815
And the moon is Buried in darkness. 5816
And the sun and moon Are joined together, 5817
That Day will Man say: "Where is the refuge?"
By no means! No place of safety!
Before thy Lord (alone), That Day will be The place of rest.
That Day will Man Be told (all) that he Put forward, and all That he put back. 5818
Nay, man will be Evidence against himself, 5819

5815. At the Hour of Judgment the full light and glory of the Lord will shine, and the effulgence will daze man's eyes. For the world as we knew it will go to pieces and a new World will come into being.

5816. Not only will man's sight be dazed, but the great luminaries themselves will lose their light. The moon with its present reflected light will then cease to shine. All reflected or relative truth or goodness will sink into nothing before the true and Eternal Reality.

5817. To the moon the sun is the original light, but the sun itself is a created light, and it will sink into nothingness along with the moon. Both will be like empty shells "whose lights are fled, whose glories dead", because the Light of Allah now shines in full splendour in a new World. See n. 4344 to xxxix. 69.

5818. All good and bad deeds, positive and negative, i.e., all sins of commission and omission, and all the good that a man did and all the evil that he omitted, all the influence that he radiated before him and all that he left behind him.

5819. Cf. xxiv. 24, and n. 2976: "On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions." It is not what a man says about himself, or what others say of him, that determines judgment about him. It is what he is in himself. His own personality betrays him or commends him.
15. Even though he were  
To put up his excuses.

16. Move not thy tongue  
Concerning the (Qur-án)  
To make haste therewith.  

17. It is for Us to collect it  
And to recite it:

18. But when We have  
Recited it, follow thou  
Its recital (as promulgated):

19. Nay more, it is  
For Us to explain it  
(And make it clear):

20. Nay, (ye men!)  
But ye love  
The fleeting life,  

21. And leave alone  
The Hereafter.

5820. Cf. xx. 114, and n. 2639: "Be not in haste with the Qur-án before its revelation to thee is completed." S. lxxv. is an earlier revelation, and the shade of meaning is slightly different. The immediate meaning was that the holy Prophet was to allow the revelation conveyed to him to sink into his mind and heart and not to be impatient about it; Allah would certainly complete it according to His Plan, and see that it was collected and preserved for men, and not lost; that the inspired one was to follow it and recite it as the inspiration was conveyed to him; and that it carries its own explanation according to the faculties bestowed by Allah on man. The general meaning follows the same lines: we must not be impatient about the inspired Word; we must follow it as made clear to us by the faculties given to us by Allah.

5821. Cf. xxi. 37. Man loves haste and things of haste. For that reason he pins his faith on transitory things that come and go, and neglects the things of lasting moment, which come slowly, and whose true import will only be fully seen in the Hereafter.
22. Some faces, that Day,\textsuperscript{5822}
Will beam (in brightness
And beauty);–
23. Looking towards their Lord;
24. And some faces, that Day,
Will be sad and dismal,
25. In the thought that some
Back-breaking calamity was about
To be inflicted on them;
26. Yea, when (the soul)\textsuperscript{5823}
Reaches to the collar-bone
(In its exit),
27. And there will be a cry,
“Who is an enchanter
(To restore him)?
28. And he\textsuperscript{5824} will think
That it was (the time)
Of Parting;
29. And one leg will be\textsuperscript{5825}
Joined with another:

\textsuperscript{5822} This passage (especially with reference to verses 26-28) would seem to refer to what our Doctors call the Lesser Judgment \textit{(Qiyāmāt-us-Sugrā)}, which takes place immediately after death, and not to the Greater or General Judgment, which may be supposed to be referred to in such passages as occurs in S. lvi. There are other passages referring to the Lesser Judgment immediately after death; \textit{e.g.}, vii. 37 etc. If I understand aright, the punishment of sin takes place in three ways; (1) it may take place in this very life, but this may be deferred, to give the sinner respite; (2) it may be an agony immediately after death; and (3) in the final Resurrection, when the whole of the present order gives place to a wholly new World: xiv, 48.

\textsuperscript{5823} A symbolic picture of the agony of death.

\textsuperscript{5824} He=the dying man, whose soul is referred to in verse 26 above.

\textsuperscript{5825} When the soul has departed, the legs of the dead body are placed together in position, in preparation for the rites preliminary to the burial. \textit{Sāq} (literally, leg) may also be taken metaphorically to mean a calamity: calamity will be joined to calamity for the poor departed sinner’s soul, as his life-story in this world is now done. Willy-nilly, he will now have to go before the Throne of Judgment.
30. That Day the Drive
   Will be (all) to thy Lord!

SECTION 2.

31. So he gave nothing
    In charity, nor
    Did he pray! 5826

32. But on the contrary,
    He rejected Truth
    And turned away!

33. Then did he stalk
    To his family
    In full conceit! 5827

34. Woe to thee,
    (O man!), yea, woe!

35. Again, woe to thee,
    (O man!), yea, woe!

36. Does Man think
    That he will be left
    Uncontrolled, (without purpose)? 5828

5826. His indictment in this and the succeeding verse consists of four counts: (1) he neglected prayer; (2) he neglected charity; (3) he rejected Truth; and (4) he turned away. In lxxiv. 43-46, the four counts are (1) neglecting prayer; (2) neglecting charity; (3) talking vanities; (4) denying the Day of Judgment; see n. 5803, Nos. (1) and (2) are identical in both places, and Nos. (3) and (4) are analogous. Rejecting the truth is equivalent to talking vanities and making an alliance with falsehoods. Denying the Day of Judgment means behaving as if no account was to be given of our actions, i.e., turning away from right conduct. An additional touch is found here in verse 33. See next note.

5827. Conceit or arrogance is the root-cause of most Evil. By that cause fell Iblis: see ii. 34.

5828. Sudan: has many implications: (1) uncontrolled, free to do what he likes; (2) without any moral responsibility; not accountable for his actions; (3) without a purpose, useless; (4) forsaken.
37. Was he not a drop
Of sperm emitted
(In lowly form)?

38. Then did he become
A leach-like clot;
Then did (Allah) make
And fashion (him)
In due proportion.

39. And of him He made
Two sexes, male
And female.

40. Has not He, (the same),
The power to give life
To the dead?

5829. Cf. xxii. 5, where the argument is developed in greater detail. The briefer argument here may be stated thus. His lowly animal origin makes him no higher than a brute; his fetial development is still that of a brute animal; then at some stage come human limbs and shape; the divine spirit is poured into him, and he is fashioned in due proportion for his higher destiny. Inspite of that the mystery of sex remains in his nature: we are living souls, yet men and women. Allah Who creates these wonders,—has He not the power to bring the dead to life at the Resurrection?
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Ad-Dahr or Al-Insān 76

The revelation of this Sūra was probably in the early Makkan period, with the possible exception of some verses.

Its theme is the contrast between the two classes of men, those who choose good and those who choose evil, with special reference to the former.

The title of the Sūra recalls a Pagan Arab idea, which explains Time as existing spontaneously from eternity to eternity and responsible for the misery or the happiness of mankind. In xlv. 24 we read: "They say....'nothing but Time can destroy us'." This attitude is of course wrong. Time is a created thing: it has its wonders, but it is no more eternal than matter. It is also relative to our conceptions and not absolute, as Einstein has proved. It is only Allah Who is self Subsisting, Eternal from the beginning and Eternal to the end, the absolute Existence and Reality. We must not transfer His attributes to any figments of our imagination.

This idea of Time (Dahr) as against a living personal God has given rise to the term dahriya, as applied to an atheist or a materialist.

The whole of the Sūra is full of the highest meanings, as is generally the case with Makkan Sūras, and this should always be remembered in their interpretation.
Ad-Dahr, or Time.

or Insân, or Man.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Has there not been\(^{5830}\) Over Man a long period Of Time,\(^{5831}\) when he was Nothing—(not even) mentioned?

2. Verily We created Man from a drop Of mingled sperm,\(^{5832}\) In order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts), Of Hearing and Sight.

3. We showed him the Way: Whether he be grateful Or ungrateful.\(^{5833}\)

4. For the Rejecters We have prepared Chains, Yokes, and A Blazing Fire.\(^{5834}\)

5830. The undoubted fact is mentioned in the form of a question, to get the assent of man. It is certain that the physical world existed long before man was ever heard of or mentioned, as geological records prove. It is also true that the world existed long before man came on the scene: see ii. 30-31. Man is here taken in a generic sense.

5831. Dahr is Time as a whole, or for a long period.

5832. Mingled: the female ovum has to be fertilised with the male sperm before a new animal can be born. Man as an animal has this humble origin. But he has been given the gift of certain faculties of receiving instruction (typified by Hearing) and of intellectual and spiritual insight (typified by Sight). His life has therefore a meaning: with a certain amount of free-will, he is to be vicegerent on earth (ii. 30). But he must be trained and tried, and that is the whole problem of human life.

5833. Besides the gift of the faculties, Man has been shown the Way by means of Revelation, through men of the highest spiritual standing. If he is grateful, he will accept Guidance, be of the Righteous, and join the company of the Blessed. If not, he puts chains round himself, thus burdening himself with sin, and gets into the Blazing Fire of Punishment. See next verse. His choice rests on his will.

5834. Cf. xiii. 5; xxxiv. 33 and xl. 71.
5. As to the Righteous,  
They shall drink  
Of a Cup  
Mixed with Kāfūr.  

6. A Fountain where  
The Devotees of Allah  
Do drink, making it  
Flow in unstinted abundance.

7. They perform (their) vows,  
And they fear a Day  
Whose evil flies far and wide.

8. And they feed, for the love  
Of Allah, the indigent,  
The orphan, and the captive;  
(Saying), “We feed you  
For the sake of Allah alone:  
No reward do we desire  
From you, nor thanks.

5835. Kāfūr is literally Comphor. It is a fountain in the Realms of Bliss. It is a seasoning added to the Cup of pure, beatific Wine, which causes no intoxication (v1i. 18-19), but stands for all that is wholesome, agreeable, and refreshing. Camphor is cool and refreshing, and is given as a soothing tonic in Eastern medicine. In minute doses its odour and flavour are also agreeable.

5836. They: i.e., the Righteous: they are known in the present life by the virtues described in verses 7-10, and in the life of the Hereafter they will enjoy the Bliss described in verses 11-22.

5837. Cf. xxii. 29. The vows must be vows of spiritual service, which of course includes service to humanity, such as is mentioned in the next verse. They are Devotees of Allah, and they must perform all vows and contracts (v. 1 and n. 682). Vows of the Pagan sort, savouring of a sort of “bribe” to the Deity, are not approved.

5838. That is, they prepare for the Judgment to come, where the effects of Sin will not be transitory but far-reaching.

5839. The captive: when taken literally, it refers to the old state of things when captives of war had to earn their own food, or their own redemption; even ordinary prisoners in jail for criminal offences often starved unless food was provided for them by private friends or from their own earnings.

5840. These words need not be actually uttered. They express the true motives of pious and unpretentious Charity.
10. “We only fear a Day
Of frowning and distress
From the side of our Lord”.5841

11. But Allah will deliver
Them from the evil
Of that Day, and will
Shed over them brightness5842
And a (blissful) Joy.

12. And because they were
Patient and constant, He will
Reward them with a Garden
And (garments of) silk.5843

13. Reclining in the (Garden)
On raised couches,5844
They will see there neither
The sun’s (excessive heat)
Nor excessive cold.5845

14. And the shades of the (Garden)
Will come low over them,
And the bunches (of fruit),

5841. It is a Day of Distress for sin and evil. But the truly righteous are not self-righteous. They have the fear of Allah in their minds: they know they are human, and they fear lest they should be found wanting in the sight of Allah. But Allah in His Mercy gives them a bountiful Reward.

5842. Cf. lxxv. 22-23.

5843. Cf. xxii. 23.

5844. Cf. xviii. 31.

5845. The sun and the moon as we know them will be no longer there. It will be a new world on a different plane. But to give us an idea of comfort we recall the excessive heat of the sun especially in tropical climates, and the excessive cold of the moon especially in northern climates, and we negative them both. That is, the temperature will be just that delightful one that is most agreeable to our sensations as we know them now. The moon is not mentioned, but Zamharir (excessive cold) is sometimes used for the moon.
15. And amongst them will be
   Passed round vessels of silver—
   And goblets of crystal,—


   They will determine
   The measure thereof
   (According to their wishes).

17. And they will be given
   To drink there of a Cup
   Mixed with Zanjabil,—

18. A fountain there,
   Called Salsabil.

19. And round about them
   Will (serve) youths
   Of perpetual (freshness):

5846. Without sun and moon there will of course be no shade in the literal sense of the word. But for full comfort, there will be sheltering shade for rest and change from whatever light there be.

5847. Cf. xliii. 71, where "dishes and goblets of gold" are mentioned. The idea conveyed is that of rarity, preciousness, and spotless splendour.

5848. That is, silver polished and white, and shining like crystal.

5849. Cf. above, lxxvi. 5-6, and n. 5835, where the Cup of Kāfūr (Camphor) was mentioned for coolness and refreshment to the Righteous, who had just passed the great Event of Judgment. The second stage is described in verses 12-14, when they enter the Garden in Garments of Silk, and find that their former humility in the probationary life is rewarded with high honour in the new world they have entered. The third stage is in verses 15-21, where they settle down in Bliss, with Garments of fine silk and heavy brocades, with Ornaments and Jewels, with an ordered Feast of set service, and the Cup of Zanjabil. This word literally means Ginger. In Eastern medicine Ginger is administered to give warmth to the body and zest to the taste; this is appropriate for the Royal Feast which is now figured forth.


5851. Cf. lvi. 17 and n. 5231.
If thou seest them,
Thou wouldst think them
Scattered Pearls.\textsuperscript{5852}

20. And when thou lookest,
It is there thou wilt see
A Bliss and
A Realm Magnificent.

21. Upon them will be
Green Garments of fine silk
And heavy brocade,
And they will be adorned
With Bracelets of silver,\textsuperscript{5853}
And their Lord will
Give to them to drink
A pure drink.\textsuperscript{5854}

22. "Verily this is a Reward
For you, and your Endeavour
Is accepted and recognised."

\textbf{SECTION 2.}

23. It is We Who
Have sent down the Qur-\textae n
To thee by stages.\textsuperscript{5855}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5852} Pearls for beauty and splendour: scattered, because they are moving to and fro.
\item \textsuperscript{5853} Cf. xviii. 31. The bracelets are there said to be of gold.
\item \textsuperscript{5854} This would seem to be the culmination of the honour which the Blessed receive at the Royal and Divine Banquet. The words in the next verse express the sort of speech which will make the Guest a denizen of Heaven.
\item \textsuperscript{5855} The Qur-\textae n was being revealed stage by stage as the occasion demanded and at the date of this S\textae ra it was still one of the earlier stages. Persecution, abuse, and false charges were being levelled against the man of Allah, but he is bidden to stand firm and do his duty. In a minor degree this applies to all of us who suffer in the cause of Truth.
\end{itemize}
24. Therefore be patient
With constancy to the Command
Of thy Lord, and obey not
To the sinner or the ingrate
Among them.

25. And celebrate the name\textsuperscript{5856}
Of thy Lord morning
And evening,

26. And part of the night,
Prostrate thyself to Him;
And glorify Him\textsuperscript{5857}
A long night through.

27. As to these, they love
The fleeting life,
And put away behind them\textsuperscript{5858}
A Day (that will be) hard.

\textsuperscript{5856} Three methods of Prayer and Devotion are mentioned: (1) to remember and celebrate the holy name of Allah always; (2) to spend a part of the night in humble prostration; and (3) to glorify Him in the long hours of a weary night of waiting and watching. As to (1), “morning and evening” means all the waking hours of our life, but in the special hours of morning and evening the physical world without us, and the inner world within us, combine to make us specially receptive of spiritual influences. The “name” of Allah includes His attributes, as a locked golden casket might include priceless jewels. Any one may carry the casket, even though he may not be worthy to handle the jewels. If he carries the casket, he is in potential possession of the jewels, and he hopes some time to get the key which opens the jewels to him. So the tyro, who celebrates the holy name of Allah, hopes some day to see the “Face” of Allah and be blessed with the privilege of proximity to His Person. For (2) and (3) see next note.

\textsuperscript{5857} See last note. (2) Humble prostration to Allah means some visible mode of dedication. That is best done at night, when the soul, free from worldly occupations, is alone with its God. (3) The weary hours of a long night are no longer weary, but become full of meaning when we join in concert with the whole Creation, which glorifies Allah: liv. 1.

\textsuperscript{5858} Fleeting life: Cf. lxxv. 20. They: the immediate reference was to the Pagan Quraish: the general reference is to the Unbelievers of all ages. They reject, or at least put away the thought of, a Hereafter, a Day that will be hard, for the easy pleasures of a fleeting life.
28. It is We Who created Them, and We have made Their frame strong;\(^{5859}\) But, when We will, We shall exchange Their likes.\(^{5860}\)

29. This is an admonition: Whosoever will, let him Take a (straight) Path To his Lord.

30. But ye will not, Except as Allah wills;\(^{5861}\) For Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom.

31. He will admit To His Mercy Whom He will;\(^{5862}\) But the wrong-doers,— For them has He prepared A grievous Chastisement.

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\(^{5859}\) Allah has not only created men, but “made their frame strong”, i.e., given them the power and strength to withstand the temptations of Evil and stand firmly in the Path of Right.

\(^{5860}\) If, in spite of Allah’s loving care, any particular men or group of men, misuse their powers or wilfully disobey Allah’s Law, Allah will set them aside, and substitute others in their place, with like powers. Allah’s gifts are free, but let no one think that he can monopolise them or misuse them without being called to answer for the trust. And the man of Allah must not be discouraged by the whole world being at some moment completely against him. Allah can in a moment make a complete change. Either the same men that fought against him will be his zealous adherents, or another generation will spring up, which will carry the flag of Righteousness to victory. Allah’s Will and Plan work in their own good time.

\(^{5861}\) Man in himself is weak; he must seek Allah’s Grace; without it he can do nothing; with it he can do all. For Allah knows all things, and His wisdom comprehends the good of all.

\(^{5862}\) That is according to His just and wise Plan. If the will is right, it obtains Allah’s Grace and Mercy. If the will of man rejects Allah, man must suffer the Penalty.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Mursalāt, 77.

This Sūra belongs to the early Makkan period, somewhere near to S. lxxv. (Al-Qiyāmat). The theme is somewhat similar. It denounces the horrors of the Hereafter, for those who rejected Truth. The refrain, “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!” which occurs ten times in its fifty verses, or, on an average, once in every five verses, indicates the leitmotif.
Al-Mursalat, or Those Sent Forth.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the (Winds) Sent Forth
   One after another
   (To man's profit);
2. Which then blow violently
   In tempestuous Gusts,
3. And scatter (things)
   Far and wide;
4. Then separate them,
   One from another,

5863. This Sūra begins with an appeal to five things, as pointing to the substantive statement in verse 7, that the Day of Justice and Judgment is bound to come, and we must prepare for it. It is difficult to translate, but easy to understand, if we remember that a triple thread of allegory runs through this passage (verses 1-7). The five things or phases, which will be presently considered in detail, refer to (a) Winds in the physical world, (b) Angels in the Kingdom of Allah, and (c) Prophets in the human world, connecting it with the Kingdom of Allah.

5864. Understanding the reference to Winds, we can see that they are powerful factors in the government of the physical world. (1) They come gently as harbingers of the blessings of rain and fertility (xv. 22; xxx. 48); but (2) they can come as violent tornadoes, uprooting and destroying (ii. 41-42); (3) they can scatter seeds far and wide, and (4) they can separate chaff from grain, or clear the air from epidemics; and (5) they literally carry sound, and therefore Messages. All these things point to the power and goodness of Allah, and we are asked to believe that His promise of Mercy and Justice in the Hereafter is indeed true.

Cf. this passage with li. 1-6 (Zāriyāt) with which it has many affinities.

5865. If we understand the reference to be, not to Winds, but to Angels, they are agencies in the Kingdom of Allah, which carry out similar functions, changing and revolutionising the face of the world. (1) They come softly, on beneficent errands of Mercy; (2) they are charged with the mission of punishment and destruction for sin as in the case of the two angels who came to Lūt (xv. 57-66); (3) they distribute Allah’s Mercies as the Winds distribute good seeds; (4) they sort out the good from the evil among men; and (5) they are the agency through which Allah’s Messages and Revelations are conveyed to the Prophets (see No. 5 in the last note).
5. Then spread abroad
   A Reminder,\(^{5866}\)
6. Whether of Justification
   Or of Warning;–
7. Assuredly, what ye are
   Promised must come to pass.
8. Then when the stars
   Become dim;\(^{5867}\)
9. When the heaven
   Is cleft asunder;
10. When the mountains are
   Scattered (to the winds) as dust;
11. And when the messengers
   Are (all) appointed a time
   (To collect);–\(^{5868}\)

5866. If we understand the reference to Prophets or Messengers of Allah, or the
verses of Revelation which would be particularly appropriate for verses 5-6, we also get
a satisfactory solution of the Allegory. (1) The Prophets have followed one another in
a series: the verses of the Qur-\(\text{\textsuperscript{a}}\)\n\(\text{\textsuperscript{n}}\) an came, one after another as needed; in both cases it
was for man’s spiritual profit; (2) they caused great disturbance in a ‘spiritual decadent
world; they pulled down evil institutions root and branch, and substituted new ones; (3)
they proclaimed their truths far and wide, without fear and without favour; (4) through
them were sorted out men of Faith and rebels against Allah’s Law; and (5) they gave
a Message, through which just men were justified through repentance, and evil men were
warned of their sins.

Some Commentators take one or other of these allegories, and some apply one
allegory to a few of these verses, and another to another few. In my opinion the Allegory
is wide enough to comprehend all the meanings which I have sketched. I wish a
translation could do justice to those marvellously terse sentences in the original.

5867. The lustre of the stars will become dim; in fact they will disappear: cf. lxxxi.
2, and lxxxi. 2. The heaven’s canopy will be torn asunder: cf. lxxii. 1, and lxxiii. 18.
The mountains will be uprooted and fly about like dust: cf. lxix. 14; lxxi. 3; etc. All
the old landmarks of the physical world as we know it will be swept away.

5868. The Resurrection will be established. In the world which will then have passed
away, inspired Prophets had been sent in succession at different times to all nations. Now
they will be gathered together in one place before the Judgment-seat to bear witness as
to the righteous or the evil ones within their respective spheres of work. Cf. xxxix. 69.
12. For what Day are these (Portents) deferred?

13. For the Day of Sorting out. 5869

14. And what will explain To thee what is The Day of Sorting out?

15. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

16. Did We not destroy The men of old 5870 (For their evil)?

17. So shall We make Later (generations) Follow them.

18. Thus do We deal With men of sin.

19. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

20. Have We not created You from a fluid (Held) despicable? 5871

5869. Cf. xxxvii. 21 and n. 4047; also xliv. 40, and n. 4718. That will be the Day of Judgment or Day of Decision. Good will then be completely separated from Evil. And the men who rejected Truth and flourished on Falsehood will find that in the world of Realities they will be absolutely nowhere. Hence the refrain of this Sûra. “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!” it sounds like a dirge on Sin.

5870. Allah’s Law is always the same. Sin or corruption prepares its own destruction. It was so with the generation of Noah. In Arab tradition it was so with the ‘Ad and the Thamûd. In our own day we see relics of prehistoric civilisations, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and the Ægean: these were men of wonderful skill and resource, but they went under. If our generations, which pride themselves on their science and skill, desert Allah’s Law, they will be certain to meet the same fate.

5871. Cf. xxxii. 8, n. 3638. Man is ashamed of the process of physical creation, by which he comes into being. Yet he is arrogant in life and neglectful of the Future.
21. The which We placed  
   In a place of rest,  
   Firmly fixed,  

22. For a period (of gestation),  
   Determined?  

23. For We do determine  
   For We  
   Are the Best to determine (things).  

24. Ah woe, that Day!  
   To the Rejecters of Truth!  

25. Have We not made  
   The earth (as a place)  
   To draw together  

26. The living and the dead,  

27. And made therein  
   Mountains standing firm,  

5872. See n. 2873 to xxiii. 13. The silent growth in the mother's womb, and the protection and sustenance which the growing life receives from the life of the mother, are themselves wonders of creation.

5873. The period roughly of nine months and ten days is subject to many adjustments. In fact throughout our pre-natal as well as post-natal life there are wonderful and nicely-balanced adjustments of which we are ourselves unconscious. Should we not turn in love and gratitude to Allah our Creator?

5874. Perhaps the life in the womb, in relation to the life after birth, is an allegory for our probationary life on earth in relation to the eternal Life to come. Perhaps, also, our state when we are buried in the tomb suggests an allegory to the life in the womb, in relation to the life in the Hereafter.

5875. What a wonderful parable! The earth is a place where death and life, decay and growth and decay, green grass, stubble, and fuel, corruption and purification jostle together,—one often leading to the other. The drama which we see with our own eyes in this world should enable us to appreciate the wonders in the Kingdom of Allah where the despised and rejected receive the highest honour, Lazarus rests in Abraham's bosom, and the Pharaoh is led in chains for his arrogance and his sin.

5876. See n. 2038 to xvi. 15. The solid mountains are frequently referred to: cf. xiii.

3. The parable here is that the mountains are hard, solid rock, and yet they act as sponges to collect, store up, and filter sweet and wholesome water, which on account of their altitude they are able to distribute by gravity to the lower, dry land by means of rivers —
Lofty (in stature);
And provided for you
Water sweet (and wholesome)?

28. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

29. (It will be said:)
"Depart ye to that
Which ye used to reject
As false!

30. "Depart ye to a Shadow\(^{5877}\)
(Of smoke ascending)
In three columns,

31. "(Which yields) no shade
Of coolness, and is
Of no use against
The fierce Blaze.

32. "Indeed it throws about
Sparks (huge) as Forts,\(^{5878}\)

33. "As if there were
(A string of) yellow camels
(Marching swiftly)."\(^{5879}\)

= or springs. Any one who has seen the parched Makkah valleys and the delicious springs in the mountains around, or the Zubaida Canal, which used to be the main source of Makkah's water-supply, will appreciate the aptness of the metaphor, but it applies to any country, though not to so striking a degree. If the wisdom and power of Allah can do such things before your eyes, how can you reject His teaching of a still more wonderful future Life?

5877. The Sinners, instead of reposing in cool shades, will only see the blazing Fire. The only shadow they will see will be that of Smoke, ascending in three columns, right, left, and above, i.e., completely enveloping them. But it will give no comfort or coolness. On the contrary, it will contain huge sparks.

5878. \textit{Qasr:} Fort, big building, palace. An alternative reading is \textit{Qasur}, plural of \textit{Qasarat (-un)}, meaning bundles of wood used for fuel: Ibn `Abbás \textit{apud} Bukhārī. I almost prefer this latter reading.

5879. The yellow sparks flying swiftly one after another suggest a string of camels marching swiftly, such as the Arabs of Nejd and central Arabia are so proud of. There is a double allegory. It refers not only to the colour and the rapid succession of sparks, \(=\)
5881. We may suppose this as spoken primarily to the Quraysh who were plotting against the Prophet. You may use all your wisdom and that of your ancestors, but you will not be able to defeat Allah or His Plan. See next verse.

5882. The plots against the holy Prophet were plots against Allah’s Truth, and therefore against Allah. Can any one hope to profit by such plots? Can any one defeat Allah’s Plan and Purpose? Let them try. They will only ruin themselves, as the Pagan leaders did. There can only be pity for such men. What will be their state in the Hereafter? “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Allah’s Truth!”

34. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

35. That will be a Day When they shall not Be able to speak, 5880

36. Nor will it be Open to them To put forth pleas.

37. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

38. That will be a Day Of Sorting out! We shall Gather you together And those before (you)! 5881

39. Now, if ye have A trick (or plot), Use it against Me! 5882

40. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

5880. They will be dumbfounded; i.e., (when read with the next verse), they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defence or plea. Facts will speak too plainly against them. They might perversely try to deny false worship: vi. 23: but their own tongues and limbs will bear witness against them: xxiv. 24. Nor does the fighting out or settling of doctrinal disputes in the Hereafter (xxxix. 31) amount to putting forward pleas in defence.

5881. We may suppose this as spoken primarily to the Quraysh who were plotting against the Prophet. You may use all your wisdom and that of your ancestors, but you will not be able to defeat Allah or His Plan. See next verse.

5882. The plots against the holy Prophet were plots against Allah’s Truth, and therefore against Allah. Can any one hope to profit by such plots? Can any one defeat Allah’s Plan and Purpose? Let them try. They will only ruin themselves, as the Pagan leaders did. There can only be pity for such men. What will be their state in the Hereafter? “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Allah’s Truth!”
SECTION 2.

41. As to the Righteous,
They shall be amidst
(Cool) shades and springs
(Of water).

42. And (they shall have)
Fruits,—all they desire.

43. “Eat ye and drink ye
To your heart’s content:
For that ye worked
(Righteousness).”

44. Thus do We certainly
Reward the Doers of Good.

45. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

46. (O ye Unjust!)
Eat ye and enjoy yourselves
(But) a little while,
For that ye are Sinners.

47. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

5883. This is in contrast to the triple shade of smoke and sin for the sinners, which neither gives them coolness nor protects them from the Blazing Fire. The Shade, i.e. Covering, of Allah’s Good Pleasure, will be the greatest Boon of all, and the Spring of Allah’s Love will be inexhaustible.

5884. *Fruits:* see n. 4671 to xliii. 73.

5885. The fruits of righteousness are contentment in this life and the supreme Bliss in the next.

5886. “Eat” is symbolical of having the good things of life in this world. It may be that they are only given for a trial. Because their minds and wishes run to wrong things, the opportunities for wrong are multiplied, as the impetus for good or for evil increases progressively. They are asked to believe and repent. But if they do not, they are to be pitied, even for the good things of this life, for they will come to an evil End in the Hereafter.
48. And when it is said
   To them, “Prostrate yourselves!”
   They do not so.  5887

49. Ah woe, that Day,
   To the Rejecters of Truth!

50. Then what Message,
   After that,  5888
   Will they believe in?

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5887. Prostration is a symbol of humility and a desire to get nearer to Allah by Prayer and a good life. Those who refuse to adopt this Path are to be pitied: how will they fare at Judgment?

5888. “That” may refer to verse 48: they were given plain and clear Guidance, and they refused to accept it: after that what kind of Message will they accept? The Guidance referred to is obviously that of Islam or the Qur-ān.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT An-Nabaa, 78.

The beautiful Makkān Sūra is not quite so early as the last (S. lxxvii) nor quite so late as S. lxxvi, but nearer in time to the later.

It sets forth Allah's loving care in a fine nature-passage, and deduces from it the Promise of the Future, when Evil will be destroyed and Good will come to its own; and invites all who have the will, to seek refuge with their Lord.
An-Nabaa, or The (Great) News.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Concerning what Are they disputing?
2. Concerning the Great News,\textsuperscript{5889}
3. About which they Cannot agree.
4. Verily, they shall soon (Come to) know!
5. Verily, verily they shall Soon (come to) know!
6. Have We not made The earth as a wide\textsuperscript{5890} Expanse,

\textsuperscript{5889} Great News: usually understood to mean the News or Message of the Resurrection or the Hereafter, about which there are various schools of thought among the Jews and Christians and other nations. There is practically nothing about the Resurrection in the Old Testament, and the Jewish sect of Sadducees even in the time of Christ denied the Resurrection altogether. The Pagan ideas of a future life—any varied from place to place and from time to time. Even in the early Christian Church, as we learn from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, there were contentions in that little community (I. Corinthians, i. 11), and some definitely denied the resurrection of the dead (ib., xv. 12).

Great News may also be translated Great Message or a Message Supreme as I have translated at xxxviii. 67. In that case it would refer to the Qur-an, or the Message of Revelation, or the Message of the Holy Prophet, about which there was great contention in those days. As this Message also lays great stress on the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection, the practical result by either mode of interpretation amounts to the same.

\textsuperscript{5890} See n. 2038 to xvi. 15. Cf. also xiii. 3 and xv. 19. The spacious expanse of the earth may be compared to a carpet, to which the mountains act as pegs. The Signs of Allah are thus enumerated: the great panorama of outer nature (verses 6-7); the creation of Man in pairs, with the succession of rest and work fitting in with the succession of night and day (verses 8-11); the firmaments above, with their splendid lights (verses 12-13); and the clouds and rain and abundant harvests, which knit sky and earth and man together (verses 14-16). These point to Allah, and Allah's Message points to the Future Life.
7. And the mountains as pegs?

8. And (have We not) created You in pairs,

9. And made your sleep For rest,

10. And made the night As a covering, 5891

11. And made the day As a means of subsistence? 5892

12. And (have We not) Built over you The seven firmaments, 5893

13. And placed (therein) A blazing lamp. 5894

14. And do We not send down From the clouds water In abundance; 5895

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5891. The darkness of the night is as a covering. Just as a covering protects us from exposure to cold or heat, so this covering gives us spiritual respite from the buffets of the material world, and from the tiring activities of our own inner exertions. The rest in sleep (in verse 9) is supplemented by the covering of the night with which we are provided by Allah.

5892. "Subsistence" in English only partly covers the idea of *maʿāsh*, which includes every kind of life activity. The Day is specially illumined, so runs the figure of speech, in order that these life-activities of all kinds may be fully exercised.

5893. See n. 5526 to lxv. 12 and n. 2876 to xxiii. 17, also xxxvii. 6 and notes there.

5894. That is, the sun. Cf. xxv. 61; xxxiii. 46 (where it is used metaphorically for the holy Prophet); and lxxi. 16.

5895. Note how the evidences of Allah and His beneficence are set out in four groups. (1) Look to external nature on the earth around you (verses 6-7); (2) your own nature, physical, mental and spiritual (verses 8-11); (3) the starry heavens, and the glory of the sun (verses 12-13); and (4) the interdependence of earth, air, and sky in the cycle of water, clouds, rain, corn and gardens, all serving in their several ways to further the whole plan of the World as it affects us. Can you not then believe that a Creator who does this will sort out Good and Evil on an appointed Day with real justice and power?
15. That We may produce
   Therewith grain and vegetables,
16. And gardens of luxurious growth?

17. Verily the Day
   Of Sorting Out
   Is a thing appointed,—
18. The Day that the Trumpet
   Shall be sounded, and ye
   Shall come forth in crowds;
19. And the heavens
   Shall be opened
   As if there were doors,
20. And the mountains
   Shall vanish, as if
   They were a mirage.
21. Truly Hell is
   As a place of ambush
22. For the transgressors
   A place of destination:
23. They will dwell therein
   For ages.

5896. Cf. xxxvii. 21, n. 4047, and xxxvi. 59, n. 4005 (end). The Day of Judgment
   is the Day of Sorting Out, as between Good and Evil.

5897. The angel charged with the sounding of the Trumpet is Israfil. It will herald
   Judgment. Cf. 1. 20; also xxxix. 68, and n. 4343; and lxix. 13, n. 5648.

5898. A sign that the present order of things will have ceased to exist, and a new
   world will have come into being. Such a figure applies to the heavens in this verse and
   to the earth in the next verse. The mystery of what is beyond the heavens will have
   vanished through the doors which will then be opened. The solid mountains, as we
   suppose them to be, will have vanished like an unsubstantial mirage.

5899. Hell, the embodiment of evil, is lying in wait like an ambush for every one.
   We should be on our guard. For the transgressors, those who have wilfully rebelled
   against Allah, it will be a definite destination, from which there is no return, except, it
   may be, after ages, i.e., unless Allah so wills: Cf. vi. 128, and n. 951.
24. Nothing cool shall they taste
   Therein, nor any drink,
25. Save a boiling fluid
   And a fluid, dark, murky,
   Intensely cold,—
26. A fitting recompense
   (For them).
27. For that they used not
   To look for any account
   (For their deeds),
28. But they (impudently) treated
   Our Signs as false
29. And all things have We
   Preserved on record.
30. “So taste ye (the fruits
   Of your deeds);
   For no increase
   Shall We grant you,
   Except in Chastisement.

5900. Cf. x. 4, and n. 1390; also xxxviii. 57, and n. 4213.

5901. Their transgressions go on progressively as they refuse to repent and turn to
   Allah. The fire of misery begins to blaze forth more and more fiercely, an there is nothing
e to cool that blaze; their food and drink themselves are tainted with the disorder of
   contradictory elements,—boiling hot drink, with intensely cold, murky, and disgusting
   fluids. These are fitting punishments for their crimes, which are inconsistent with the pure
   and gentle mould in which Allah had originally cast their nature.

5902. It was not isolated acts, but a continued course of evil conduct; they repudiated
   the moral and spiritual responsibility for their lives; and they impudently called Truth
   itself by false names and disdained Allah’s Signs, which were vouchsafed for their
   instruction. These are not mere impressions; these are hard facts “preserved on record”,
   so that every deed can have its due weight in making up the account.

5903. Just as there is a progressive deterioration in the sinner’s soul when he
   surrenders himself to evil, so there is a progressive increase in the Penalty which he
   suffers.
31. Verily for the Righteous
   There will be
   An Achievement,

32. Gardens enclosed, and
   Grapevines;

33. Maidens of Equal Age;

34. And a Cup full
   (To the Brim);

35. No Vanity shall they hear
   Therein, nor Untruth;

36. Recompense from thy Lord,
   A Gift, (amply) sufficient,

5904. This is true Salvation. It is not only safety and felicity, but the attainment of
   the final Goal, the supreme Achievement, the Fulfilment of the highest in human nature,
   the satisfaction of the true and pure desires of the heart,—seeing the “Face of Allah”. See
   n. 4733 to xliv. 57.

5905. The supreme Achievement, or the Fulfilment of the Heart’s Desires, spoken
   of in the last verse, is now described in three illustrations (verses 32-34), as further
   explained by two negatives (verse 35). The first is the enclosed Fruit-Garden, represented
   by the Grape. The Garden in its many aspects is the most frequent expression adopted
   for Bliss. The most carefully-tended Garden is a Fruit-Garden, with walls all round to
   protect it, and the most characteristic fruit mentioned here is the luscious Grape.

5906. The second is maidens of Equal Age.

5907. The third, the Cup, takes us partly to the Grapes mentioned in verse 32 and
   partly to the Springs or Rivers mentioned with the Garden in so many places.

5908. The explanation of the three illustrations is made further clear by the two
   negatives. (1) There will be no talk of vanities, such as are usually associated on this
   earth with pleasant Gardens, Companions of equal age, or generous Cups flowing in
   Assemblies. (2) There will be no Untruth or Falsehood. Insincerity or Hollowness there.
   Everything will be on a plane of absolute Truth and Reality.

5909. The Recompense is not exactly a Reward in proportion to merit, but is rather
   a Gift or a Bounty from the Merciful,—a Gift most amply sufficient to satisfy all desire
   on that plane of purity. “A Gift (amply) sufficient” might almost be translated: a liberal
   and bountiful gift. Cf. the phrase, A ‘tā fa aḥṣaba—he gave generously, or bountifully.
37. (From) the Lord
Of the heavens
And the earth,
And all between,—
The Most Gracious:
None shall have power
To argue with Him.  

38. The Day that
The Spirit  and the angels
Will stand forth in ranks,
None shall speak
Except any who is
Permitted by The Most Gracious,
And he will say
What is right.  

39. That is the True Day:  
Therefore, whoso will, let him
Take a (straight) Return
To his Lord!

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5910. No one has the right or the power to argue with Allah about the Gifts which He may bestow on His devotees beyond their deserts, (verse 36 above) or about the Penalty which His justice may inflict for sin or wrong-doing. He is high above all Creation. But He is also Most Gracious. Therefore He may permit special Dignitaries, of honour in His eyes, to plead for sinners, but they will only plead in truth and righteousness: see verse 38 below.

5911. The Spirit: see n. 5677 to lxx. 4. Some Commentators understand by "the Spirit" the angel Gabriel as he is charged specially with bringing Messages to human prophets: see xxi. 193, n. 3224.

5912. See n. 5910 above. No one has the right to speak before the Judgment-Seat; but certain great Dignitaries may be given permission to plead for mercy for sinners, and they will only so plead if the mercy is not negatory of Allah's universal justice.

5913. Cf. lxix. 1 and n. 5635. Judgment is sure to come, and Truth will then be free from all veils. Why should not man, therefore, now in this life of probation, turn back to Allah, and understand and do His Will?
40. Verily, We have warned you of a Chastisement near. — 5914
The Day when man will see (the Deeds) which his hands have sent forth,
And the Unbeliever will say, "Woe unto me! Would that I were (mere) dust!" — 5915

5914. Is Judgment very near? Yes. There are three stages of Judgment. (1) Many of our sins and wrong-doings find their penalty in this very life. It may not be an open or striking event, but it corrodes the soul and conscience all the time. Let us therefore turn back to Allah in repentance and ask for forgiveness. (2) Where the Penalty is not actually perceived or is not visible in this life, Death is considered the Lesser Judgment for each individual soul: see n. 5822 to lxxv. 22. Death may come to anyone at any time, and we must all be ready for it. (3) Then there is the final Judgment, when the whole of the present order passes away, and there is a New World. Time as we know it will not exist. Fifty thousand years as we reckon now will be but as a Day: lxx. 4. According to those standards even this Final Judgment is quite near, and we must prepare for it. For it will be too late then for repentance.

5915. The Unbeliever, the Rejecter of Allah, will then find himself in a world of absolute Reality, in which there will be no place for him. He will neither live nor die: xx. 74. He will wish that he could be reduced to nothingness, but even that would not be possible.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT An-Nāzi'ūt 79.

This is also an early Makkān Sūra, of about the same date as the last, and deals with the theme of Judgment from the point of view of Pride and its Fall. The parable of Pharaoh occupies a central place in the argument: for he said, "I am your Lord Most High", and perished with his followers.
An-Nāzi‘āt, or Those Who Tear Out.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the (angels)\textsuperscript{5916} Who tear out (The souls of the wicked) With violence;\textsuperscript{5917}

2. By those who gently Draw out (the souls Of the blessed);\textsuperscript{5918}

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\textsuperscript{5916} The beginning of this Sūra may be compared with the beginning of S. lxxvii. A translator’s task in such passages is extremely difficult. He has to contend, again and again, with verities of a realm beyond man’s normal range of experience expressed in elliptical language and he has to render them in another language with words of precision intelligible to readers. It is therefore necessary for him to put in part of the Commentary in the Translation in such cases.

The evidence of five things is here invoked in verses 1-5, in order to lead to the conclusion in verse 6 and those following. Or, if we treat verses 3-5 as three stages of the same thing, there are three things to be considered in five stages. What are they? And what is the conclusion? See the following notes.

\textsuperscript{5917} There is much difference of opinion among the Commentators as to the five things or beings mentioned in these verses. I follow the general opinion in my interpretation, which is that angels are referred to as the agency which in their dealings with mankind show clearly Allah’s Justice, Power, and Mercy, which again point to the Judgment to come, as a certainty which none can evade. The first point, referred to in this verse, is that the souls of the wicked are loath to part with their material body at death, but their will will not count: their souls will be wrenched out into another world. Who will then deny Resurrection and Judgment?

\textsuperscript{5918} The second point is that in contrast with the wicked, the souls of the blessed will be drawn out gently to their new life. They will be ready for it. In fact death for them will be a release from the grosser incidents of bodily sense. To them the approach of Judgment will be welcome.
3. And by those who glide
   Along (on errands of mercy),
4. Then press forward
   As in a race,
5. Then arrange to do
   (The Commands of their Lord),
6. The Day everything that
   Can be in commotion will
   Be in violent commotion,
7. Followed by oft-repeated
   (Commotions).
8. Hearts that Day
   Will be in agitation;
9. Cast down will be
   (Their owners’) eyes.

5919. At all times there are errands of mercy and blessing and errands of justice, which the angels are prompt to execute by order of Allah. There are three features of this, thus giving the third, fourth, and fifth points. (3) Their movement is compared to that of gliding or swimming (ṣabān). In xx. 33 this verb is applied to the motion of the celestial bodies: they all “swim along, each in its rounded course”. Cf. Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*: “There’s not an orb which thou behold’st, But in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims”. (4) In hurrying on their errands the angels press forth as in a race. (5) And thus they promptly execute the orders of their Lord.

5920. The evidence of the wonderful working of the angels having been invoked in the first five verses, the conclusion is now drawn and stated. It is certain that one great Day, the whole world as we now see it in our lower life will be in violent revolution. It will be like an earthquake destroying all landmarks. But that will affect only things subject to change: they will suffer violent convulsions as a preliminary to their disappearance. But Allah and His divine order will not change: His “Face” abideth for ever, full of Majesty, Bounty, and Honour (Iv. 27).

5921. The Commotion will be repeated again and again in the transitory world, to make way for the new world that will then come into being.

5922. All hearts will be in agitation: those of the blessed ones to see the beginning of the fulfilment of their Lord’s Promise; those of the Rejecters of Allah for fear of His just Judgment.

5923. Similarly all eyes will be cast down: those of the blessed ones in humble modesty, and those of the Rejecters of Allah, in utter humiliation, sorrow, and shame, for their arrogance and insolence in their probationary life.
10. They say (now): “What! Shall we indeed be returned to (our) former state?—
11. “What!—when we shall have become rotten bones?”
12. They say: “It would, in that case, be a return with loss!”
13. But verily, it will be but a single (Compelling) Cry,
14. When, behold, they will be brought out to the open.
15. Has the story Of Moses reached thee?

5924. The Unbelievers say now, in their arrogance, insolence, and mocking defiance: “Surely death here is the end of all things! When we are dead and buried, and our bones are rotten, how can we be restored again?” They add, “If that were so, then we should indeed be in a turn of dreadful luck! Instead of gaining by the Resurrection, we should be in terrible loss (with our rotten bones)!” They mean this in biting mockery. But there will indeed be an Account taken, and they will indeed be in a terrible loss, for they will go to perdition!

5925. Judgment will be inaugurated with a single compelling Cry. Cf. xxxvii. 19. See also xxxvi. 29 and 49, where the single mighty Blast seems to refer to the sinners being cut off in this life and plunged into the other world where they will be further judged, and xxxvi. 53, where the final Judgment is referred to.

5926. They will have been more or less dormant before the Great Judgment, as contrasted with the Lesser Judgment (n. 5914 to lxxviii. 40, and n. 5822 to lxxv. 22). When the resurrection comes, they will come fully into the new world, the old heaven and earth having then completely passed away, not only for them but absolutely.

5927. This is just a reference to the story of Moses told more fully in S. xx. 9-76. The lessons drawn are: (1) That even to an arrogant blasphemer and rebel against Allah’s Law, like Pharaoh, Allah’s grace was offered through a major Prophet Moses; (2) that this rejection brought about his signal downfall even in this world; and (3) that his humiliation and punishment will be completed in the Hereafter at Judgment.
16. Behold, thy Lord did call  
   To him in the sacred valley  
   Of Tuwâ:- 5928

17. “Go thou to Pharaoh,  
   For he has indeed  
   Transgressed all bounds: 5929

18. “And say to him,  
   ‘Wouldst thou that thou  
   Shouldst be purified  
   (From sin)?—

19. “And that I guide thee  
   To thy Lord, so thou  
   Shouldst fear him?”

20. Then did (Moses) show him  
   The Great Sign. 5931

21. But (Pharaoh) rejected it  
   And disobeyed (guidance);  

22. Further, he turned his back,  
   Striving hard (against Allah).  

23. Then he collected (his men)  
   And made a proclamation,  

24. Saying, “I am your Lord,  
   Most High”.

5928. Cf. xx. 12.  


5930. Even for such a one as Pharaoh, intoxicated with his own power and greatness, guidance and grace were offered through Moses.

5931. What was the Great Sign? Some Commentators understand by it the “White Shinning Hand”: see n. 2550 to xx. 22-23. Others think it was the miracle of the rod that became a “snake active in motion”: see xx. 20, n. 2549. These were among the Greater Signs: xx. 23. In xvii. 101 there is a reference to nine Clear Signs given to Moses, and these are specified in detail in n. 1091 to vii. 133. The fact is, there were many Signs given, “openly self-explained,” but Pharaoh and his men “were steeped in arrogance,—a people given to sin” (vii. 133). The pre-eminently Great Sign was therefore the fact of Moses being sent to Pharaoh, which subsequently converted the magicians and the more learned Egyptians to the true God (xx. 70-73), though Pharaoh and his Chiefs resisted and suffered for their sins.
25. But Allah did punish him,
   (And made an) example
   Of him,—in the Hereafter,
   As in this life. 5932

26. Verily in this is
   A lesson 5933
   For whosoever feareth (Allah).

SECTION 2.

27. What! Are ye the more
   Difficult to create
   Or the heaven (above)? 5934
   (Allah) hath constructed it:

28. On high hath He raised
   Its canopy, and He hath
   Given it order and perfection. 5935

29. Its night doth He
   Endow with darkness,
   And its splendour doth He
   Bring out (with light). 5936

5932. See xx. 78-79, also vii. 135-137.

5933. Cf. xxiv. 44.

5934. If man grows arrogant or forgets his accountability to Allah, in his ignorance or thoughtlessness, he is reminded that he is only an insignificant speck in Allah's spacious Creation. All the excellence that man acquires is the gift of Allah. Who has bestowed on him a high Destiny if he fulfils the purpose of his creation: ii. 30-39. Then follows a nature passage, pointing to the glory of the heavens and the earth, and how they are both made to subserve the life of man.

5935. Cf. ii. 29. The mystery of the heavens with their countless stars and the planets obeying the laws of motion, and the sun and moon influencing the temperature and climates of the earth from thousands or millions of miles, illustrate the order and perfection which Allah has given to His Creation. Can man then remain exempt from his responsibility for his deeds, endowed as he is with a will, or deny the Day of Sorting Out, which is the Day of Judgment?

5936. Its of course refers to the starry heaven. Both the Night and the Day have each its own beauty and its utility for man, as has been frequently pointed out in the Qur-ān. The night is a period of darkness, but it has also its splendours of light in the moon, or the planets Jupiter or Venus, or stars like Sirius or the Milky Way. These =
30. And the earth, moreover,\(^{5937}\)
    Hath He extended
    (To a wide expanse);

31. He draweth out
    Therefrom its water
    And its pasture,\(^{5938}\)

32. And the mountains
    Hath He firmly fixed;\(^{5939}\)

33. A provision\(^{5940}\)
    For you and your cattle.

34. Therefore, when there comes
    The great, overwhelming
    (Event),\(^{5941}\)

35. The Day when Man
    Shall remember (all)
    That he strove for,\(^{5942}\)

= countless lights of night have their own beauty, and by day there is the splendour of the sun for us, which in Creation as a whole, is just one of countless stars.

5937. Moreover: or, more literally, after that. See n. 4475 to xli. 11.

5938. The underground springs and wells of water as well as rivers and glaciers in northern climates are due to the different levels of highlands not lowlands. They spread the moisture evenly as wanted, and give corn, fruits, and vegetables to man, and pastures and feeding grounds to beasts of the fields. For the wonderful circuit or cycle of water between heaven and earth, see notes 3106 (xxv. 49) and 3111 (xxv. 53).

5939. See n. 2038 to xvi. 15. The “eternal hills” are the main reservoirs for the storage and gradual distribution of water, the very basis of the life of man and beast.

5940. This clause I construe to apply to verses 30, 31, and 32 above. Everything on earth has, by Allah's bountiful providence, been arranged to subserve the use and convenience of man and the lower life which depends upon him. The intermediary between Allah's providence and the actual use made of Allah's other gifts is man's own intelligence and initiative, which are also gifts of Allah.

5941. The Judgment, the time for sorting out all things according to their true, intrinsic, and eternal values.

5942. The Judgment will be not only for his acts but for his motives, “all he strove for”. In this life he may forget his ill-deeds, but in the new conditions he will not only remember them, but the Fire of Punishment will be plainly visible to him, and not only to him, but it will be “for all to see”. This will add to the sinner's humiliation.
36. And Hell-Fire shall be Placed in full view\footnote{5943} For him who sees.–
37. Then, for such as had Transgressed all bounds,
38. And had preferred\footnote{5944} The life of this world,
39. The Abode will be Hell-Fire;
40. And for such as had Entertained the fear Of standing before\footnote{5945} Their Lord’s (tribunal) And had restrained (Their) soul from lower Desires,
41. Their Abode will be The Garden.
42. They ask thee\footnote{5946} About the Hour,—‘When Will be its appointed time?’
43. Wherein art thou (concerned) With the declaration thereof?

\footnote{5943} Cf. xxvi. 91.

\footnote{5944} The abiding Punishment will be for those who had wilfully and persistently rebelled against Allah, “transgressing all bounds”, and had given themselves up to the vanities and lusts of this lower life. This Punishment will not touch those who had repented and been forgiven, nor those guilty, through human frailty, of minor sins, whose deeds will be weighed in the balance against their good deeds: ci. 6-9.

\footnote{5945} The contrast is complete and parallel: the persistent rebels against Allah’s Law, who preferred the lower life, are to dwell in the Fire of Punishment, while those who humbly feared the punishment of sin and believing in their Lord’s warnings restrained their lower desires, will dwell in the Garden. See last note.

\footnote{5946} Cf. vii. 187 and n. 1159. Only Allah can reveal it. But were it known, “heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth". 
44. With thy Lord is
   The final end of it.\textsuperscript{5947}

45. Thou art but a Warner
   For such as fear it.\textsuperscript{5948}

46. The Day they see it,
   (It will be) as if they
   Had tarried but a single
   Evening, or (at most till)
   The following morn!\textsuperscript{5949}

\textsuperscript{5947} Our time has no sort of comparison with the timeless state in the new spiritual World in which the final Judgment will take place. Nor can its limits—how long it will last—be set except in the Will of Almighty Allah. Lord of Supreme Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness: xi. 107-108. But it is near, in the sense explained in n. 5914 to lxviii. 40.

\textsuperscript{5948} The warning is only effective for those who believe in Allah and in the Final Account. Such men immediately turn in repentance to Allah, and it is to lead such men and help them, that Prophets are sent.

\textsuperscript{5949} Cf. x. 45, where the expression used is: "it will be as if they had tarried but an hour of a day." Here the metaphor used is "a single evening, or, at most, till the following morn". Death is like sleep, and may be compared to the evening of life. In sleep we do not know how the time passes. When we wake up from the sleep of Death at the Resurrection, we shall not know whether it was the following moment or the following hour after we slept, but we shall feel that it is morning, for we shall be conscious of all that goes on, as one awakened in the morning.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT 'Abasa, 80.

This is an early Makkan Sûra, and is connected with an incident which reflects the highest honour on the Prophet's sincerity in the Revelations that were vouchsafed to him even if they seemed to reprove him for some natural and human zeal that led him to a false step in his mission according to his own high standards.

He was once deeply and earnestly engaged in trying to explain the holy Qur-ân to Pagan Quraish leaders, when he was interrupted by a blind man, 'Abdullâh ibn Umm-i-Muktûm, one who was also poor, so that no one took any notice of him. He wanted to learn the Qur-ân. The holy Prophet naturally disliked the interruption. Perhaps the poor man's feelings were hurt. But he whose gentle heart ever sympathised with the poor and the afflicted, got new Light from above, and without the least hesitation published this revelation, which forms part of the sacred scripture of Islam, as described in verses 13-16. And the Prophet always afterwards held the man in high honour.

The incident was only a passing incident, but after explaining the eternal principles of revelation, the Sûra recapitulates the Mercies of Allah to man, and the consequences of a good or a wicked life here, as seen in the world to come, in the Hereafter.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. (The Prophet) frowned
   And turned away, 5950

2. Because there came to him
   The blind man (interrupting).

3. But what could tell thee
   But that perchance he might
   Grow in purity?

4. Or that he might receive
   Admonition, and the Reminder
   Might profit him? 5951

5. As to one who regards
   Himself as self-sufficient, 5952

6. To him dost thou attend;

7. Though it is no blame
   To thee if he grow not 5953
   In purity.

5950. See the Introduction to this Sūra for the incident to which this refers. The lesson is that neither spiritual worth nor the prospect of effective spiritual guidance is to be measured by a man's position in life. The poor, or the blind, the halt, or the maimed, may be more susceptible to the teaching of Allah's Word than men who are apparently gifted, but who suffer from arrogance and self-sufficiency.

5951. It may be that the poor blind man might, on account of his will to learn, be more likely to grow in his own spiritual development or to profit by any lessons taught to him even in report than a self-sufficient leader. In fact it was so. For the blind man became a true and sincere Muslim and lived to become a governor of Madinah.

5952. Such a one would be a Pagan Quraish leader, whom the holy Prophet was anxious to get into his fold, in order that the work of preaching Allah's Message might be facilitated. But such a Message works first amongst the simple and lowly, the poor and despised folk, and the mighty ones of the earth only come in when the stream rushes in with irresistible force.

5953. Allah's Message is for all, but if the great ones arrogantly keep back from it, it is no fault of the preacher, so long as he has proclaimed the Message. He should attend to all, and specially to the humble and lowly.
8. But as to him who came
   To thee striving earnestly,
9. And with fear
   (In his heart),
10. Of him wast thou unmindful.
11. By no means
    (Should it be so)!
    For it is indeed
    A Message of remembrance.
12. Therefore let whose will,
    Keep it in remembrance.
13. (It is) in Books
    Held (greatly) in honour,
14. Exalted (in dignity),
    Kept pure and holy,
15. (Written) by the hands
    Of scribes—
16. Honourable and
    Pious and Just.

5954. The fear in the blind man's heart may have been two-fold. (1) He was humble and God-fearing, not arrogant and self-sufficient; (2) being poor and blind, he feared to intrude; yet his earnest desire to learn the Qur'an made him bold, and he came, perhaps unseasonably, but was yet worthy of encouragement, because of the purity of his heart.

5955. Allah's Message is a universal Message, from which no one is to be excluded,—rich or poor, old or young, great or lowly, learned or ignorant. If anyone had the spiritual craving that needed satisfaction, he was to be given precedence if there was to be any question of precedence at all.

5956. At the time this Sûra was revealed, there were perhaps only about 42 or 45 Sûras in the hands of the Muslims. But it was a sufficient body of Revelation of high spiritual value, to which the description given here could be applied. It was held in the highest honour; its place in the hearts of Muslims was more exalted than that of anything else; as Allah's Word, it was pure and sacred; and those who transcribed it were men who were honourable, just and pious. The legend that the early Sûras were not carefully written down and preserved in books is a pure invention. The recensions made later in the time of the first and the third Khalifas were merely to preserve the purity and safeguard the arrangement of the text at a time when the expansion of Islam among non-Arabic-speaking people made such precautions necessary.
17. Woe to man! 
What hath made him 
Reject Allah? 

18. From what stuff 
Hath He created him? 

19. From a sperm-drop: He hath created him, and then 
Mouldeth him in due Proportions; 

20. Then doth He make 
His path smooth for him; 

21. Then He causeth him to die, 
And putteth him in his Grave; 

22. Then, when it is 
His Will, He will 
Raise him up (again). 

23. By no means hath he 
Fulfilled what Allah 
Hath commanded him. 

5957. Cf. lxxvi. 2, and n. 5832. The origin of man as an animal is lowly indeed. But what further faculties and capacities has not Allah granted to man? Besides his animal body, in which also he shares in all the blessings which Allah has bestowed on the rest of His Creation, man has been granted divine gifts which entitle him to be called the Vicegerent on earth: ii. 30. He has a will; he has spiritual perception; he is capable of divine love; he can control nature within certain limits, and subject nature’s forces to his own use. And he has been given the power of judgment, so that he can avoid excess and defect, and follow the middle path. And that path, as well as all that is necessary for his life in its manifold aspects, has been made easy for him. 

5958. Cf. xx. 55. Death is an inevitable event after the brief life on this earth, but it is also in a sense a blessing,—a release from the imperfections of this world, a close of the probationary period, after which will dawn the full Reality. “The Grave” may be understood to be the period between physical death and immortal Life, whatever may be the mode of disposal of the dead body. This intermediate period is the Barzakh or Partition: see n. 2940 to xxiii. 101. 

5959. Though all these blessings and stages have been provided by Allah’s Grace for the good of man, yet unregenerate man fails in carrying out the purpose of his creation and life.
24. Then let man look
   At his Food, (And how We provide it):

25. For that We pour forth
   Water in abundance,

26. And We split the earth
   In fragments,

27. And produce therein grain,

28. And Grapes and
   The fresh vegetation,

29. And Olives and Dates,

30. And enclosed Gardens,
    Dense with lofty trees,

31. And Fruits and Fodder,—

32. A provision
    For you and your cattle.

5960. After a reference to man's inner history, there is now a reference to just one item in his daily outer life, his food: and it is shown how the forces of heaven and earth unite by Allah's Command to serve man and his dependants. "A provision for you and your cattle" (verse 32 below). If that is the case with just one item, food, how much more comprehensive is Allah's beneficence when the whole of man's needs are considered!

5961. The water comes from the clouds in plentiful abundance; the earth is ploughed, and the soil is broken up in fragments, and yields an abundant harvest of cereals (Corn), trellised fruit (Grapes), and vegetable food (nutritious Plants), as well as fruit that can keep for long periods and serve many uses, like olives and dates.

5962. Therein: i.e., from within the earth or the soil.

5963. We not only get field crops such as were mentioned in n. 5961 above, but we have the more highly cultivated garden crops, both in the way of lofty trees, and in the way of carefully tended fruits like the fig; and then we have grass and all kinds of fodder.

5964. The same verse occurs at lxxix. 33, where no. 5940 explains the wider meaning in that context.
33. At length, when there
   Comes the Deafening Noise,—
34. That Day shall a man
   Flee from his own brother,
35. And from his mother
   And his father,
36. And from his wife
   And his children.
37. Each one of them,
   That Day, will have
   Enough concern (of his own)
   To make him indifferent
   To the others.
38. Some Faces that Day
   Will be beaming,
39. Laughing, rejoicing.

5965. Preliminary to the establishment of the Final Judgment.

5966. Even those who were nearest and dearest in this life will not be able or willing
to help each other on that awful Day. On the contrary, if they have to receive a sentence
for their sins, they will be anxious to avoid even sharing each other’s sorrows or
witnessing each other’s humiliation; for each will have enough of his own troubles to
occupy him. On the other hand, the Righteous will be united with their righteous families:
lii. 21; and their faces will be “beaming, laughing, rejoicing” (lxxx. 38-39).

5967. Cf. lxx. 10-14. Nor friend will ask after a friend that Day. On the contrary
the sinner will desire to save himself at the expense even of his own family and
benefactors.
40. And other faces that Day
   Will be dust-stained; 5968
41. Darkness will cover them:
42. Such will be
   The Rejecters of Allah,
   The Doers of Iniquity.

5968. The dust on the faces of the sinners will be in contrast to the beaming light on the faces of the righteous; and the blackness in contrast to the “laughing, rejoicing” faces of the righteous. But the dust also suggests that being Rejecters of Allah, their faces and eyes and faculties were choked in dust, and the blackness suggests that being Doers of Iniquity they had no part or lot in Purity or Light. Another contrast may possibly be deduced: the humble and lowly may be “in the dust” in this life, and the arrogant sinners in sunshine, but the roles will be reversed at Judgment.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT At-Takwīr, 81.

This is quite an early Makkan Sūra, perhaps the sixth or seventh in chronological order. It opens with a series of highly graphic images portraying the break-up of the world as we know it (verses 1-13) and the enforcement of complete personal responsibility for each soul (verse 14). This is followed by a passage showing how the Quranic Revelation was true, and revealed through the angel Gabriel, and not merely a rhapsody from one possessed. Revelation is given for man's spiritual guidance (verses 14-29).

Comparable with this Sūra are the Sūras lxxxiι and lxxxiv which may be read with this.
Sūra Al-Takwīr 81  Āyat 1-3  Juz' 30  الجزء الثلاثون 81

At-Takwīr, or the Folding Up.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. When the sun is folded up,
   (With its spacious light)
   Is folded up,

2. When the stars fall,
   Losing their lustre;

3. When the mountains vanish
   (Like a mirage),

---

5969. Verses 1 to 13 are conditional clauses, and the substantive clause is in verse 14. The time will come when nature’s processes as we know them will cease to function, and the soul will only then know by self conviction the results of its actions. With reference to an individual soul, its resurrection is its supreme crisis: the whole world of sense, and even of imagination and reason, melts away, and its whole spiritual scroll is laid bare before it.

5970. The conditional clauses are twelve, in two groups of six. The first six affect the outer or physical life of man; the last six, his inmost spiritual life. Let us take them one by one. (1) The biggest factor affecting us in the external physical world is the light, heat, and perhaps electric or magnetic energy of the sun. The sun is the source of all the light, heat, and energy, and indeed the source and support of all the physical life that we know. It is the biggest factor and yet most remote from us in our solar system.

Yet the sources of our inner spiritual life will be greater and more lasting, for they will survive it. The sun as the centre of our solar system also stands as a symbol of the present order of things. The physical forces, as defined in Newton’s laws of Matter and Attraction, will also break up with the break-up of the sun.

*Is folded up:* is folded up, or twisted up, like a sheet or a garment.

5971. (2) Next after the sun, we can derive faint lights from the innumerable stars in the firmament. For all the ages of which we have any record, these stars have remained fixed. Nothing can be more fixed; yet they can and will fail.

5972. Cf. lxxvii. 20. (3) On our own earth the mountains—the “eternal hills”—seem the most striking examples of stability; yet they will be swept away like a mirage, as if they had never existed.
4. When the she-camels,  
   Ten months with young,  
   Are left untended;  
5. When the wild beasts  
   Are herded together  
   (In human habitations);  
6. When the oceans  
   Boil over with a swell;  
7. When the souls  
   Are sorted out,  
   (Being joined, like with like);  
8. When the female (infant),  
   Buried alive, is questioned—

5973. (4) The type of Arab property, as well as the type of the Arab pet, was the camel, and the most precious camel was the she-camel just about to be delivered of her young. She would in normal times be most sedulously cared for. But when all our landmarks of this life vanish, even she would be left untended. Nothing would then be as it is now.

5974. (5) In the present world, the wild animals fear each other, and they all fear man and normally keep away from human habitations. But when this order passes away, there will be scarcely any differentiation between human habitations and the wilds of the forests.

5975. See lii. 6 and n. 5041. (6) The oceans, which now keep their bounds, will surge and boil over, and overwhelm all landmarks. At present the waters seem to have reached their fixed and normal levels, but the whole equilibrium will then be disturbed. Such will be the complete wreck of this transitory world, at the approach of the dawn of the permanent Reality. But these are physical symbols, relating to the outer nature surrounding the physical nature of man. The remaining six. viz.,: the 7th to the 12th, describe the ordering of the new World, from which all present seeming incongruities will be removed.

5976. Cf. lvi. 7, where the sorting out into three classes is mentioned, viz.,: Those Nearest to Allah, the Companions of the Right Hand, and the Companions of the Left Hand. That was a sort of broad general division. The meaning in this passage is wider, (7) Whereas in this world of probation, good is mixed with evil, knowledge with ignorance, power with arrogance, and so on,—in the new world of Reality, all true values will be restored, and like will consort with like, for it will be a world of perfect Peace, Harmony, and Justice.
9. For what crime
She was killed; 5977

10. When the Scrolls
Are laid open; 5978

11. When the sky
Is unveiled;

12. When the Blazing Fire
Is kindled to fierce heat;

13. And when the Garden
Is brought near; 5982

14. (Then) shall each soul know
What it has put forward. 5983

5977. (8) In this world of sin and sorrow, much unjust suffering is caused, and innocent lives sacrificed, without a trace being left, by which offenders can be brought to justice. A striking example before the Quraish was female infanticide: cf. xvi. 58-59, and n. 2084. The crime was committed in the guise of social plausibility in secret collusion, and no question was asked here. But in the world of Justice, full questions will be asked, and the victim herself—dumb here—will be able to give evidence, for she had committed no crime herself. The proofs will be drawn from the very means used for concealment.

5978. (9) The Scrolls recording the deeds of men, good or bad, will then be laid open before all. Cf. 1. 17-18, n. 4954; also lxxii. 11-12. In the present phenomenal world, things may be concealed; but in the world of absolute Reality, every secret is opened out, good or bad. The whole tale of acts, omissions, motives, imponderable spiritual hurt, neglect, or help will be laid bare.

5979. The Sky, or Heaven as standing for both the Blazing Fire and the Garden, the Home of the Hereafter. (10) Just as when an animal is skinned, its real flesh and blood and inner organs become visible, without any outer coating to hold them together, so the inmost state of every soul will then become plain.

5980. (11) Then will burn the Blazing Fire of the Hell, worse than the fiercest fire.

5981. (12) Lastly the Garden will come in sight,—not yet attained, but visible, or “brought near”. For the scales have fallen from the eyes, and the soul knows itself.

5982. See lxxv. 22, n. 5822; lxxviii. 40, n. 5914; and lxxix, 14, n. 5926.

5983. This is the conclusion. It is only on such conditions that the soul reaches its full realisation. Put forward: cf. “the Deeds which his hands have sent forth” in lxviii. 40.
15. So verily I call 5984
   To witness the Planets— 5985
   That recede,

16. Go straight, or hide;

17. And the Night
   As it dissipates, 5986

18. And the Dawn
   As it breathes away
   The darkness;— 5987

19. Verily this is the word
   Of a most honourable Messenger, 5988

5984. Cf. lvi. 75, n. 5258, for the witness that the heavenly bodies bear to the power, beauty, and goodness of Allah, in sending His Revelation. See n. 5798 to lxxiv. 32, for the significance of an adjuration in the Qur-an.

5985. The appeal here is made to three things, the Planets, the Night, and the Dawn. (1) The Planets have a retrograde and a forward motion, and, during occultation, hide or disappear behind the sun or moon, or are otherwise invisible or appear stationary. They behave differently from the millions of stars around them. Yet they are not mere erratic bodies, but obey definite laws, and evidence the power and wisdom of Allah.

5986. How the Night gradually declines after its height at midnight! It seems gradually to steal away, and as Dawn approaches, to merge into Day. So a soul in spiritual darkness gradually awakes to its spiritual Dawn through Revelation.

5987. The slow “breathing out” of the darkness by the Dawn, shows us, by beautiful imagery, that these wonderful operations, of which people in their ignorance are frightened if they have to do with darkness, are really beneficent operations of Allah. They have nothing to do with evil spirits, or witches, or magic. For three questions were actually raised about the holy Prophet’s Ministry by the ignorant. (1) Did his wonderful works come from himself and not from Allah? (2) Was he possessed of an evil spirit? In other words, was he mad? For that was the theory of madness then current. (3) Was he a soothsayer, or necromancer, or magician? For he had virtues, powers and eloquence, so extraordinary that they could not understand him.

5988. They are told here that all their three theories were foolish. The Revelation was really from Allah. Their wonder should cease if they observe the daily miracles worked round them in nature. The bringer of Allah’s Message was the angel Gabriel, and not an evil spirit.
20. Endued with Power, 
   Held in honour by 
   The Lord of the Throne,  
   5989
21. With authority there, 
   (And) faithful to his trust.  
22. And (O people)! 
   Your Companion is not 
   One possessed;  
   5990
23. And without doubt he saw him 
   In the clear horizon.  
   5991
24. Neither doth he withhold 
   Grudgingly a knowledge 
   Of the unseen.  
   5992
25. Nor is it the word 
   Of a Satan accursed.  
   5993

5989. Not only was the bringer of the Revelation, Gabriel, an honourable Messenger, 
   incapable of deceit, but he had, in the angelic kingdom, rank and authority before Allah's 
   Throne, and he could convey an authoritative divine Message. He was, like the holy 
   Prophet, faithful to his trust; and therefore there could be no question of the Message 
   being delivered in any other way than exactly according to the divine Will and Purpose. 
   These epithets could apply to the Prophet himself, but in view of verse 23 below, it 
   is best to understand them of Gabriel.

5990. After describing the credentials of the Archangel Gabriel, the Text now appeals 
   to the people to consider their own “Companion”, the Prophet, who had been born 
   among them and had lived with them, and was known to be an honourable, truthful, and 
   trustworthy man. If Gabriel was the one who brought the Message to him, then there 
   was no question of demoniacal possession. And the Prophet had seen him in his inspired 
   vision “in the clear horizon”.

5991. Read along with this the whole passage in liii. 1-18 and notes there; specially 
   n. 5092, where the two occasions are mentioned when there was a vision of inspiration: 
   “For truly did he see, of the Signs of his Lord, the Greatest” (liii. 18).

5992. Such would be the words of a soothsayer, guarded, ambiguous, and misleading. 
   Here everything was clear, sane, true, and under divine inspiration.

5993. Such as evil suggestions of envy, spite, greed, selfishness, or other vices. On 
   the contrary the teaching of the Qur-ān is beneficent, pointing to the Right Way, the 
   Way of Allah. Rajim: literally, driven away with stones, rejected with complete ignominy. 
   Cf. xv. 17. The rite of throwing stones in the valley of Minā at the close of the Makkah 
   Pilgrimage [see n. 217 (6) to ii. 197] suggests symbolically that the Pilgrim emphatically, 
   definitely, and finally rejects all Evil.
26. Then whither go ye? 5994
27. Verily this is no less
Than a Message
To (all) the Worlds: 5995
28. (With profit) to whoever
Among you wills
To go straight: 5996
29. But ye shall not will
Except as Allah wills,–
The Cherisher of the Worlds.

5994. It has been shown that this is no word of a mortal, but that it is full of divine wisdom; that its teaching is not that of a madman, but sane to the core and in accordance with human needs; that it freely and clearly directs you to the right Path and forbids you the Path of evil. Why then hesitate? Accept the divine Grace; repent of your sins; and come to the higher Life.

5995. It is not meant for one class or race; it is universal, and is addressed to all the Worlds. For the meaning of “Worlds”, see n. 20 to i. 2.

5996. Cf. lxxiv. 55-56. Allah is the Cherisher of the Worlds, Lord of Grace and Mercy, and His guidance is open to all who have the will to profit by it. But that will must be exercised in conformity with Allah’s Will (verse 29). Such conformity is Islam. Verse 28 points to human free-will and responsibility; verse 29 to its limitations. Both extremes, viz., cast-iron Determinism and an idea of Chaotic Free-will, are condemned.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Infiṭār, 82.

In subject-matter this Sūra is cognate to the last, though the best authorities consider it a good deal later in chronology in the early Makkān Period.

Its argument is subject to the threefold interpretation mentioned in n. 5982 to lxxxi. 13, viz., as referring (1) to the final Day of Judgment, (2) to the Lesser Judgment, on an individual's death, and (3) to the awakening of the Inner Light in the soul at any time, that being considered as Death to the Falsities of this life and a Re-birth to the true spiritual Reality.
Al-Infiṭār, or The Cleaving Asunder.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. When the Sky Is cleft asunder;
2. When the Stars Are scattered;
3. When the Oceans Are suffered to burst forth;

5997. Cf. the passage lxxxi. 1-14 and notes. For the three parallel interpretations, see the Introduction to this Sūra. There are four conditional clauses here, and the substantive clause is in verse 5. In S. lxxxi, there were 12 conditional clauses, and the conclusion was, similar, but not expressed in precisely the same terms. See lxxii. 5. n. 6002 below. The physical world as we see it now will be destroyed before the final Day of Judgment, establishing the true Reality. In the following four clauses we have a reference to the Lesser Judgment, the individual dawn of the true Reality at Death.

5998. Cf. lxxiii. 18, n. 5769. The beautiful blue sky overhead, which we take for granted in sunshine and storm, will be shattered to pieces before the New World is established. The partition which seems at present to divide things divine from this phenomenal world has to be shattered before each soul knows the reality about itself.

5999. Cf. lxxxi. 2, where the word for “stars” (*Nujūm*) is different, and the verb is different. *Najm* has reference to brightness, and the verb “losing their lustre” was appropriate there, to show the opposite, *Kaukab* (used here) has more the meaning of a star as fixed in a constellation; and the opposite of a fixed and definite order is “scattered”, the verb used here. In fact, throughout this passage, the dominating idea is the disturbance of order and symmetry. The metaphor behind the scattering of the constellations is that in the present order of things we see many things associated together, *e.g.*, rank with honour, wealth with comfort, etc. In the New World this will be seen to have merely fortuitous.

6000. Cf. lxxxi. 6, “when the oceans boil over with a swell”. Here, “are suffered to burst forth” expresses the end of the present order of things. This may be in two ways, (1) The barrier which keeps within their respective bounds the various streams of salt and fresh water (lv. 20, n. 5185) will be removed; (2) the Ocean will overwhelm the whole Globe.
4. And when the Graves Are turned upside down;—
5. (Then) shall each soul know What it hath sent forward And (what it hath) kept back.
6. O man! what has Seduced thee from Thy Lord Most Beneficent?
7. Him Who created thee, Fashioned thee in due proportion, And gave thee a just bias;
8. In whatever Form He wills, Does He put thee together.

6001. This item is not mentioned in lxxxi. 1-14. Here it is introduced to show that the whole order of things will be so reversed that even Death will not be Death. We think there is tranquillity in Death: but there will be no tranquillity. Literally, and figuratively, Death will be the beginning of a new Life. What we think to be Death will bring forth Life.

6002. *Sent Forward* and *kept back*: may mean: the deeds of commission and omission in this life. Or the Arabic words may also be translated: *sent forward and left behind*: i.e., the spiritual possibilities which it sent forward for its other life, and the physical things on which it prided itself in this life, but which it had to leave behind in this life. Or else, the things it put first and the things it put last in importance may change places in the new world of Reality. “The first shall be last and the last shall be first”.

6003. Cf. xv. 29. Allah not only created man, but fashioned him in due proportions, giving him extraordinary capacities, and the means wherewith he can fulfil his high destiny.

6004. See n. 834 to vi. 1. Having given a limited free-will, He gave us a just bias through our reason and our spiritual faculties. If we err, it is our will that is at fault.

6005. By “Form” (Ṣūrat) here I understand the general shape of things in which any given personality is placed, including his physical and social environments, his gifts of mind and spirit, and all that goes to make up his outer and inner life. The Grace of Allah is shown in all these things, for His Will is formed from perfect knowledge, wisdom, and goodness.
9. Nay! but ye do
   Reject The Judgment!  

10. But verily over you
    (Are appointed angels) 
    To protect you,— 

11. Kind and honourable,—
    Writing down (your deeds):

12. They know
    All that ye do. 

13. As for the Righteous,
    They will be in Bliss; 

14. And the Wicked—
    They will be in the Fire, 

15. Which they will enter 
    On the Day of Judgment, 

16. And they will not be
    Able to keep away therefrom. 

17. And what will explain
    To thee what the Day 
    Of Judgment is? 

6006. The goodness and mercies of Allah, and His constant watchful care of all His creatures should make men grateful, instead of which they turn away from the Right and deny the Day of Sorting Out, the Day when every action performed here will find its fulfilment in just reward or punishment. 

6007. Besides the faculties given to man to guide him, and the Form and Personality through which he can rise by stages to the Presence of Allah, there are spiritual agencies around him to help and protect him, and to note down his Record, so that perfect justice may be done to him at the end. For these Guardian Angels, see I. 17-18, and n. 4954. 

6008. I understand this relative clause to govern “the Fire”, i.e., the Punishment. It will be postponed as long as possible, to give the Sinner every chance of repentance and amendment. But once the period of probation is past, it will be irrevocable. There will be no going back from it. By inference, the Righteous may individually reach some stage of Bliss at once, possibly in this life, possibly after death, though the Final Judgment will be the general and complete cessation of this fleeting world and the creation of the world of Eternity.
18. Again, what will explain
To thee what the Day
Of Judgment is?6009

19. (It will be) the Day
When no soul shall have
Power (to do) aught
For another:6010
For the Command, that Day,
Will be (wholly) with Allah.

6009. We can speak of Rewards and Punishments, the Fruits of Actions, the Resurrection and the Tribunal, the Restoration of True Values, the Elimination of all Wrong, and a hundred other phrases. They might serve to introduce our minds vaguely to a new World, of which they cannot possibly form any adequate conception under present conditions. The question is repeated in verses 17-18 to emphasize this difficulty, and a simple answer is suggested, as explained in the next note.

6010. The answer is suggested by a negative proposition: 'No soul shall have power to do aught for another'. This is full of meaning. Personal responsibility will be fully enforced. In this world we all depend on one another proximately, though our ultimate dependence is always on Allah, now and for ever. But here a father helps a son forward; husband and wife influence each other's destinies; human laws and institutions may hold large masses of mankind under their grip; falsehood and evil may seem to flourish for a time, because a certain amount of limited free-will has been granted to man. This period will be all over then. The good and the pure will have been separated from the evil and the rebellious; the latter will have been rendered inert, and the former will have been so perfected that their wills will be in complete consonance with Allah's Universal Will. The Command, thenceforward, will be wholly with Allah.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SūRAT At-Taḥfīf or Al-Muṭaffifeen 83

This Sūra is close in time to the last one and the next one.

It condemns all fraud—in daily dealings, as well as and especially in matters of Religion and daily Life.
At-Tatfif, or Dealing in Fraud.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Woe to those 
   That deal in fraud,—\(^{6011}\)

2. Those who, when they 
   Have to receive by measure 
   From men, exact full measure,

3. But when they have 
   To give by measure 
   Or weight to men, 
   Give less than due.

4. Do they not think 
   That they will be raised up?—\(^{6012}\)

5. On a Mighty Day,

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\(^{6011}\). "Fraud" must here be taken in a widely general sense. It covers giving short measure or short weight, but it covers much more than that. The next two verses make it clear that it is the spirit of injustice that is condemned,—giving too little and asking too much. This may be shown in commercial dealings, where a man exacts a higher standard in his own favour than he is willing to concede as against him. In domestic or social matters an individual or group may ask for honour, or respect, or services which he or they are not willing to give on their side in similar circumstances. It is worse than one-sided selfishness: for it is double injustice. But it is worst of all in religion or spiritual life: with what face can a man ask for Mercy or Love from Allah when he is unwilling to give it to his fellow-men? In one aspect this is a statement of the Golden Rule. 'Do as you would be done by'. But it is more completely expressed. You must give in full what it due from you, whether you expect or wish to receive full consideration from the other side or not.

\(^{6012}\). Legal and social sanctions against Fraud depend for their efficacy on whether there is a chance of being found out. Moral and religious sanctions are of a different kind. 'Do you wish to degrade your own nature?' 'Do you not consider that there is a Day of Account before a Judge Who knows all, and Who safeguards all interests, for He is the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds? Whether other people know anything about your wrong or not, you are guilty before Allah'.

- 1916 -
6013. This is a word from the same root as *Sijn*, a Prison. It rhymes with and is contrasted with *'Ilîyin* in verse 18 below. It is therefore understood by many Commentators to be a place, a Prison or a Dungeon in which the Wicked are confined pending their appearance before the Judgment-Seat. The mention of the Iscribed Register in verse 9 below may imply that *Sijjin* is the name of the Register of Black Deeds, though verse 9 may be elliptical and may only describe the place by the significance of its contents.

6014. If we take *Sijjin* to be the Register itself, and not the place where it is kept, the Register itself is a sort of Prison for those who do wrong. It is inscribed fully: *i.e.*, no one is omitted who ought to be there, and for every entry there is a complete record, so that there is no escape for the sinner.

6015. The fact of Personal Responsibility for each soul is so undoubted that people who deny it are to be pitied, and will indeed be in a most pitiable condition on the Day of Reckoning, and none but the most abandoned sinner can deny it, and he only denies it by playing with Falsehoods.

6016. Cf. vi. 25; lxviii. 15; etc. They scorn Truth and pretend that it is Falsehood.
14. By no means!
   But on their hearts
   Is the stain of the (ill)
   Which they do! 6017

15. Verily, from (the Light
   Of) their Lord, that Day,
   Will they be veiled. 6018

16. Further, they will enter
   The Fire of Hell.

17. Further, it will be said
   To them: “This is
   The (reality) which ye
   Rejected as false!

18. Nay, verily the Record
   Of the Righteous is
   (Preserved) in “Ilīyīn. 6019

19. And what will explain
   To thee what ‘Ilīyūn is?

20. (There is) a Register
   (Fully) inscribed, 6020

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6017. The heart of man, as created by Allah, is pure and unsullied. Every time that a man does an ill deed, it marks a stain or rust on his heart. But on repentance and forgiveness, such stain is washed off. If there is no repentance and forgiveness, the stains deepen and spread more and more, until the heart is sealed (ii. 7), and eventually the man dies a spiritual death. It is such stains that stand in the way of his perceiving Truths which are obvious to others. That is why he mocks at Truth and hugs Falsehood to his bosom.

6018. The stain of evil deeds on their hearts sullies the mirror of their hearts, so that it does not receive the light. At Judgment the true Light, the Glory of the Lord, the joy of the Righteous, will be hidden by veils from the eyes of the Sinful. Instead; the Fire of Punishment will be to them the only reality which they will perceive.

6019. ‘Ilīyīn: the oblique form of the nominative ‘Ilīyūn, which occurs in the next verse. It is in contrast to the Sijjin which occurs in verse 7 above, where see n. 6213. Literally, it means the ‘High Places’. Applying the reasoning parallel to that which we applied to Sijjin, we may interpret it as the Place where is kept the Register of the Righteous.

6020. This repeats verse 9 above, where see n. 6014. But the Register is of the opposite kind, that of the Righteous. It contains every detail of the Righteous.
21. To which bear witness
Those Nearest (to Allah). 6021

22. Truly the Righteous
Will be in Bliss:

23. On raised couches 6022
Will they command a sight
(Of all things):

24. Thou wilt recognise
In their Faces 6023
The beaming brightness of Bliss.

25. Their thirst will be slaked
With Pure Wine sealed; 6024

26. The seal thereof will be
Musk: and for this
Let those aspire,
Who have aspirations: 6025

27. With it will be (given)
A mixture of Tasnim: 6026

6021. See lvi. 11, n. 5227; also n. 5223. Those Nearest to Allah will be witnesses to this Righteous Record; or as it may also be rendered, they will be present at the Record, and watch this Record.

6022. Cf. xxxvi. 56.

6023. Cf. lxxv. 22, and lxxvi. 11.

6024. The Wine will be of the utmost purity and flavour, so precious that it will be protected with a seal, and the seal itself will be of the costly material of musk, which is most highly esteemed in the East for its perfume. Perhaps a better interpretation of the "seal" is to take it as implying the final effect of the drink: just as a seal close a document, so the seal of the drink will be the final effect of the delicious perfume and flavour of musk, heightening the enjoyment and helping in the digestion.

6025. If you understand true and lasting values, this is the kind of pure Bliss to aspire, for, and not the fleeting enjoyments of this world, which always leave a sting behind.

6026. Tasnim literally indicates height, fulness, opulence. Here it is the name of a heavenly Fountain, whose drink is superior to that of the Purest Wine. It is the nectar drunk by Those Nearest to Allah (n. 5227 to lvi. 11), but a flavour of it will be given to all. See n. 5835 to lxxvi. 5 (Kāfūr fountain), and n. 5849 to lxxvi. 17-18 (Salsabil).
28. A spring, from (the waters)
Whereof drink
Those Nearest to Allah.

29. Those in sin used
To laugh at those
Who believed,

30. And whenever they passed
By them, used to wink
At each other (in mockery);

31. And when they returned
To their own people,
They would return jesting;

32. And whenever they saw them,
They would say, “Behold!
These are the people
Truly astray!”

33. But they had not been
Sent as Keepers over them.

34. But on this Day
The Believers will laugh
At the Unbelievers.

6027. The wicked laugh at the righteous in this world in many ways: (1) They inwardly laugh at their Faith, because they feel themselves so superior. (2) In public places, when the righteous pass, they wink at each other and insult them. (3) In their own houses they run them down. (4) Whenever and wherever they see them, they reproach them with being fools who have lost their way, when the boot is really on the other leg. In the Hereafter all these tricks and falsehoods will be shown for what they are, and the tables will be reversed.

6028. But the wicked critics of the Righteous have no call in any case to sit in judgment over them. Who set them as Keepers or guardians over the Righteous? Let them look to their own condition and future first.

6029. The tables will then be reversed, and he laughs best who laughs last.
35. On raised couches
They will command (a sight)
(Of all things).\textsuperscript{6030}

36. Will not the Unbelievers
Have been paid back
For what they did?

\textsuperscript{6030}. A repetition of verse 23 above, but with a different shade of meaning. The Righteous on their raised couches will be able to see all the true values restored in their own favour: but they will also see something else: they will also see the arrogant braggarts brought low, who brought about their own downfall by their own actions.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Inshiqqāq, 84.

Chronologically this Sūra is closely connected with the last one. In subject-matter it resembles more to S. lxxxi. and lxxxi., with which it may be compared.

The Sūra, which opens with a mention of some cataclysmic events, shows that the present phenomenal order will not last, and Allah's full Judgment will certainly be established: man should therefore strive for that World of Eternity and True Values.
**Al-Inshiqaq, or The Rending Asunder**

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. When the Sky is Rent asunder,\(^{6031}\)

2. And hearkens to\(^{6032}\) (The Command of) its Lord,—
   And it must needs (Do so);—

3. And when the Earth Is flattened out,\(^{6033}\)

4. And casts forth What is within it
   And becomes (clean) empty,

5. And hearkens to\(^{6034}\) (The Command of) its Lord,—

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6031. The passing away of this world of sense to make way for a new World of Reality is here indicated by two Facts, which are themselves signs for a complete revolution in our whole knowledge and experience. At the beginning of S. lxxxii. and S. lxxxi, other Signs were used, to lead up to the arguments there advanced. Here the two Signs are: (1) the Sky being rent asunder and giving up its secrets, and (2) the Earth being flattened out from the globe it is, and giving up its secrets. See the following notes.

6032. We may think that the heavens we see above us,—high and sacred, seemingly vast and limitless, eternal and timeless—are not created matter. But they are. And they remain just so long as Allah wills it so, and not a moment longer. As soon as His Command issues for their dissolution, they will obey and vanish, and all their mystery will be emptied out. And it must necessarily be so; their very nature as created beings requires that they must hearken to the voice of their Creator, even to the extent of their own extinction.

6033. The Earth is a globe, enclosing within it many secrets and mysteries—gold and diamonds in its mines, heat and magnetic forces in its entrails, and the bodies of countless generations of men buried within its soil. At its dissolution all these contents will be disgorged: it will lose its shape as a globe, and cease to exist.

6034. See n. 6032. We think the earth so solid and real. All our perishable things dissolve into the earth. But the earth itself will dissolve into a truer Reality.
And it must needs (Do so)-(then will come Home the full Reality).

Verily thou art ever toiling on towards thy Lord-

Painfully toiling,-but thou shalt meet Him.

Then he who is given His Record in his Right hand, soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning, and he will turn to his people, rejoicing!

But he who is given His Record behind his back, will not be free. Sin will tie their hands behind their back: and thus they can only receive their Records in their left hand, behind their back.

The substantive clause, to follow the two conditional clauses preceding, may be filled up from the suggestion contained in Ixxx. 5.

This life is full of toil and misery, if looked at as empty of the Eternal Hope which Revelation gives us. Hence the literature of pessimism in poetry and philosophy, which thinking minds have poured forth in all ages, when that Hope was obscured to them. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." "To each his suffering; all are men condemned alike a groan!" It is the noblest men that have to "scorn delights and live laborious days" in this life. The good suffer on account of their very goodness: the evil on account of their Evil. But the balance will be set right in the end. Those that wept shall be made to rejoice, and those that went about thoughtlessly rejoicing, will all go to their account with Allah and meet Him before His Throne of Judgment.

These will be the fortunate ones, who spent their lives in goodness and truth: for them the account will be made easy; for even after the balancing, they will receive more than their merits deserve, on account of the infinite grace and mercy of Allah.

Right Hand: Cf. xvii. 71. These will be the fortunate ones, who spent their lives in goodness and truth: for them the account will be made easy; for even after the balancing, they will receive more than their merits deserve, on account of the infinite grace and mercy of Allah.

His people: should be understood in a large sense, including of course all those nearest and dearest to him.

In Ixix. 24. the wicked are given the Record in their left hand. But their hands will not be free. Sin will tie their hands behind their back: and thus they can only receive their Records in their left hand, behind their back.
11. Soon will he cry
   For Perdition, 6040
12. And he will enter
   A Blazing Fire.
13. Truly, did he go about
   Among his people, rejoicing 6041
14. Truly, did he think
   That he would not
   Have to return (to Us) 6042
15. Nay, nay! for his Lord
   Was (ever) watchful of him!
16. So I do call 6043
   To witness the ruddy glow
   Of Sunset; 6044
17. The Night and its Homing; 6045

6040. The wicked will cry for death and annihilation: but they will neither live nor die: xx. 74.

6041. The tables are now turned. His self-complacence and self-conceit in his lower life will now give place to weeping and gnashing of teeth! Cf. n. 6036 above.

6042. Most of the Evil in this world is due to the false idea that man is irresponsible, or to a mad and thoughtless indulgence of self. Man is not irresponsible. He is responsible for every deed, word, and thought of his, to his Maker, to Whom he has to return, to give an account of himself. To remember this and act accordingly is to achieve salvation; to forget or flout that responsibility is to get into Hell.

6043. The same form of adjuration as in lxix. 37. The substantive statement is in verse 19 below: “Ye shall surely travel from stage to stage”. Nothing in this life is fixed, or will last. Three things are mentioned which on the one hand have remained from age to age for as far back as the memory of man can go, and yet each of them is but a short phase, gone as it were in the twinkling of an eye. See the following notes. So our life here is but a fleeting show. Its completion is to be looked for elsewhere.

6044. (1) The sun seems such a great reality that people worshipped him as a divinity. The beautiful glow it leaves when it sets is but momentary: it changes every moment and vanishes with the twilight.

6045. (2) The Night is a phenomenon you see during almost half every twenty-four hours in ordinary latitudes. At nightfall, all the wandering flocks and herds come home. The men scattered abroad for their livelihood return home to rest and sleep.
18. And the Moon
   In her Fulness:

19. Ye shall surely travel
   From stage to stage.

20. What then is the matter
   With them, that they
   Believe not?

21. And when the Qur-ān
   Is read to them, they
   Fall not prostrate,

22. But on the contrary
   The Unbelievers reject (it).

23. But Allah has full Knowledge
   Of what they secrete
   (In their breasts).

24. So announce to them
   A Chastisement Grievous,

= collects them in their homes, and yet this phase of Homing lasts but a little while. Presently all is silent and still. So will it be with our souls when this life is ended with our death. We shall be collected in a newer and larger Homing.

6046. (3) The astronomical Full Moon does not last a moment. The moment the moon is full, she begins to decline, and the moment she is in her “inter-lunar swoon”, she begins her career anew as a growing New Moon. So is man’s life here below. It is not fixed or permanent, either in its physical phases, or even more strikingly, in its finer phases, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual.

6047. Man travels and ascends stage by stage. In lxvii. 3 the same word in the form tibāqan was used of the heavens, as if they were in layers one above another. Man’s spiritual life may similarly be compared to an ascent from one heaven to another.

6048. Considering man’s high destiny, and the fact that this life is but a stage or a sojourn for him, it might be expected that he would eagerly embrace every opportunity of welcoming Allah’s Revelation and ascending by Faith to heights of spiritual wisdom. There is something wrong with his will if he does not do so. Notice the transition from the second person in verse 19, where there is a direct appeal to Allah’s votaries, to the third person in verses 20-21, where men who are rebels against Allah’s Kingdom are spoken of as if they were aliens.

6049. Prostrate: out of respect and humble gratitude to Allah.
25. Except to those who believe
And work righteous deeds:
For them is a Reward
That will never fail. 6050

6050. Cf. xli. 8.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Burāj, 85.

This is one of the earlier Makkan Sūras, chronologically cognate with S. xci. The subject-matter is the persecution of Allah's votaries. Allah watches over His own, and will deal with the enemies of Truth as He dealt with them in the past.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the Sky, with its constellations;
2. By the promised Day (Of Judgment);
3. By one that witnesses, And the subject of the witness;
4. Woe to the makers Of the pit (of fire),

6051. Here is an appeal to three Signs in verses 1-3, and the substantive proposition is in verses 4-8, a denunciation of wicked persecutors of the votaries of Allah, persecutors who burnt righteous men for their Faith. The three Signs are: (1) the Glorious Sky, with the broad belt of the Constellations marking the twelve Signs of the Zodiac; (2) the Day of Judgment, when all evil will be punished; and (3) certain Persons that will be witnesses, and certain Persons or things that will be the subjects of the witness. See the notes following.

6052. See n. 1950 to xv. 16. The Stars of the Zodiac as well as of other Constellations are like the eyes of the Night. It may be that crimes are committed in the darkness of the night. But countless eyes are watching all the time, and every author of evil will be brought to book.

6053. The Day of Judgment, when the Sinner will have to give an account of every deed, open or hidden, is not merely a matter of speculation. It is definitely promised in revelation, and will inevitably come to pass. Woe then to the Sinners for their crimes.

6054. The literal meaning is clear, but its metaphorical application has been explained in a variety of ways by different Commentators. The words are fairly comprehensive, and should, I think, be understood in connection with Judgment. There the Witnesses may be: (1) the Prophets (iii. 81); Allah Himself (iii. 81, and x. 61); the Recording Angels (l. 21); the Sinner’s own misused limbs (xxiv. 24); his record of deeds (xvii. 14); or the Sinner himself (xvii. 14). The subject of the witness may be the deed or crime, or the Sinner against whom the testimony cries out. The appeal to these things means that the Sinner cannot possibly escape the consequences of his crime. He should repent, seek Allah’s Mercy, and amend his life.

6055. Who were the makers of the pit of fire in which they burn people for their Faith? The words are perfectly general, and we need not search for particular names, except by way of illustration. In ancient history, and in Medieial Europe, many lives were sacrificed at the stake because the victims did not conform to the established religion. In Arab tradition there is the story of Abraham: Nimrud tries to burn him to death, but
5. Fire supplied (abundantly)
With Fuel:

6. Behold! they sat\(^{6056}\)
Over against the (fire),

7. And they witnessed
(All) that they were doing
Against the Believers.

8. And they ill-treated them
For no other reason than
That they believed in Allah,
Exalted in Power,
Worthy of all Praise!–

9. Him to Whom belongs
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth!
And Allah is Witness
To all things.\(^{6057}\)

10. Those who persecute
The Believers, men and women,
And do not turn
In repentance, will have
The Chastisement of Hell:

\(^{6056}\) on account of Abraham's Faith, the fire became "a means of safety for Abraham": xxii. 69, and n. 2725. Another case cited is that of Zu-Nuwâs, the last Himyarite King of Yemen, by religion a Jew, who persecuted the Christians of Najrân and is said to have burnt them to death. He seems to have lived in the latter half of the sixth Christian century, in the generation immediately preceding the Prophet's birth in 570 A.D. While the words are perfectly general, a reference is suggested to the persecution to which the early Muslims were subjected by the Pagan Quraish. Among other cruelties, they were stripped, and their skins were exposed to the burning rays of the Arabian summer sun.

\(^{6057}\) It is suggested that the persecutors will richly deserve to be punished in the Fire of Hell. That Punishment will be far more real and lasting than the undeserved cruelty which they inflicted on men for their Faith in the One True God.
They will have the Chastisement Of the Burning Fire. 6058

11. For those who believe
   And do righteous deeds,
   Will be Gardens. 6059
   Beneath which Rivers flow:
   That is the great Triumph. 6060

12. Truly strong is the Grip
    Of thy Lord.

13. It is He Who Creates
    From the very beginning, 6061
    And He can restore (life).

14. And He is the Oft-Forgiving,
    Full of loving-kindness,

15. Lord of the Throne,
    Full of all glory,

16. Doer (without let) 6062
    Of all that He intends.

6058. The “Chastisement of the Burning Fire” has been mentioned here in addition to the “Penalty of Hell”. This assumes a special significance in the background of the cruel burning of the Faithful by the “makers of the pit”. These criminals would be duly retributed by being subjected to a similar kind of suffering that they had caused their innocent victims.

6059. Cf. v. 119, ix. 72 and xxii. 19.

6060. Cf. v. 119, n. 833.

6061. For the various words for “Creation” and the ideas implied in them, see n. 120 to ii. 117.

6062. Allah’s Will is itself the Word and the Deed. There is no interval between them. He does not change His mind. No circumstances whatever can come between His Will and the execution thereof. Such are His Power and His Glory. Compare it with that of men, described in the next two verses.
6063. In contrast to the real, all-embracing, and eternal power of Allah, what are the forces of man at their best? Two examples are mentioned. (1) Pharaoh was a proud monarch of a powerful kingdom, with resources and organisation, material, moral, and intellectual, as good as any in the world. When he pitted himself against Allah's Prophet, he and his forces were destroyed. See lxxix. 15-26. (2) The Thamūd were great builders, and had a high standard of material civilization. But they defied the law of Allah and perished. See vii. 73-79, and n. 1043.

6064. In spite of the great examples of the past, by which human might and skill were shown to have availed nothing when the law of Allah was broken, the unbelievers persist (in all ages) in defying that law. But Allah will know how to deal with them.

6065. Allah encompasses every thing. But the wicked will find themselves defeated not only in conditions that they foresee, but from all sorts of unexpected directions, perhaps from behind them, i.e., from the very people or circumstances which in their blindness they despised or thought of as helping them.

6066. "Inscribed in a Tablet Preserved", i.e. Allah's Message is not ephemeral. It is eternal. The "Tablet" is "preserved" or guarded from corruption: xv. 9: for Allah's Message must endure for ever. That Message is the "Mother of the book": see n. 347 to iii. 7.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT At-Tariq, 86.

This Sūra also belongs to the early Makkah period, perhaps not far removed from the last Sūra.

Its subject-matter is the protection afforded to every soul. The physical nature of man may be insignificant, but the soul given to him by Allah must win a glorious Future in the end.
\textit{At-Tāriq}, or \textit{The Night-Visitant}.

\textit{In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.}

1. By the Sky\(^6067\)
   And the Night-Visitant\(^6068\)
   (Therein);

2. And what will explain to thee
   What the Night-Visitant is?–

3. (It is) the Star
   Of piercing brightness;–

4. There is no soul but has
   A protector over it.\(^6069\)

5. Now let man but think
   From what he is created!

6. He is created from
   A drop emitted\(^6070\)

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6067. The appeal here is to single Sign, \textit{viz.}: the Sky with its Night. Visitant; and the substantive proposition is in verse 4: "There is no soul but has a protector over it". In the last Sura we considered the persecution of Allah's votaries, and how Allah protects them. Here the same theme is presented in another aspect. In the darkest sky shines out most brilliantly the light of the most brilliant star. So in the night of spiritual darkness—whether through ignorance or distress—shines the glorious star of Allah's revelation. By the same token the man of Faith and Truth has nothing to fear. Allah will protect His own.

6068. This is explained in verse 3 below. The "Star of piercing brightness" is understood by some to be the Morning Star, by others to be the planet Saturn, by others again to be Sirius, or the Pleiads or shooting stars. I think it is best to take the "Star" in the collective or generic sense, for stars shine on every night in the year, and their piercing brightness is most noticeable on the darkest night.

6069. If man has a true spiritual understanding, he has nothing to be afraid of. He is protected by Allah in many ways that he does not even know. He may be an insignificant creature as a mere animal, but his soul raises him to a dignity above other creation. And all sorts of divine forces guard and protect him.

6070. See n. 5832. to lxxvi. 2. See also last note.
7. Proceeding from between
The backbone and the ribs:  

8. Surely (Allah) is able
To bring him back
(To life)!  

9. The Day that
(All) things secret
Will be tested,  

10. (Man) will have
No power,
And no helper.  

11. By the Firmament
Which giveth the returning rain,  

12. And by the Earth
Which opens out
(For the gushing of springs
Or the sprouting of vegetation),—  

6071. A man's seed is the quintessence of his body. It proceeds from his loins, i.e., from his back between the hip-bones and his ribs. His back-bone is the source and symbol of his strength and personality. In the spinal cord and in the brain is the directive energy of the central nervous system, and this directs all action, organic and psychic. The spinal cord is continuous with the Medulla Oblongata in the brain.  

6072. The Creator who can mingle the forces of psychic and physical muscular action in the creation of man, as explained in the last note, can surely give a new life after physical death here, and restore man's personality in the new world that will open out in the Hereafter.  

6073. In that new world, all our actions, motives, thoughts, and imaginings of this life, however secret, will be brought into the open, and tested by the standards of absolute Truth, and not by false standards of custom, prejudice, or partiality. In that severe test, any adventitious advantages of this life will have no strength or force whatever, and cannot help in any way.  

6074. The Firmament above is always the same, and yet it performs its diurnal round, smoothly and punctually. So does Allah's Revelation show forth the Truth, which like a circle is ever true to its centre,—which is ever the same, though it revolves through the changing circumstances of our present life.  

6075. The earth seems hard, but springs can gush forth and vegetables sprout through it and make it green and soft. So is Truth: hard perhaps to mortals, but through the fertilising agency of Revelation, it allows our inner personality to sprout and blossom forth.
13. Behold this is the Word
That distinguishes (Good
From Evil).  

14. It is not a thing
For amusement.

15. As for them, they
Are but plotting a scheme,

16. And I am planning
A scheme.

17. Therefore grant a delay
To the unbelievers:
Give respite to them
Gently (for awhile).

6076. See the last two notes. Revelation—Allah’s Truth—can pierce through the hardest crusts, and ever lead us back to the centre and goal of our life: for it separates Good from Evil definitely. It is not mere play or amusement, any more than the Sky or the Earth is. It helps us in the highest issues of our life.

6077. Though Allah in His Mercy has provided a piercing light to penetrate our spiritual darkness, and made our beings responsive to the growth of spiritual understanding, just as the hard earth is responsive to the sprouting of a seed or the gushing of a stream, yet there are evil, unregenerate men who plot and scheme against the beneficent purpose of Allah. But their plots will be of no avail, and Allah’s Purpose will prevail. It happened so with the Quraish who wanted to thwart the growth of Islam. It will be so in all ages.

6078. Cf. iii. 54.

6079. Gentle forbearance with Evil shows our trust in Allah and Allah’s Plan: for it can never be frustrated. This does not mean that we should assist or compromise with evil, or fail to put it down where we have the power. It means patience and humility where we have no visible power to prevent Evil.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-A‘lā, 87.

This is one of the earliest of the Makkah Sūras, being usually placed eighth in chronological order, and immediately after S. lxxxi.

The argument is that Allah has made man capable of progress by ordered steps, and by His Revelation will lead him still higher to purification and perfection.
Al-A’lā, or The Most High.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Glorify the name
   Of thy Guardian-Lord⁶⁰⁸⁰
   Most High,

2. Who hath created,⁶⁰⁸¹
   And further, given
   Order and proportion;

3. Who hath measured,⁶⁰⁸²
   And granted guidance;

4. And Who bringeth out⁶⁰⁸³
   The (green and luscious) pasture,

5. And then doth make it
   (But) swarthy stubble.

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6080. The word “Lord” by itself is an inadequate rendering here for Rabb. For it implies cherishing, guarding from harm, sustaining, granting all the means and opportunities of development. See n. 20 to i. 2. For shortness, perhaps “Guardian-Lord” will be sufficient in the Text.

6081. The story of Creation is wonderful and continuous. There are several processes which we contemplate in glorifying Allah’s name. First, He brings us into being. Secondly, He endows us with forms and faculties exactly suited to what is expected of us, and to the environments in which our life will be cast, giving to everything due order and proportion.

6082. Thirdly, He has ordained laws and decrees, by which we can develop ourselves and fit ourselves into His whole scheme of evolution for all His Creation. He has measured exactly the needs of all, and given us instincts and physical predispositions which fit into His decrees. Fourthly, He gives us guidance, so that we are not the sport of mechanical laws. Our reason and our will are exercised, that we may reach the higher destiny of man.

6083. Fifthly, after maturity comes decay. But even in that decay, as when green pasture turns to stubble, we subserve other ends. In so far as we are animals, we share these processes with other forms of material Creation, animal, vegetable, and even mineral, which all have their appointed laws of growth and decay. But man’s higher destiny is referred to in subsequent verses.
6. By degrees shall We Teach thee (The Message), so thou Shalt not forget,
7. Except as Allah wills: For He knoweth What is manifest And what is hidden.
8. And We will make it Easy for thee (to follow) The simple (Path).

6084. The soul, as it reaches the Light of Allah, makes gradual progress, like a man going from darkness into light. So the Qur-an was revealed by stages. So all revelation from Allah comes by stages.

As usual, there are two parallel meanings: (1) that connected with the occasion of direct inspiration to the holy Prophet; and (2) the more general Message to mankind for all time. Everyone who understands the Message must declare it, in words, and still more, in his conduct.

6085. The particular occasion was an assurance to the Prophet, that though he was unlettered, the Message given to him would be preserved in his heart and in the hearts of men. The more general sense is that mankind, having once seized great spiritual truths, will hold fast to them, except as qualified in the following verse.

6086. There can be no question of this having any reference to the abrogation of any verses of the Qur-an. For this Sura is one of the earliest revealed, being placed about eighth according to the most accepted chronological order. While the basic principles of Allah's Law remain the same, its form, expression, and application have varied from time to time, e.g., from Moses to Jesus, and from Jesus to Muhammad. It is one of the beneficent mercies of Allah that we should forget some things of the past, lest our minds become confused and our development is retarded. Besides, Allah knows what is manifest and what is hidden, and His Will and Plan work with supreme wisdom and goodness.

6087. The Path of Islam is simple and easy. It depends on no abstruse mysteries or self-mortifications, but on straight and manly conduct in accordance with the laws of man's nature as implanted in him by Allah (xxx. 30). On the other hand, spiritual perfection may be most difficult, for it involves complete surrender on our part to Allah in all our affairs, thoughts, and desires: but after that surrender Allah's Grace will make our path easy.
9. Therefore give admonition
   In case the admonition \textsuperscript{6088}
   Profits (the hearer).

10. He will heed
    Who fears:

11. But it will be avoided
    By the most unfortunate one,

12. Who will enter
    The Great Fire, \textsuperscript{6089}

13. In which he will then
    Neither die nor live. \textsuperscript{6090}

14. But he will prosper \textsuperscript{6091}
    Who purifies himself. \textsuperscript{6092}

15. And remembers the name
    Of his Guardian–Lord, 
    And prays.

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\textsuperscript{6088}. This is not so strong as the Biblical phrase, “Cast not pearls before swine” (Matt. vii. 6). The cases where admonition does produce spiritual profit and where it does not, are mentioned below in verses 10 and 11-13 respectively. Allah's Message should be proclaimed to all: but particular and personal admonitions are also due to those who attend and in whose hearts is the fear of Allah; in the case of those who run away from it and dishonour it, such particular and personal admonition is useless. They are the unfortunate ones who prepare their own ruin.

\textsuperscript{6089}. The Great Fire is the final Penalty or Disaster in the Hereafter, as contrasted with the minor Penalties or Disasters from which all evil suffers from within in this very life.

\textsuperscript{6090}. A terrible picture of those who ruin their whole future by evil lives here below. They introduce a discord into Creation, while life should be one great universal concord. And their past clings to them as part of their own will. They are not even like the dry swarthy stubble mentioned in verse 5 above, which grew naturally out of the luscious pasture, for they have grown harmful, in defiance of their own nature. “Neither die nor live”: Cf. xx. 74.

\textsuperscript{6091}. Prosper: in the highest sense; attain to Bliss or Salvation; as opposed to “enter the Fire”.

\textsuperscript{6092}. The first process in godliness is to cleanse ourselves in body, mind, and soul. Then we shall be in a fit state to see and proclaim the Glory of Allah. That leads us to our actual absorption in Praise and Prayer.
16. Nay (behold), ye prefer
   The life of this world;
17. But the Hereafter
   Is better and more enduring.
18. And this is
   In the Books
   Of the earliest (Revelations),
19. The Books of
   Abraham and Moses.

6093. The law of righteousness and godliness is not a new law, nor are the vanity
and short duration of this world preached here for the first time. But spiritual truths have
be renewed and reiterated again and again.

6094. No Book of Abraham has come down to us. But the Old Testament recognises
that Abraham was a prophet (Gen. xx. 7). There is a book in Greek, which has been
translated by Mr. G.H. Box, called the Testament of Abraham (published by the Society
for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1927). It seems to be a Greek
translation of a Hebrew original. The Greek Text was probably written in the second
Christian century, in Egypt, but in its present form it probably goes back only to the
9th or 10th Century. It was popular among the Christians. Perhaps the Jewish Midrash
also refers to a Testament of Abraham.

6095. The original Revelation of Moses, of which the Present Pentateuch is a
surviving recension. See Appendix II.

The present Gospels do not come under the definition of the “earliest” Books. Nor
could they be called “Books of Jesus”: they were written not by him, but about him,
and long after his death.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Gāshiya, 88.

This is a late Sūra of the early Makkān period, perhaps close in date to S. liii. Its subject-matter is the contrast between the destinies of the Good and the Evil in the Hereafter,—on the Day when the true balance will be restored: the Signs of Allah even in this life should remind us of the Day of Account, for Allah is good and just, and His creation is for a just Purpose.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Has the story Reached thee, of The Overwhelming (Event)?

2. Some faces, that Day, Will be humiliated,

3. Labouring (hard), weary,

4. The while they enter The Blazing Fire,

5. The while they are given, To drink, of a boiling hot spring,

6. No food will there be For them but a bitter Dhart

7. Which will neither nourish Nor satisfy hunger.

8. (Other) faces that Day Will be joyful,

6096. Gāshiya: the thing or event that overshadows or overwhelms, that covers over or makes people lose their senses. In xii. 107, it is described as the “covering veil of the Wrath of Allah”: where see n. 1790. The Day of Judgment is indicated, as the Event of overwhelming importance in which all our petty differences of this imperfect world are covered over and overwhelmed in a new world of perfect justice and truth.


6098. On the faces of the wicked will appear the hard labour and consequent fatigue of the task they will have in battling against the fierce Fire which their own Deeds will have kindled.

6099. The root-meaning implies again the idea of humiliation. It is a plant, bitter and thorny, loathsome in smell and appearance, which will neither give fattening nourishment to the body nor in any way satisfy the burning pangs of hunger,—a fit plant for Hell, like Zaqqūm (lvi. 52; or xvii. 60, n. 2250).
9. Pleased with their Striving,—

10. In a Garden on high,

11. Where they shall hear
   No (word) of vanity:

12. Therein will be
    A bubbling spring.

13. Therein will be couches
    (Of dignity), raised on high,

14. Goblets placed (ready),

15. And Cushions set in rows,

16. And rich carpets
    (All) spread out.

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6100. Notice the parallelism in contrast, between the fate of the Wicked and that of the Righteous. In the one case there was humiliation in their faces; in the other, there is joy; where there was labour and weariness in warding off the Fire, there is instead a healthy Striving, which is itself pleasurable,—a Striving which is a pleasant consequence of the spiritual Endeavour in the earthly life, which may have brought trouble or persecution from without, but which brought inward peace and satisfaction.

6101. The most important point is their inward state of joy and satisfaction, mentioned in verses 8-9. Now are mentioned the outer things of bliss, the chief of which is the Garden. The Garden is in contrast to the Fire. Its chief beauty will be that they will hear there nothing unbecoming, or foolish, or vain. It will be a Garden on high, in all senses,—fit for the best, highest, and noblest.

6102. Instead of the boiling hot spring (verse 5) there will be a bubbling spring of sparkling water. Instead of the grovelling and grumbling in the place of Wrath, there will be couches, with all the accompaniments of a brilliant Assembly.
17. Do they not look
At the Camels, \(^{6103}\)
How they are made?–

18. And at the Sky, \(^{6104}\)
How it is raised high?–

19. And at the Mountains, \(^{6105}\)
How they are fixed firm?–

20. And at the Earth, \(^{6106}\)
How it is spread out?

21. Therefore do thou remind
For thou art
One to remind.

6103. In case men neglect the Hereafter as of no account, they are asked to contemplate four things, which they can see in every-day life, and which are full of meaning, high design, and the goodness of Allah to man. The first mentioned is the domesticated animal, which for Arab countries is *par excellence* the Camel. What a wonderful structure has this Ship of the Desert? He can store water in his stomach for days. He can live on dry and thorny desert shrubs. His limbs are adapted to his life. He can carry men and goods. His flesh can be eaten. Camel’s hair can be used in weaving. And withal, he is so gentle! Who can sing his praises enough?

6104. The second thing they should consider is the noble blue vault high above them,—with the sun and moon, the stars and planets, and other heavenly bodies. This scene is full of beauty and magnificence, design and order, plainness and mystery. And yet we receive our light and warmth from the sun, and what would our physical lives be without these influences that come from such enormous distances?

6105. From every-day utility and affection in the Camel, to the utility in grandeur in the heavens above us, we had two instances touching our individual as well as our social lives. In the third instance, in the Mountains we come to the utility to human kind generally in the services the Mountains perform in storing water, in moderating climate, and in various other ways which it is the business of Physical Geography to investigate and describe.

6106. The fourth and last instance given is that of the Earth as a whole, the habitation of mankind in our present phase of life. The Earth is a globe, and yet how marvellously it seems to be spread out before us in plains, valleys, hills, deserts, seas, etc! Can man, seeing these things, fail to see a Plan and Purpose in his life, or fail to turn to the great Creator before Whom he will have to give an account after this life is done?
22. Thou art not one
   To manage (their) affairs.\textsuperscript{6107}

23. But if any turn away
   And disbelieve,—

24. Allah will chastise him
   With a mighty Chastisement.

25. For to Us will be
   Their Return;

26. Then it will be for Us
   To call them to account.

6107. The Prophet of Allah is sent to teach and direct people on the way. He is not sent to force their will, or to punish them, except in so far as he may receive authority to do so. Punishment belongs to Allah alone. And Punishment is certain in the Hereafter, when true values will be restored.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT AL-FĀJR, 89.

This is one of the earliest of the Sūras to be revealed,—probably within the first ten in chronological order.

Its meaning is suggested by contrasts,—contrasts in nature and in man’s long history. Thus does it enforce the lesson of Faith in the Hereafter to “those who understand”. Man’s history and legendary lore show that greatness does not last and the proudest are brought low. For enforcing moral and spiritual truths, the strictest history is no better than legend. Indeed all artistic history is legend, for it is written from a special point of view.

Man is easily cowed by contrasts in his own fortunes, and yet he does not learn from them the lesson of forbearance and kindness to others, and the final elevation of goodness in the Hereafter. When all the things on which his mind and heart are set on this earth shall be crushed to nothingness, he will see the real glory and power, love and beauty, of Allah, for these are the light of the Garden of Paradise.
1. By the Dawn;\(^{6108}\)
2. By the ten Nights;\(^{6109}\)
3. By the Even
And Odd (contrasted);\(^{6110}\)

6108. Four striking contrasts are mentioned, to show Allah's Power and Justice, and appeal to "those who understand". The first is the glory and mystery of the Break of Day. It just succeeds the deepest dark of the Night, when the first rays of light break through. Few people except those actually in personal touch with nature can feel its compelling power. In respect both of beauty and terror, of hope and inspiration, of suddenness and continuing increase of light and joy, this "holy time" of night may well stand as the type of spiritual awakening from darkness to Faith, from Death to Resurrection.

6109. By the Ten Nights are usually understood the first ten nights of \(Zul-Hijja\), the sacred season of Pilgrimage. From the most ancient times Makkah was the centre of Arab pilgrimage. The story of Abraham is intimately connected with it: see ii. 125-127 and notes, also n. 217 to ii. 197. In times of Paganism various superstitions were introduced, which Islam swept away. Islam also purified the rites and ceremonies, giving them new meaning. The ten days specially devoted to the \(Haj\) introduce a striking contrast in the life of Makkah and of the pilgrims. Makkah, from being a quiet secluded city, is then thronged with thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the world. They discard their ordinary dress—representing every kind of costume—to the simple and ordinary \(Ihram\) (n. 217); they refrain from every kind of fighting and quarrel; they abstain from every kind of luxury and self-indulgence; they hold all life sacred, however humble, except in the way of carefully-regulated sacrifice; and they spend their nights in prayer and meditation.

6110. The contrast between even and odd forms the subject of learned argument among those who deal with the properties of numbers. In any case, even and odd follow each other in regular succession: each is independent, and yet neither is self-sufficient. In ultimate analysis every even number is a pair of odd ones. And all things go in pairs: see xxxvi. 36, and n. 3981. In the animal world pairs are but two individuals, and yet each is a complement of the other. Both abstract and concrete things are often understood in contrast with their opposites. Why should we not, in spiritual matters, understand this life better with reference to the Hereafter, and why should we disbelieve in the Hereafter simply because we cannot conceive of anything different from our present life?
6111. That is, the last part of the night, just before full day-light. Note the gradations: first, the turn of the night, when just the first rays of daylight break through; secondly, the social and institutional rites of religion, like those during the ten nights of Pilgrimage; thirdly, when the usual contrast between the Here and Hereafter vanishes, and we can see heaven even here; and lastly, when this world vanishes, the full light of Day arrives, and we see Reality face to face.

6112. All these Signs draw our attention, like solemn adjurations in speech, to the profoundest mystery of our inner life, viz., how from utter depths of darkness—ignorance or even degradation—Allah's wonderful Light or Revelation can lead us by contrast into the most beautiful sunshine of a glorious spiritual Day. But the contrast suggest also the opposite process as a corollary,—how resistance to Allah's light would destroy us utterly, converting our greatness or glory to perdition, as happened with the peoples of Arab antiquity, the 'Ad and the Thamûd, and the type of the powerful but arrogant and godless monarch, the Pharaoh of Egypt. Like a man with a bounded horizon, the average man does not understand these long-range mysteries of life, and we have need to pray that we may be of “those who understand”.

6113. For the 'Ad see n. 1040 to vii. 65. They seem to have possessed an ancient civilisation, which succumbed when they persistently broke Allah’s law.

6114. Iram would seem to have been an ancient 'Ad capital, in southern Arabia. It boasted of lofty architecture ("lofty pillars"). Some Commentators understand Iram to be the name of an eponymous hero of the 'Ad, in which case the following line, “with lofty pillars”, should be construed “of lofty stature”. The 'Ad were a tall race.
8. The like of which
   Were not produced
   In (all) the land?6115

9. And with the Thamūd6116
   (People), who cut out
   (Huge) rocks in the valley?–

10. And with Pharaoh
    Lord of Stakes?6117

11. (All) these transgressed
    Beyond bounds in the lands.

12. And heaped therein
    Mischief (on mischief).

13. Therefore did thy Lord
    Pour on them a sourgc
    Of diverse chastisements:
    For thy Lord
    is Watchful.6118

6115. This tract of southern Arabia was once very prosperous (Arabia Felix) and
contains ruins and inscriptions. It has always been an object of great interest to the
Arabia. In the time of Mu‘awiya some precious stones were found among the ruins in
this locality. Quite recently, a bronze lion’s head and a bronze piece of gutter with a
Sabean inscription, found in Najrān, have been described in the British Museum

6116. For the Thamūd see n. 1043 to vi. 73. Their civilisation shows traces of
Egyptian, Syrian, and (later) Greek and Roman influences. They built fine temples,
tombs, and buildings cut out of the solid rock. The cult of the goddess Lāt flourished
among them.

6117. For “Lord of Stakes”, see xxxviii. 12, n 4160. For Pharaoh’s arrogance and his
fall see xx. 43, 78-79. The three examples given, the ‘Ād, the Thamūd, and Pharaoh,
show that neither nations nor individuals, however mighty, prosperous, or firmly
established they may be, can live if they transgress the Law of Allah. The Law of Allah,
which is also the law of the higher nature which He has bestowed on us, made them
in the first place great and glorious: when they fell from it and “heaped mischief on
mischief”, they were swept away.

6118. Even though Allah’s punishment is delayed, it is not to be supposed that He
does not see all things. Allah’s providence is ever vigilant: His punishment of evil doers
is a form of justice to the weak and the righteous whom they oppress. It is part of the
signification of His title as Rabb (Cherisher).
15. Now, as for man,\textsuperscript{6119} When his Lord trieth him, Giving him honour and gifts, Then saith he, (puffed up), “My Lord hath honoured me.”

16. But when he trieth him, Restricting his subsistence\textsuperscript{6120} For him, then saith he (In despair), “My Lord Hath humiliated me!”

17. Nay, nay! But ye\textsuperscript{6121} Honour not the orphans!

18. Nor do ye encourage One another\textsuperscript{6122} To feed the poor!–

19. And ye devour Inheritance–\textsuperscript{6123} All with greed,

\textsuperscript{6119} Contrast with Allah’s justice and watchful care, man’s selfishness and pettiness. Allah tries us both by prosperity and adversity: in the one we should show humility and kindness; and in the other patience and faith. On the contrary, we get puffed up in prosperity and depressed in adversity, putting false values on this world’s goods.

\textsuperscript{6120} Subsistence, in both the literal and the figurative sense. Allah provides for all, but people complain if the provision is measured and restricted to their needs, circumstances, and antecedents, and does not come up to their desires or expectations, or is different from that given to people in quite different circumstances.

\textsuperscript{6121} Even at our own valuation, if we are favoured with superfluities, do we think of the fatherless children, or the struggling poor? On the contrary, too many men are but ready to embezzle the helpless orphan’s inheritance, and to waste their own substance in worthless riot instead of supplying the people’s real needs.

\textsuperscript{6122} Kindness and generosity set up standards which even worldly men feel bound to follow out of social considerations even if they are not moved by higher motives. But the wicked find plausible excuses for their own hard-heartedness, and by their evil example choke up the springs of charity and kindness in others.

\textsuperscript{6123} Inheritance is abused in two ways. (1) Guardians and trustees for the inheritance of minors or women or persons unable to look after their own interests should fulfil their trusts with even more care than they devote to their own interests. Instead of that they selfishly “devour” the property. (2) Persons who inherit property in their own rights should remember that in that case, too, it is a sacred trust. They must use it for the purposes, objects, and duties which they also inherit. It gives them no licence to live in idleness or waste their days in riotous show.
20. And ye love wealth
   With inordinate love!

21. Nay! When the earth
   Is pounded to powder, \(^{6124}\)

22. And thy Lord cometh,
   And His angels,
   Rank upon rank,

23. And Hell, that Day, \(^{6125}\)
   Is brought (face to face),—
   On that Day will man
   Remember, but how will
   That remembrance profit him?

24. He will say: "Ah!
   Would that I had
   Sent forth (Good Deeds)
   For (this) my (Future) Life!"

25. For, that Day,
   His Chastisement will be
   Such as none (else)
   Can inflict, \(^{6126}\)

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6124. Our attention is now called to the Day of Reckoning. Whether we failed to respect the rights of the helpless here or actually suppressed those rights in our mad love for the good things of this life, we shall have to answer in the realm of Reality. This solid earth, which we imagine to be so real, will crumble to powder like dust before the real Presence, manifested in glory.

6125. The Retribution will at last come, and we shall realise it in our inmost being, all the illusions of this fleeting world having been swept away. Then we shall remember, and wish, too late, that we had repented. Why not repent now? Why not bring forth the fruits of repentance now, as a preparation for the Hereafter?

6126. "Chastisement" in this verse and the "binding in bonds" in the next verse are two distinct phases of the Penalty. "Chastisement" involves pain and agony, such as cannot be imagined anywhere else, or from any other source, for it touches our inmost soul and cannot be compared with anything our bodies may suffer or others may inflict. "Bonds" imply confinement, want of freedom, the closing of a door which was once open but which we deliberately passed by. We see that others accepted in faith and entered that door. This shutting out of what might have been in worse than any other bonds or confinement we can imagine, and may be worse than actual chastisement.
26. And His bonds
   Will be such as
   None (other) can bind.

27. (To the righteous soul
   Will be said:)
   "O (thou) soul, 6127
   In (complete) rest
   And satisfaction!

28. "Come back thou
   To thy Lord,—6128
   Well pleased (thyself),
   And well-pleasing
   Unto Him!

29. "Enter thou, then,
   Among my Devotees!

30. "Yea, enter thou
   My Heaven!" 6129

6127. The righteous enter into their inheritance and receive their welcome with a title that suggests freedom from all pain, sorrow, doubt, struggle, disappointment, passion, and even further desire: at rest, in peace; in a state of complete satisfaction.

In Muslim theology, this stage of the soul is the final stage of bliss. The unregenerate human soul, that seeks its satisfaction in the lower earthly desires, is the Ammāra (xii. 53). The self-reproaching soul that feels conscious of sin and resists it is the Lawwāma (lxv. 2, and n. 5810).

6128. Note that Evil finds itself isolated, and cries out in lonely agony (verse 24), while Good receives a warm welcome from the Lord of Goodness Himself,—also that it is the soul which enters heaven, and not the gross body which perishes.

6129. The climax of the whole is: “Enter My Heaven!” Men may have imagined all kinds of heaven before, and many types are used in the sacred Word itself. But nothing can express the reality itself better than “My Heaven”—Allah’s own Heaven! May we reach it through Allah’s grace!
This is an early Makkah revelation, and refers to the relation (by divine sanction) of the holy Prophet with the city of Makkah. He was born in that City, which had already been sacred for ages before. He was nurtured in that City and had (to use a modern phrase) the freedom of that City, belonging, as he did, to the noble family which held the government of its sacred precincts in its hands. But he was an orphan, and orphans in his day had a poor time. But his mind was turned to things divine. He protested against the prevailing idolatry and sin, and his parent City persecuted him and cast him out. He made another City, Yathrib, his own: it became the Madīnat-un-Nabī, the City of the Prophet, and it has ever since been called Madinah. We can speak of Madinah as the Prophet's child. But the Prophet ever cherished in his heart the love of his parent City of Makkah, and in the fulness of time was received in triumph there. He purified it from all idols and abominations, re-established the worship of the One True God, overthrew the purse-proud selfish autocracy, restored the sway of the righteous (people of the Right Hand), the liberty of the slave, and the rights of the poor and downtrodden. What a wonderful career centring round a City? It becomes a symbol of the world's spiritual history.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Nay I do swear by This City;—
2. And, thou art an inhabitant Of this City;—
3. And the begetter And that he begot;—
4. Verily We have created Man into toil and struggle.

6130. The appeal to the close ties between the holy Prophet and his parent City of Makkah has been explained in the Introduction to this Sûra. It is a symbol of man's own history. Man is born for toil and struggle, and this is the substantive proposition in verse 4 below, which this appeal leads up to.

6131. Hillun: an inhabitant, a man with lawful rights, a man freed from such obligations as would attach to a stranger to the city, a freeman in a wider sense than the technical sense to which the word is restricted in modern usage. The Prophet should have been honoured in his native city. He was actually being persecuted. He should have been loved, as a parent loves a child. Actually his life was being sought, and those who believed in him were under a ban. But time was to show that he was to come triumphant to his native city after having made Madinah sacred by his life and work.

6132. A parent loves a child: ordinarily the father is proud and the mother, in spite of her birth-pains, experiences supreme joy when the child is born. But in abnormal circumstances there may be misunderstanding, even hatred between parent and child. So Makkah cast out her most glorious son, but it was only for a time. Makkah was sound at heart; only her power had been usurped by an ignorant autocracy which passed away, and Makkah was to receive back her glory at the hands of the son whom she had rejected but whom she welcomed back later. And Makkah retains for all time her sacred character as the centre of Islam.

6133. Cf. "Man is born unto troubles as the sparks fly upward" (Job, v. 7); "For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief" (Ecclesiastes, ii. 23). Man's life is full of sorrow and vexation; but our text has a different shade of meaning: man is born to strive and struggle; and if he suffers from hardships, he must exercise patience, for Allah will make his way smooth for him (lxv. 7; xciv. 5-6). On the other hand no man should boast of worldly goods or worldly prosperity (see verses 5-7 below).
5. Thinketh he, that none
Hath power over him?  

6. "He may say (boastfully):
Wealth have I squandered
In abundance!" 

7. Thinketh he that none
Beholdeth him? 

8. Have We not made
For him a pair of eyes?— 

9. And a tongue, And a pair of lips? 

10. And shown him
The two highways? 

6134. See the end of last note. If a man has wealth, influence, or power, he should
not behave as if it is to last for ever, or as if he has no responsibility for his acts and
can do what he likes. All his gifts and advantages are given to him for trial. Allah, Who
bestowed them on him, can take them away, and will do so if man fails in his trial.

6135. The man who feels no responsibility and thinks that he can do what he likes
in life forgets his responsibility to Allah. He boasts of his wealth and scatters it about,
thinking that he can thus purchase the support of the world. For a time he may. But
a rude awakening must come soon, for he bases his hopes on unsubstantial things. Or
if he spends his substance on self-indulgence, he is weakening himself and putting himself
into snares that must destroy him.

6136. Allah watches him, and sees all his acts and motives, and all the secret springs
of his follies. But lest he should think the higher forces too remote for him, let him look
within himself and use the faculties which Allah has given him. See the next verses
following.

6137. The eyes give us the faculty of seeing, and may be taken in both the literal
and the metaphorical sense. In the same way the tongue gives us the faculty of tasting
in both senses. Along with the lips, it also enables us to speak, to ask for information
and seek guidance, and to celebrate the praises of Allah.

6138. The two highways of life are: (1) the steep and difficult path of virtue, which
is further described in the verses following, and (2) the easy path of vice and the rejection
of Allah, referred to in verses 19-20 below. Allah has given us not only the faculties
implied in the eyes, the tongue, and the lips, but has also given us the judgment by which
we can choose our way; and He has sent us Teachers and Guides, with Revelation, to
show us the right and difficult way.
Persons down in the dust can only be helped from motives of pure charity, because nothing can be expected of them—neither praise nor advertisement nor any other advantage to the helper. Such help is help indeed. But there may be various degrees, and the help will be suited to the needs.

Such practical charity and love will be the acid test of Faith and the teaching of all virtues. The virtues are summed up under the names of Patience (the Arabic word includes constancy and self-restraint) and compassionate kindness. Not only will they be the test by which the sincerity of their Faith will be judged; they will be the fruit which their Faith will constantly produce.
And self-restraint), and enjoin Deeds of kindness and compassion.

18. Such are the Companions Of the Right Hand.\textsuperscript{6145}

19. But those who reject Our Signs, they are The (unhappy) Companions Of the Left Hand.\textsuperscript{6146}

20. On them will be Fire Vaulted over (all round).

\textsuperscript{6145} Cf. lvi. 27-40, also n. 5223. They will be those who achieve salvation.

\textsuperscript{6146} Cf. lvi. 41-56, also n. 5223. They will be the unfortunate ones enveloped in the Fire of lasting Penalty, heaped over them and all round them.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Ash-Shams, 91.

This is one of the early Makkah revelations. Beginning with a fine nature passage, and leading up to man’s need of realising his spiritual responsibility, it ends with a warning of the terrible consequences for those who fear not the Hereafter.
Ash-Shams, or The Sun.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1. By the Sun\(^{6147}\) And his (glorious) splendour;
2. By the Moon\(^{6148}\) As she follows him;
3. By the Day as it\(^{6149}\) Shows up (the Sun’s) glory;
4. By the Night as it Conceals it;
5. By the Firmament\(^{6150}\)

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\(^{6147}\) Six types are taken in three pairs, from Allah’s mighty works in nature, as tokens or evidence of Allah’s providence and the contrasts in His sublime creation, which yet conduce to cosmic harmony (verses 1-6). Then (verses 7-8) the soul of man, with internal order and proportion in its capacities and faculties, as made by Allah, is appealed to as having been endowed with the power of discriminating between right and wrong. Then the conclusion is stated in verses 9-10, that man’s success or failure, prosperity or bankruptcy, would depend upon his keeping that soul pure or his corrupting it.

\(^{6148}\) The first pair is the glorious sun, the source of our light and physical life, and the moon which follows or acts as second to the sun for illuminating our world. The moon, when she is in the sky with the sun, is pale and inconspicuous; in the sun’s absence she shines with reflected light and may metaphorically be called the sun’s vicegerent. So with Revelation and the great Prophets who brought it; and the minor Teachers who derive their light reflected, or perhaps doubly reflected, from the original source.

\(^{6149}\) The next contrasted pair consists, not of luminaries, but conditions, or periods of time, Day and Night. The Day reveals the sun’s glory and the Night conceals it from our sight. So there may be contrasts in our subjective reception of divine light, but it is there, working all the time, and must reappear in its own good time.

\(^{6150}\) The next contrasted pair is the wonderful firmament on high, and the earth below our feet, stretching away to our wide horizons. The sky gives us rain, and the earth gives us food. Yet both work together: for the rain is moisture sucked up from the earth, and the food cannot grow without the heat and warmth of the sun. There are many other contrasts under this head; yet they all point to unity.
And its (wonderful) structure; 6151

6. By the Earth
   And its (wide) expanse:

7. By the Soul,
   And the proportion and order
   Given to it; 6152

8. And its inspiration
   As to its wrong
   And its right;–

9. Truly he succeeds
   That purifies it,

10. And he fails
    That corrupts it! 6153

11. The Thamûd (people)
    Rejected (their prophet)
    Through their inordinate
    Wrong-doing. 6154

6151. The mā maṣḍariya in Arabic, in this and the subsequent clauses, is best translated in English by nouns. Thus what would literally be “and the (wonderful) making or construction of it” or “the fact of its (wonderful) construction” is, idiomatically, “its (wonderful) structure.” “The (wide) spreading out” of the earth is rendered “its (wide) expanse,” and so on.

6152. Allah makes the soul, and gives it order, proportion, and relative perfection, in order to adapt it for the particular circumstances in which it has to live its life. Cf. xxxii. 9. See also n. 120 to ii. 117. He breathes into it an understanding of what is sin, impiety, wrong-doing and what is piety and right conduct, in the special circumstances in which it may be placed. This is the most precious gift of all to man, the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong. After the six external evidences mentioned in verses 1-6 above, this internal evidence of Allah’s goodness is mentioned as the greatest of all. By these various tokens man should learn that his success, his prosperity, his salvation depends on himself—on his keeping his soul pure as Allah made it; and his failure, his decline, his perdition depends on his soiling his soul by choosing evil.

6153. This is the core of the Sûra, and it is illustrated by a reference to the story of the Thamûd in the following verses.

6154. The allusion to the story of the Thamûd will be understood by a reference to vii. 73-79; see specially n. 1044. Their prophet was Sâlih, but he had to deal with an arrogant people, who oppressed the poor and denied them their rights of watering and pasture for their cattle.
12. Behold, the most wicked
   Man among them was
   Deputed (for impiety).\textsuperscript{6155}

13. But the messenger of Allah\textsuperscript{6156}
   Said to them: “It is
   A She-camel of Allah!
   And (bar her not
   From) having her drink!”

14. Then they rejected him
   (As a false prophet),
   And they hamstrung her\textsuperscript{6157}
   So their Lord, crushed them
   For their sin and
   Levelled them.

15. And for Him\textsuperscript{6158}
   Is no fear
   Of its consequences.

\textsuperscript{6155} The prophet Sālih was given a certain she-camel as a Sign, a test case, “This she-camel of Allah is Sign unto you: so leave her to graze in Allah’s earth and let her come to no harm, or ye shall be seized with a grievous punishment” (vii. 73). But they plotted to kill her and sent the most wicked man among them to dare and do that deed of impiety. It was probably when she came to drink at the stream that she was hamstrung and killed. See xxvi. 155, and liv. 27.

\textsuperscript{6156} That is, Sālih: see last note.

\textsuperscript{6157} The man who was deputed to do the impious deed of hamstrung the she-camel had of course the sympathy and co-operation of the whole people. Only he was more daring than the rest.

\textsuperscript{6158} This verse has been variously construed. I follow the general opinion in referring the pronoun “Him” to “their Lord” in the last verse and the pronoun “its” to the Punishment that was meted out to all, high and low, equally. In that case the meaning would be: God decreed the total destruction of the Thamūd; in the case of creatures any such destruction might cause a loss to them, and they might fear the consequences of such loss or destruction, but Allah has created and can create at will, and there can be no question of any such apprehension in His case. An alternative view is that “him” refers to the prophet Sālih, mentioned in verse 13. Then the interpretation would be: Sālih had no fear of the consequences for himself; he had warned the wicked according to his commission; he was saved by Allah’s mercy as a just and righteous man, and he left them with regrets (vii. 79). Yet another alternative refers “him” to the wicked man (mentioned in verse 12) who hamstrung the she-camel: he feared not the consequences of his deed.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Lail, 92.

This was one of the first Sūras to be revealed,—within the first ten; and may be placed in date close to S. lxxxix and S. xciii. Note that in all these three Sūras the wonder and the contrast as between Night and Day are appealed to for the consolation of man in his spiritual yearning. Here we are told to strive our utmost towards Allah, and He will give us every help and satisfaction.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the Night as it Conceals (the light); 6159
2. By the Day as it Appears in glory;
3. By the creation of male And female; 6161
4. Verily, (the ends) ye Strive for are diverse. 6162
5. So he who gives (In charity) and fears (Allah),

6159. The evidence of three things in invoked, viz., Night, Day, and Sex, and the conclusion is stated in verse 4, that men’s aims are diverse. But similarly there are contrasts in nature. What contrast can be greater than between Night and Day? When the Night spreads her veil, the sun’s light is hidden, but not lost. The sun is in his place all the time, and will come forth in all his glory again in his own good time. Cf. xci. 3, 4, and n. 6149. Man pursuing diverse aims may find, owing to his own position, Allah’s light obscured from him for a time, but he must strive hard to put himself in a position to reach it in all its glory.

6160. Mà maṣdarīya as in xci. 5-7; see there n. 6151.

6161. The wonder of the sexes runs through all life. There is attraction between opposite; each performs its own functions, having special characters, primary and secondary, within limited spheres, and yet both have common characteristics in many other spheres. Each is indispensable to the other. Love in its noblest sense is the type of heavenly love and the highest good; in its debasement it leads to the lowest sins and the worst crimes. Here, then, striving is necessary for the highest good.

6162. There are wide contrasts in the nature and aims of men. These may be broadly divided into two classes, good and evil. As night replaces day on account of certain relative position, but does not annihilate it, so evil may for a time obscure good but cannot blot it out. Again, night in certain circumstances (e.g. for rest) is a blessing; so certain things, which may seem evils to us, may be really blessings in disguise. Whatever our aims or positions, we must seek the highest truth from the light of Allah. Considering these contrasts, do not be surprised or depressed. Men’s immediate aims may be different. The duty of all is to seek the one true Light.
6163. The good are distinguished here by three signs: (1) large-hearted sacrifices for Allah and men; (2) fear of Allah, which shows itself in righteous conduct for Taqwā, (see n. 26 to ii. 2) includes just action as well as a mental state: and (3) truth and sincerity in recognising and supporting all that is morally beautiful, for Ḥusn is the good as well as the beautiful.

6164. So far from there being any hardship in a good life, the righteous will enjoy their life more and more, and Allah will make their path smoother and smoother until they reach eventual Bliss.

6165. The evil are distinguished here by three signs: (1) selfish greed and denial of other people's rights; (2) arrogance and self-sufficiency (xcvi. 6-7); and (3) knowingly dishonouring Truth out of spite, or seeing ugliness where there is beauty. Such men's downward progress gathers momentum as they go, and their end can be nothing but Misery. Where will be their boasted wealth and possessions, or their self-confidence?

6166. Wealth amassed in this world will be of no use at the Day of Final Judgment, nor will any material advantages of this life bring profit by themselves in the Hereafter. What will count will be a life of truth and righteousness, and of goodness to all the creatures of Allah.
12. Verily We take Allah in His infinite mercy has provided full guidance to His creatures. All through His creation there are sign-posts indicating the right way. To man He has given the five senses of perception, with mental and spiritual faculties for co-ordinating his physical perceptions and leading him higher and higher in thought and feeling. He has besides sent inspired men as prophets for further teaching and guidance.

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6168. In the End man will return to Allah, and even from the beginning of man's life Allah's mercies and loving care surround him. In the probationary period of man's life, he has a measure of free-will, and he is expected to use it in such a way as to bring his whole being into harmony with the universal Will and Law. For he will have to answer for the right use of his talents and opportunities. If man's will has any meaning, he has the choice of accepting Allah's guidance or rejecting it, and in the latter case he must take the consequences. Hence the warning of the future "Fire" in the next verse.

6169. The Fire of Punishment will not reach any except those who have deliberately sinned against their conscience and rejected Allah's Truth. The term used for them is "Ashqa" (superlative degree). Cf. lxxxvii. 11. The corresponding idea in Christian theology is expressed in the following sentence. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Matt. xii. 31).

6170. "Those most devoted to Allah": the Aṭqā, the Allah-fearing men who live lives of purity, and seek only for the "Face of their Lord Most High". See the verses following.
18. Those who spend their wealth\textsuperscript{6171}
   For increase in self-purification,\textsuperscript{6172}

19. And have in their minds
   No favour from anyone
   For which a reward
   Is expected in return,\textsuperscript{6173}

20. But only the desire
   To seek for the Countenance
   Of their Lord Most High,\textsuperscript{6174}

21. And soon will they
   Attain (complete) satisfaction.

\textsuperscript{6171} The spending may be for charity, or for good works, such as advancing the cause of knowledge or science, or supporting ideals, etc. "Wealth" must be understood not only for money or material goods, but also for any advantage or opportunity which a man happens to enjoy, and which he can place at the service of others.

\textsuperscript{6172} The Arabic root word \textit{zakā} implies both increase and purification, and both meanings may be understood to be implied here. Wealth (understood both literally and metaphorically) is not for selfish enjoyment or idle show. It is held on trust. It may be a trial in itself, from which a man who emerges successfully is a man all the purer in his life; and even if he was a good man before, his proper use of his wealth increases his position and dignity in the moral and spiritual world.

\textsuperscript{6173} The good man does not give in charity or do his good deeds with the motive that he is returning someone else's favour and compensating and rewarding someone for some service done to him or expecting some reward in return for his own good deed: the sole motive in his mind is that he desires the Countenance or Good Pleasure of Allah Most High. This "Countenance" or "Face" (Arabic, \textit{Wajh}) implies good pleasure or approval; but it implies something more. It also means the Cause,--either the "final cause" or the "efficient cause" of Aristotelian philosophy. For the \textit{Aqād} would refer everything, backwards in origin and forwards in destiny, to Allah. Allah is the source of their goodness, as well as its goal or purpose.

\textsuperscript{6174} The definition of Righteousness, Charity, or Self-sacrifice, becomes thus highly spiritualised. The \textit{Aqād} are so completely identified with Allah's Will that everything else is blotted out to them. What would seem to be sacrifice from other points of view, becomes their own highest pleasure and satisfaction. Every virtuous man will have his own bliss, for there are degrees in virtue and bliss. This supreme bliss is the portion--not the prize--of supreme virtue.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Ad-Dhuḥā, 93.

This Sūra is close in date to Sūras lxxxix and xcii, and the imagery drawn from the contrast of Night and Day is common to all three. In this Sūra the vicissitudes of human life are referred to, and a message of hope and consolation is given to man’s soul from Allah’s past mercies, and he is bidden to pursue the path of goodness and proclaim the bounties of Allah. This is the general meaning. In particular, the Sūra seems to have been revealed in a difficult period in the outer life of the holy Prophet, when a man of less resolute will might have been discouraged. But the Prophet is told to hold the present of less account than the glorious Hereafter which awaited him like the glorious morning after a night of stillness and gloom. The Hereafter was, not only in the Future Life, but in his later life on this earth, full of victory and satisfaction.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the Glorious Morning Light,

2. And by the Night when it is still,

3. Thy Guardian-Lord Hath not forsaken thee, Nor is He displeased.

6175. The full morning light of the sun, when his splendour shines forth in contrast with the night which has passed. Cf. xci. 1. The growing hours of morning light, from sunrise to noon, are the true type of the growth of spiritual life and work, while the stillness of the night is, to those who know, only a preparation for it. We are not to imagine that the stillness or quiescence of the night is wasted, or means stagnation in our spiritual life. The stillness may seem lonely, but we are not alone, nor forsaken by Allah. Nor is such preparation, without immediate visible results, a sign of Allah's displeasure.

6176. Cf. xcii. 1-2. There Night is mentioned first, and Day second, to enforce the lesson of contrasts: the veil of the night naturally comes first before the splendour of daylight is revealed. Here the argument is different: the growing hours of morning light are the main things and are mentioned first; while the hours of preparation and quiescence, which are subordinate, come second.

6177. As usual, there is the particular assurance to the Holy Prophet, and the general assurance to mankind: see the Introduction to this Sûra. The early years of the Prophet's ministry might well have seemed blank. After inspiration there were days and periods of waiting. A sense of loneliness might well have weighed on his mind. His own tribe of the Quraish jeered at him, taunted and threatened him, and slandered and persecuted him as well as those who believe in him. But his faith was never shaken, not even to the extent of that cry of agony of Jesus: "My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?": (Mark, xvi. 34). Much less did it enter the Prophet's mind to think that Allah was angry with him, as the taunts of his enemies suggested.

6178. See last note. The more general meaning is similar. To the man who prepares for spiritual work and spiritual growth the chief thing is typified by the growing hours of the morning. He should not be discouraged, nor overcome with a sense of loneliness in his early struggles or difficulties. The end will crown his work. Allah's care is always around him. If unsympathetic or hostile critics laugh at him or taunt him with being "mad" or "old-fashioned" or "ploughing his lonely furrow", his steady faith will uphold him. He will never believe that his earnest and sincere devotion to Allah, whatever be its results in this world, can be anything but pleasing to Allah.
6179. To the truly devout man, each succeeding moment is better than the one preceding it. In this sense the "hereafter" refers not only to the Future Life after death, but also to "the soul of goodness in things" in this very life. For even though some outward trappings of this shadow-world may be wanting, his soul is filled with more and more satisfaction as he goes on.

6180. Allah's good pleasure is sure when we serve Him. But we are assured that even our feelings of doubt and suffering will vanish, and we shall have a sense of complete satisfaction, contentment, and active pleasure when our will is identified with the Will of Allah.

6181. Judge the future from the past. Allah has been good to you in your past experience: trust to His goodness in the future also. Again, there is a particular and a general meaning. Three facts are taken from the holy Prophet's outer life by way of illustration. Metaphorically they also apply to us. And further, the outer facts are themselves types for the spiritual life. See notes below.

6182. (1) There is the case of the orphan, literally and figuratively. Our holy Prophet was himself an orphan. His father 'Abdullāh died young before the child was born, leaving a little property. The Prophet's mother 'Āmina was in ailing health, and he was chiefly brought up by his nurse Halima. His mother herself died when he was only six years old. His aged grandfather 'Abdul Muttalib treated him as his own son, but died two years later. Therefore his uncle Abū Ṭalib treated him as his own son. He was thus an orphan in more senses than one, and yet the love he received from each one of these persons was greater than ordinary parental love.

6183. (2) The holy Prophet was born in the midst of the idolatry and polytheism of Makkah, in a family which was the custodian of this false worship. He wandered in quest of Unity and found it by the guidance of Allah. There is no implication whatever of sin or error on his part. But we may err and find ourselves wandering in mazes of error,
8. And He found thee  
   In need, and made  
   Thee independent. 6184

9. Therefore, treat not 6185  
   The orphan with harshness,

10. Nor repulse him  
    Who asks, 6186

= in thought, motive, or understanding: we must pray for Allah's grace ever to give us guidance.

The Arabic root *dhalla* has various shades of meaning. In i. 7, I have translated it by the verb "stray". In liii. 2 the Prophet is defended from the charge of being "astray" or straying in mind. In xii. 8 and xii. 95 Jacob's sons use the word for their aged father, to suggest that he was senile and wandering in mind. In xxxii. 10 it is used of the dead, and I have translated "hidden and lost" (in the earth).

6184. (3) The holy Prophet inherited not much wealth and was poor. The true, pure, and sincere love of Khadija not only raised him above want, but made him independent of worldly needs in his later life, enabling him to devote his whole time to the service of Allah. So do we all find ourselves in some want or another, which, if we work wholeheartedly and sincerely is supplied to us by the grace of Allah. When we have found the Way, it is a laborious task to climb up in our poverty of spiritual equipment: Allah will give us spiritual riches in love and knowledge.

6185. Verses 9-11 carry on, to a step further, the triple argument of verses 6-8, as explained in the preceding notes. The Prophet treated all orphans with tender affection and respect, setting an example to his contemporaries, who frequently took advantage of the helpless position of orphans, and in any case looked upon them as subordinate creatures to be repressed and kept in their place. Such an attitude is common in all ages. Helpless creatures ought, on the contrary, to be treated as sacred trusts, whether they are orphans, or dependants, or creatures of any kind unable to assert themselves, either through age, sex, social rank, artificial conditions, or any cause whatever.

6186. Then there are the people who come with petitions,—who have to ask for something. They may be genuine beggars asking for financial help, or ignorant people asking for knowledge, or timid people asking for some lead or encouragement. The common attitude is to scorn them or repulse them. The scorn may be shown even when alms or assistance is given to them. Such an attitude is wrong. Charity is of no moral value without sympathy and love. Nor is it charity to give to idle sturdy professional beggars, for show or to get rid of them. They are mere parasites on society. Every petition should be examined and judged on its merits.
11. But the Bounty
Of thy Lord—
Rehearse and proclaim!  

6187. Besides the petitioners, who ask for help, there is the case of those who do not ask but are nevertheless poor—poor but contented in worldly goods, or poor in knowledge or resources and not even knowing that they are poor. If you are bountifully endowed by Allah, your duty is to make that Bounty spread far and wide. Proclaim it and share it, as the holy Prophet always did. We all receive Allah's grace and guidance in some degree or other. We all owe it as a duty to our fellow-men to be kind and helpful to those less endowed in any respect than ourselves.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Inshiráḥ or Al-Sharḥ 94

This short Sūra gives a message of hope and encouragement in a time of difficulty. It was revealed to the holy Prophet soon after the last Sūra (Ad-Dhuḥā), whose argument it supplements.
6188. Cf. the prayer of Moses in xx. 25. The breast is symbolically the seat of knowledge and the highest feelings of love and affection, the treasure-house in which are stored the jewels of that quality of human character which approaches nearest to the divine. The holy Prophet's human nature had been purified, expanded, and elevated, so that he became a Mercy to all Creation. Such a nature could afford to ignore the lower motives of ordinary humanity which caused shameful attacks to be made on him. Its strength and courage could also bear the burden of the galling work which it had to do in denouncing sin, subduing it, and protecting Allah's creatures from its oppression.

6189. See last note. It is indeed a grievous and galling burden for a man to fight single-handed against sin. But Allah sends His grace and aid, and that burden is removed, or converted into joy and triumph in the service of the One True God.

6190. The Prophet's virtues, the magnanimity of his character, and his love for mankind were fully recognised even in his lifetime, and his name stands highest among the heroic leaders of mankind. The phrase used here is more comprehensive in meaning than that used for various prophets in xxxvii. 119 etc.; "We left this blessing for them among generations to come in later times".

6191. This verse is repeated for extra emphasis. Whatever difficulties or troubles are encountered by men, Allah always provides a solution, a way out, a relief, a way to lead to ease and happiness, if we only follow His Path and show our Faith by patience and well-doing. The solution or relief does not merely come after the Difficulty: it is provided with it. I understand the definite article in al-'usr in a generic sense, and translate: "every difficulty". In xcii. 7, I have translated Yusr as Bliss, and in xcii. 10 'Usr as Misery.
7. Therefore, when thou art
   Free (from thine immediate task),
   Still labour hard. 6192

8. And to thy Lord
   Turn (all) thy attention. 6193

6192. When thou art free: or when thou art relieved. The words understood may be:
   from thy immediate task, that of preaching to men, denouncing sin, and encouraging
   righteousness; or, from the difficulties that confronted thee. When that happens, that
does not finish the labours of the man of Allah. It is only one step to them. He has constantly
and insistently to go on. When there is rest from the task of instructing the world, the
contact with the spiritual kingdom continues, and indeed it becomes more intimate and
concentrated.

6193. The kingdom of Allah is everything. Other things are incidental, and really do
not matter. Worldly greatness or success may be a means to an end, but it may also be
a hindrance to true spiritual greatness. Allah is the goal of the righteous man's whole
attention and desire.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT At-Tīn, 95.

This is also a very early Sūra. It appeals to the most sacred symbols to show that Allah created man in the best of moulds, but that man is capable of the utmost degradation unless he has Faith and leads a good life. In subject-matter this Sūra closely resembles S. 103.
6194. The substantive proposition is in verses 4-8, and it is clinched by an appeal to four sacred symbols, viz., the Fig, the Olive, Mount Sinai, and the sacred City of Makkah. About the precise interpretation of the first two symbols, and especially of the symbol of the Fig, there is much difference of opinion. If we take the Fig literally to refer to the fruit or the tree, it can stand as a symbol of man's destiny in many ways. Under cultivation it can be one of the finest, most delicious, and most wholesome fruits in existence: in its wild state, it is nothing but tiny seeds, and is insipid, and often full of worms and maggots. So man at his best has a noble destiny; at his worst, he is "the lowest of the low". Christ is said to have cursed a fig tree for having only leaves, and not producing fruit (Matt. xxvii. 18-20), enforcing the same lesson. There is also a parable of the fig tree in Matt. xxiv. 32-35. See also the parable of the good and evil figs in Jeremiah, xxiv. 1-10. But see n. 6198 below.

6195. For the sacred symbolism of the Olive, see n. 2880 to xxiii. 20, and notes 3000-3002 to xxiv. 35, where the parable of Allah's Light includes a reference to the Olive. But it is possible that the Olive here refers to the Mount of Olives, just outside the walls of the City of Jerusalem (see n. 5038 to lii. 2), for this is the scene in the Gospel story (Matt. xxiv. 3-4) of Christ's description of the Judgment to come.

6196. This was the Mountain on which the Law was given to Moses. See xix. 52, and n. 2504. The Law was given, and the glory of Allah was made visible. But did Israel faithfully obey the Law thereafter?

6197. "This City of security" is undoubtedly Makkah. Even in Pagan times its sacred character was respected, and no fighting was allowed in its territory. But the same City, with all its sacred associations, persecuted the greatest of the Prophets and gave itself up for a time to idolatry and sin, thus presenting the contrast of the best and the worst.

6198. Having discussed the four symbols in detail, let us consider them together. It is clear that they refer to Allah's Light or Revelation, which offers man the highest destiny if he will follow the Way. Makkah stands for Islam, Sinai for Israel, and the Mount of Olives for Christ's original and pure Message.
4. We have indeed created man 
   In the best of moulds,\textsuperscript{6199}

5. Then do We abase him 
   (To be) the lowest 
   Of the low,—\textsuperscript{6200}

6. Except such as believe 
   And do righteous deeds: 
   For they shall have 
   A reward unfailing.

7. What then, can after this 
   Make you deny the 
   Last Judgment?\textsuperscript{6201}

8. Is not Allah 
   The wisest of Judges?\textsuperscript{6202}

\textsuperscript{6199} Taqwil: mould, symmetry, form, nature, constitution. There is no fault in Allah's creation. To man Allah gave the purest and best nature, and man's duty is to preserve the pattern on which Allah has made him: xxx. 30. But by making him vicegerent, Allah exalted him in posse even higher than the angels, for the angels had to make obeisance to him (ii. 30-34, and n. 48). But man's position as vicegerent also gives him will and discretion, and if he uses them wrongly he falls even lower than the beasts. See next note.

\textsuperscript{6200} This verse should be read with the next. If man rebels against Allah, and follows after evil, he will be abased to the lowest possible position. For Judgment is sure. Those who use their faculties aright and follow Allah's Law will reach the high and noble destiny intended for them. That reward will not be temporary, but unfailing.

\textsuperscript{6201} Thee: may refer to the holy Prophet, or to man collectively. \textit{After this:} i.e., when it is clearly shown to you that Allah created man true and pure, that He guides him, and that those who rebel and break His law will be punished and brought down in the Hereafter, who can doubt this, or contradict the Prophet when he gives warning?

\textsuperscript{6202} Allah is wise and just. Therefore the righteous have nothing to fear, but the evil ones cannot escape punishment.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SURA 96.

Verses 1-5 of this Sura were the first direct Revelation to the holy Prophet.

After that there was an interval or break (*Fatrah*), extending over some months or perhaps over a year. S. lxviii. is usually considered to have been the next revelation in point of time. But the remainder of this Sura (xcvi. 6-19) came soon after the *Fatrah*, and that portion is joined on to the first five verses containing the command to preach, because it explains the chief obstacle to the delivery of the message to man, *viz.*: man's own obstinacy, vanity, and insolence.
**Iqraa, or Read! or Proclaim!**

Or Al-'Alaq, or The leech-like clot.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful._

1. **Proclaim! (or Read!)**

   _In the name_ of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created—

2. Created man, out of

   A leech-like clot.

3. **Proclaim! And thy Lord Is Most Bountiful,—**

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6203. _Iqraa_ may mean “read”, or “recite or rehearse”, or “proclaim aloud”, the object understood being Allah’s Message. In worldly letters he was unversed, but with spiritual knowledge his mind and soul were filled, and now had come the time when he must stand forth to the world and declare his mission.

6204. The declaration or proclamation was to be in the name of Allah the Creator. It was not for any personal benefit to the Prophet: to him there was to come bitter persecution, sorrow, and suffering. It was the call of Allah for the benefit of erring humanity. Allah is mentioned by his title of “thy Lord and Cherisher”, to establish a direct nexus between the source of the Message and the one addressed. The Message was not merely an abstract proposition of philosophy, but the direct concrete message of a personal Allah to the creatures whom He loves and cherishes. “Thy” addressed to the Prophet is appropriate in two ways: (1) he was in direct contact with the divine Messenger (Gabriel) and Him Who sent the Messenger; (2) he represented the whole of humanity, in a fuller sense than that in which Christ Jesus is the “Son of Man”.

6205. _Cf._ xxiii. 14. The lowly origin of the animal in man is contrasted with the high destiny offered to him in his intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature by his “most bountiful” Creator. No knowledge is withheld from man. On the contrary, through the faculties freely given to him, he acquires it in such measure as outstrips his immediate understanding, and leads him ever to strive for newer and newer meaning.
4. He Who taught
(The use of) the Pen., 6206
5. Taught man that
Which he knew not. 6207
6. Nay, but man doth
Transgress all bounds, 6208
7. In that he looketh
Upon himself as self-sufficient.
8. Verily, to thy Lord
Is the return (of all). 6209

6206. See n. 5593 to lxviii. 1.

The Arabic words for “teach” and “knowledge” are from the same root. It is impossible to produce in a Translation the complete orchestral harmony of the words for “read”, “teach”, “pen” (which implies reading, writing, books, study, research), “knowledge” (including science, self knowledge, spiritual understanding), and “proclaim”, an alternative meaning of the word for “to read”. This proclaiming or reading implies not only the duty of blazoning forth Allah’s message, as going, with the prophetic office, but also the duty of promulgation and wide dissemination of the Truth by all who read and understand it. The comprehensive meaning of qaraa refers not only to a particular person and occasion but also gives a universal direction. And this kind of comprehensive meaning, as we have seen, runs throughout the Qur-an—for those who will understand.

6207. Allah teaches us new knowledge at every given moment. Individuals learn more and more day by day; nations and humanity at large learn fresh knowledge at every stage. This is even more noticeable and important in the spiritual world.

6208. All our knowledge and capacities come as gifts from Allah. But man, in his inordinate vanity and insolence, mistakes Allah’s gifts for his own achievements. The gifts may be strength or beauty, wealth, position, or power, or the more subtle gifts of knowledge or talents in individuals,—or Science, or Art, or Government, or Organisation for mankind in general.

6209. Man is not self-sufficient, either as an individual, or in his collective capacity. If he arrogates Allah’s gifts to himself, he is reminded—backwards, of his lowly physical origin (from a drop of animal matter), and forwards, of his responsibility and final return to Allah.
9. Seest thou one
   Who forbids?—

10. A votary when he
    (Turns) to pray?

11. Seest thou if?
    He is on (the road
    Of) Guidance?—

12. Or enjoins Righteousness?

13. Seest thou if he
    Denies (Truth) and turns away?

14. Knoweth he not
    That Allah doth see?

15. Let him beware! If he
    Desist not, We will
    Drag him by the forelock,—

16. A lying, sinful forelock!

6210. The words, may be applied generally to perverse humanity, which seeks not only to rebel against Allah’s Law, but also to prevent others from following it. There may however be a reference here to Abū Jahl, an inveterate enemy of Islam, who used in its early days to insult and persecute the holy Prophet and those who followed his teaching. He used, in particular, to use shameful methods to prevent the Prophet from going to the Ka’ba for devotions, and forbid any who came under his influence, from offering prayers or performing devotions. He was arrogant and purse-proud and met his end in the battle of Badr.

6211. Man’s insolence leads to two results: (1) self-destruction through self-misleading; (2) a false example or false guidance to others. The righteous man must therefore test human example or human guidance by the question, “Is there Allah’s guidance behind it?” And visible light would be thrown on it by the question, “Does it lead to righteousness?” A flouting of Allah and Allah’s truth answers the first question in the negative, and conduct which turns back from the eternal principles of Right answers the second.

6212. The usual trick of the ungodly is to refuse to face Truth. If they are placed in a corner, they deny what is obvious to reasonable men, and turn their backs.

6213. Cf. xi. 56, and n. 1551. The forelock is on the forehead, and is thus symbolical of the summit and crown of the man’s power or dignity. To be dragged by it is to suffer the lowest dregs of humiliation. Nasfa’an is a syncopated form of the emphatic first person plural.
17. Then, let him call
   (For help) to his council\(^{6214}\)
   (Of comrades):

18. We will call
   On the angels of punishment
   (To deal with him)!\(^{6215}\)

19. Nay, heed him not:
   But prostrate in adoration,
   And bring thyself
   The closer (to Allah)!\(^{6216}\)

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6214. The Pagan Quraish, who formed an oppressive junta or council to manage the Ka'ba were in sympathy with Abū Jahl, though they did not go to the unbridled lengths to which Abū Jahl went. But they could not, all combined, resist the onward march of the divine mission, though they did all they could to check it.

6215. All the combined forces of evil, though they may have worldly appearances in their favour, and though they may seem to be successful for a time, cannot stand against Allah. He has but to command His forces of punishment to exert themselves, and they will subdue evil, protect Allah's votaries and justify the faith for which the votaries suffer.

6216. The righteous man has no fear. He can disregard all the forces of evil that are brought against him. But he must learn humility: that is his defence. He will bow down in adoration to Allah. He must have the will to bring himself closer to Allah. For Allah is always close to him,—closer to him than his life blood in the jugular vein (1.16). Man's humility and adoration remove him from being an insolent rebel on the one hand and, on the other, prepare his will to realise his nearness to Allah.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT Al-Qadr, 97.

It is probably Makkah, though some hold that it was revealed in Madinah.

The subject-matter is the Night of Power (or Honour), in which Revelation came down to the Prophet for the first time through Angel Gabriel.
Al-Qadr, or The Night of Power
(or Honour).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. We have indeed revealed
This (Message)
In the Night of Power: 6217

2. And what will explain
To thee what the Night
Of Power is?

3. The Night of Power
Is better than
A thousand Months. 6218

4. Therein come down
The angels and the Spirit6219
By Allah’s permission,
On every errand:

5. Peace!...This
Until the rise of Morn 6220

6217. Cf. xliii. 3 and n. 4690. The 23rd, 25th or 27th night of Ramadhan, as well as other nights, have been suggested as the Night of Power. See, however, the Introduction to this Sura. It is best to take this in conjunction with verse 3 below, which says that the Night of Power is better than a thousand Months. It transcends Time: for it is Allah’s Power dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance, by his Revelation, in every kind of affair.

6218. “A thousand” must be taken in an indefinite sense; as denoting a very long period of time. Cf. notes 3632 and 3634 to xxxii. 4-5, and n. 5678 to lxx. 4. This does not refer to our ideas of time, but to “timeless Time”. One moment of enlightenment under Allah’s Light is better than thousands of months or years of animal life, and such a moment converts the night of darkness into a period of spiritual glory.

6219. The Spirit: usually understood to be the angel Gabriel.

6220. When the Night of spiritual darkness is dissipated by the glory of Allah, a wonderful Peace and a sense of Security arise in the soul. And this lasts on until this life closes, and the glorious Day of the new world dawns, when everything will be on a different plane, and the chequered nights and days of this world will be even less than a dream.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SURA Al-Baiyina, 98.

This Sūra was probably an early Madinah Sūra, or possibly a late Makkān Sūra.

In subject-matter it carries forward the argument of the last Sūra. The night of revelation is indeed blessed; but those who reject Truth are impervious to Allah's Message, however clear may be the evidence in support of it.
1. Those who disbelieve, Among the People of the Book, And among the Polytheists, Were not going to depart (From their ways) until There should come to them Clear Evidence.

2. Messenger from Allah, Rehearsing scriptures, Kept pure and holy.

3. Wherein are books Right and straight.

6221. The People of the Book immediately referred to are the Jews and the Christians, who had received scriptures in the same line of prophecy in which came our holy Prophet. Their scriptures should have prepared them for the advent of the greatest and last of the Prophets. For the Jewish scriptures promised to the Jews, cousins or brethren to the Arabs, a prophet like Moses: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut, xviii. 15). And Christ promised a Comforter (John. xiv. 16; xv. 26; and xvi. 1; see my n. 5438 to ixi. 6) almost by name. The People of the Book fell from the true, straight, and standard religion, into devious ways, and would not come to the true Path until (they said) they were convinced by the arrival of the promised Prophet. But when the promised Prophet came in the person of Muhammad, they rejected him, because they really did not seek for Truth but only followed their own fancies and desires.

6222. The Polytheists, the Pagans, had not previously believed in any scriptures. But yet, when clear evidence came to them, they should have believed. Yet they rejected the holy Prophet because they were not really searching for Truth, but were only following their own fancies and desires.

6223. The Clear Evidence was the holy Prophet himself, his life, his personality, and his teaching.

6224. Cf. ii. 151.

6225. Cf. lxxx. 13-16.

6226. Qaiyim: straight, as opposed to crooked; standard as opposed to irregular; definite and permanent, as opposed to casual or temporary. Cf. ix. 36; xii. 40; etc.
4. Nor did the People
Of the Book
Make schisms,6227
Until after there came
To them Clear Evidence.

5. And they have been commanded
No more than this:6228
To worship Allah,
Offering Him sincere devotion,
Being True (in faith);6229
To establish regular Prayer;
And to give zakat;
And that is the Religion
Right and Straight.6230

6. Those who disbelieve,
Among the People of the Book
And among the Polytheists,
Will be in hell-fire,
To dwell therein (for aye).
They are the worst
Of creatures.6231

6227. The responsibility of the People of the Book is greater than that of Pagans, because the People of the Book had been prepared for the standard and straight Religion by the revelations which they had already received. Yet, when the clear evidence came in Islam, they resisted it, And what is this standard and straight Religion, free of all ambiguity, and free of all casual rights and ceremonies? They are summed up in three eternal principles, as explained in the next verse and the next note.

6228. The three eternal principles of Religion are: (1) sincere devotion to Allah; (2) Prayer and Praise as drawing man nearer to Allah; and (3) the service of Allah’s creatures by deeds of practical charity.

6229. Hanif: see n. 134 to ii. 135.

6230. See n. 6226 above.

6231. To be given the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong, and then to reject truth and right, is the worst folly which a creature endowed with will can commit. It must necessarily bring its own punishment, whether the creature calls himself one of the children of Abraham or one of the redeemed of Christ, or whether he goes by the mere light of nature and reason as a Pagan. Honour in the sight of Allah is not due to race or colour, but to sincere and righteous conduct (xlxi. 13).
7. Those who have faith
   And do righteous deeds,—
   They are the best
   Of creatures. 6232

8. Their reward is with Allah:
   Gardens of Eternity,
   Beneath which rivers flow;
   They will dwell therein
   For ever; Allah well pleased
   With them, and they with Him. 6233
   All this for such as
   Fear their Lord and Cherisher. 6234

6232. Contrast this with the preceding verse. Human beings who live a life of faith and good deed justify the purpose of their probation here. They attain the fulfilment of their highest hopes.

6233. The Good Pleasure of Allah is the final Bliss of Salvation. The good pleasure is mutual; the truly saved is he whose will has become completely identified with Allah’s universal will.

6234. The fear of Allah is the fear to offend against His holy law, the fear to do anything which is against His holy Will. Such fear is akin to love; for with it dawns the consciousness of Allah’s loving-care for all His creatures.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÚRAT Al-Zilzál or Al-Zalzalah 99

This Sūra is close in date to the last: it is generally referred to the early Madinah period, though it may possibly be of the late Makkah period.

It refers to the tremendous convulsion and uprooting which will take place when the present order of the world is dissolved and the new world of Justice and Truth takes its place. The sign used is that of an earthquake which will shake our present material and phenomenal world to its very foundations. The words in which the earthquake is described are remarkable for both power and graphic aptness. With that shaking all hidden secrets will be brought to light.
Al-Zilzāl, or The Convulsion.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful._

1. When the Earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion,\(^{6235}\)

2. And the Earth throws up
   Her burdens (from within),\(^{6236}\)

3. And man cries (distressed);
   'What is the matter with her?'\(^{6237}\)

4. On that Day will she
   Declare her tidings:

5. For that thy Lord will
   Have given her inspiration.\(^{6238}\)

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6235. To the ordinary human observer a violent earthquake is a terrifying phenomenon, in its suddenness, in its origin, and in its power to destroy and uproot the strongest buildings and to bring up strange materials from the bowels of the earth. The Overwhelming Event (S. lxxxviii.) which ushers in the Judgment will be a bigger and more far-reaching convulsion than any earthquakes that we know. And yet the incidents of earthquakes may give us some idea of that supreme world-shaking Event.

6236. An earthquake, if accompanied by a volcanic eruption, throws up enormous boulders and lava from beneath the crust of the earth. They are thrown up as if they were a burden to the Earth personified. They may be all kinds of minerals, or treasures buried for secrecy. So in the great and final Convulsion, the dead who had been buried and forgotten will rise; and will be brought to the light of day, and justice will be done in the full glare of absolute Truth.

6237. The puzzled agony suffered by the victims of violent earthquakes is as nothing compared to the experience of the new and wonderful world which will then open out of the gaze of man.

6238. The present order may be personified as the earth. It will pass away, but the Deeds done therein, even the most secret, will be brought to the full light of day. And this will be because Allah will give the Command, the inspiration or Word, by which alone all events do proceed. The "inspiration" is the Command or direction conveyed by instruction breathed into the Earth personified: she is directed to tell the whole story of what she knows. _Cf._ xvi. 68, n. 2097.
6. On that Day will men
   Proceed in groups sorted out,\textsuperscript{6239}
   To be shown the Deeds
   That they (had done).

7. Then shall anyone who
   Has done an atom’s weight\textsuperscript{6240}
   Of good, see it!

8. And anyone who
   Has done an atom’s weight
   Of evil, shall see it.

\textsuperscript{6239}. In this world good and evil are mixed together. But then they will be sorted out, and each grade of good and evil will be sorted out. So they will proceed in companies to receive judgment. And they will be shown the exact import of everything that they had thought, said, or done, in this life of probation, however they may have concealed or misinterpreted it in this life. Everything will be considered in taking the account, and the account will convince the persons concerned themselves.

\textsuperscript{6240}. \textit{Zarrāt}: the weight of an atom, the smallest living weight an ordinary man can think of. Figuratively the subtlest form of good and evil will then be brought to account, and it will be done openly and convincingly: he “shall see it”.

- 1992 -
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-‘Ādiyāt, 100.

This is one of the earlier Makkah Sūras. In the depth of its rhythm and sublimity of its language, it may be compared with S. lxxix. Its subject-matter is the irresistible nature of spiritual power and knowledge, contrasted with unregenerate man's ingratitude, pettiness, helplessness, and ignorance.
6241. The substantive proposition is in verses 6-8 below, and the metaphors enforcing the lesson are in verses 1-5 here. They have at least three layers of meaning: (1) Look at the chargers (mares or swift camels) panting for war on behalf of their masters. Off they go, striking fire with their hoofs by night at the behest of their riders; they push home the charge in the morning, chivalrously giving the enemy the benefit of daylight; and regardless of flashing steel or the weapons of their enemies they boldly penetrate into the midst of their foe, risking their lives for the Cause. Does unregenerate man show that fidelity to his Lord Allah? On the contrary he is ungrateful to Allah; he shows that by his deeds; he is violently in love with wealth and gain and things that perish. (2) By the figure of metonymy the brave fidelity of the war-horse may stand for that of the brave men and true who rally to the standard of Allah and carry it to victory, contrasted with the poltroonery and pettiness of unregenerate man. (3) The whole conflict, fighting, and victory, may be applied to spiritual warfare against those who are caught and overwhelmed in the camp of Evil.

6242. With their hoofs. If we suppose the march to be in the dead of night, the sparks of fire would be still more conspicuous.

6243. We may suppose a surprise attack, but yet a chivalrous attack by daylight. The foe is punished through his own lethargy and unpreparedness, apart from the strength, fire, and spirit of the forces of righteousness.

6244. The clouds of dust typify the ignorance and confusion in the minds of those who oppose Truth.

6245. The forces of evil mass themselves for strength, but their massing itself may become a means of their speedy undoing.
6246. Man, i.e., unregenerate man, in contrast to those who receive guidance and wage unceasing war with Evil, is ungrateful to his Lord and Cherisher, Him Who created him and sustains him, and sends His blessings and favours at all times. The ingratitude may be shown by thoughts, words, and deeds,—by forgetting or denying Allah and His goodness, by misusing His gifts, or by injustice to His creatures.

6247. Man himself, by his conduct, proves the charge of treason against himself.

6248. What an evil choice he makes in committing treason against his own Benefactor by going after the petty baubles of this world’s wealth of fleeting gains?

6249. Dead bodies, secret plots, evil thoughts and imaginings, long since buried, will yet stand forth before the Judgment-seat of Allah. Instead of being closely hidden or blotted out—as they will have been from the consciousness of mankind,—they will stand out as from the consciousness of Allah, which is all-embracing and never suffers from sleep or fatigue.

6250. Allah’s knowledge is full and vigilant at all times. But on that day it will reveal to men secrets which they had long forgotten, for the Book of their Deeds will be made manifest at Judgment.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT Al-Qâri'a, 101.

This Makkan Sûra describes the Judgment Day as the Day of Clamour, when men will be distracted and the landmarks of this world will be lost, but every deed will be weighed in a just balance, and find its real value and setting.
5. And the mountains
Will be like carded wool.

6251. The Day of Noise and Clamour is the Day of Judgment, when the whole of the present order of things will be overthrown with a tremendous convulsion. Cf. n. 6235 to xcix. 1, and n. 6096 to lxxxviii. All our present landmarks will be lost. It will be a stunning experience to begin with, but it will inaugurate a new world of true and permanent values, in which every human deed will have its true and just consequences, as if weighed in the balance. See verses 6-11 below.

6252. Moths are frail light things. To see them scattered about in a violent storm gives some idea of the confusion, distress, and helplessness in which men will be at first overwhelmed on the Day of Account. Old memories will be like a book almost blotted out. New hopes will be vague in a new world just rising on the horizon. But it will be a perfectly just world, and no good action will be lost and no evil one but will have its compensating value estimated.

6253. Cf. n. 5682 to lxx 9. The mountains are solid things, which seem as if nothing could move them. But in that tremendous cataclysm they will be scattered about like flakes of leased or carded wool. This is a metaphor to show that what we consider very substantial in this life will be as an airy nothing in the next world.
6. Then, he whose Balance (of good deeds) \( ^{6254} \)
   Will be (found) heavy,

7. Will be in a Life
   Of good pleasure and satisfaction. \( ^{6255} \)

8. But he whose Balance (of good deeds)
   Will be (found) light,

9. Will have his home
   In a (bottomless) Pit. \( ^{6256} \)

10. And what will explain
    To Thee what this is?

11. (It is) a Fire
    Blazing fiercely!

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6254. The Good Deeds will be weighed and appraised. This appraisement will be of
the nicest and justest kind: for it will take into account motives, temptations,
provocations, surrounding conditions, antecedents, subsequent amends, and all possible
connected circumstances. Against them, presumably, will be deeds of the opposite kind,
appraised in the same way. If the good predominates, the judgment will be in the man's
favour, and he will be ushered into a life of good pleasure and satisfaction. This will of
course be on another plane.

6255. Cf. xcvi. 8, and n. 6233, but perhaps the Bliss is not of the same grade for
all men. In every case it is bliss, but bliss suited to the particular nature of the individual
concerned.

6256. Just as grades of bliss are indicated for the righteous, so apparently we are
to understand grades of punishment suited to the sins of the individual sinners concerned.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT At-Takāthur, 102.

This probably early Makkān Sūra gives a warning against acquisitiveness, *i.e.*, the passion for piling up quantities or numbers, whether in the good things of this world, or in man-power or in other forms of megalomania, which leave no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things of life.
At-Takāthur or Piling Up.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. The mutual rivalry
   For piling up (the good things
   Of this world) diverts you
   (From the more serious things),

2. Until ye visit the graves.

3. But nay, ye soon shall
   Know (the reality).

4. Again, ye soon shall know!

5. Nay, were ye to know
   With certainty of mind,
   (Ye would beware!)

6. Ye shall certainly see
   Hell-fire!

---

6257. Acquisitiveness, that is, the passion for seeking an increase in wealth, position, the number of adherents or followers or supporters, mass production and mass organisation, may affect an individual as such, or it may affect whole societies or nations. Other people's example or rivalry in such things may aggravate the situation. Up to a certain point it may be good and necessary. But when it becomes inordinate and monopolises attention, it leaves no time for higher things in life, and a clear warning is here sounded from a moral point of view. Man may be engrossed in these things till death approaches, and he looks back on a wasted life, as far as the higher things are concerned.

6258. That is, until the time comes when you must lie down in the graves and leave and pomp and circumstance of an empty life. The true Reality will then appear before you. Why not try to strive for a little understanding of that Reality in this very life?

6259. Three kinds of yaqin (certainty of knowledge) are described in n. 5673 to lxix. 51. The first is certainty of mind or inference mentioned here: we hear from someone, or we infer from something we know: this refers to our own state of mind. If we instruct our minds in this way, we should value the deeper things of life better, and not waste all our time in ephemeral things. But if we do not use our reasoning faculties now, we shall yet see with our own eyes, the Penalty for our sins. It will be certainty of sight. We shall see Hell. See next verse. But the absolute certainty of assured Truth is that described in lxix. 51. That is not liable to any human error or psychological defects.

6260. See xix. 71-72, and n. 2518.
7. Again, ye shall see it
    With certainty of sight!

8. Then, shall ye be
    Questioned that Day
    About the joy\(^{6261}\)
    (Ye indulged in!)

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6261. We shall be questioned, *i.e.*, we shall be held responsible for every kind of joy we indulge in—whether it was false pride or delight in things of no value, or things evil, or the enjoyment of things legitimate—the last, to see whether we kept this within reasonable bounds.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Inr, 103.

This early Makkan Sūra refers to the testimony of Time through the Ages. All history show that Evil came to an evil end. But Time is always in favour of those who have Faith, live clean and pure lives, and know how to wait, in patience and constancy. Cf. the theme of S. xcv.
6262. *Al-'Asr* may mean: (1) Time through the Ages, or long periods, in which case it comes near to the abstract idea of Time, Dahr; (2) or the late afternoon, from which the ‘Asr canonical prayer takes its name (see n. 271 to ii: 238). An appeal is made to Time as one of the creations of Allah, of which everyone knows something but of which no one can fully explain the exact significance. Time searches out and destroys everything material. No one is secular literature has expressed the tyranny of “never-resting Time” better than Shakespeare in his Sonnets. For example, see Sonnets 5 (“never-resting Time”), 12 (“Nothing gainst Time’s scythe can make defence”), and 64 (“When I have seen by Time’s fell hand defaced The rich proud cost of outworn buried age”). If we merely run a race against Time, we shall lose. It is the spiritual part of us that conquers Time. See verse 3 below. For the “afternoon” idea see next note.

6263. If life be considered under the metaphor of a business bargain, man, by merely attending to his material gains, will lose. When he makes up his day’s account in the afternoon, it will show a loss. It will only show profit if he has Faith, leads a good life, and contributes to social welfare by directing and encouraging other people on the Path of Truth and Constancy.

6264. Faith is his armour, which wards off the wounds of the material world; and his righteous life is his positive contribution to spiritual ascent.

6265. If he lived only for himself, he would not fulfil his whole duty. Whatever good he has, especially in moral and spiritual life, he must spread among his brethren, so that they may see the Truth and stand by it in patient hope and unshaken constancy amidst all the storm and stress of outer life. For he and they will then have attained Peace within.
APPENDIX NO. 7

Oaths and Adjurations in the Qur-ān

1. An oath is an invocation of the name of Allah or of some person or object held sacred by the person using the invocation, to witness the truth of a solemn affirmation and to emphasize that affirmation.

2. An adjuration is a solemn appeal to a person or persons to do some act or to believe some important statement by the evidence of something great or sublime or remarkable or out of the ordinary.

3. On these subjects as thus defined, let us review the teaching of the holy Qur-ān.

4. Among the Pagan Arabs the use of oaths became so common that it almost ceased to have any solemn meaning. On the other hand, when they wanted to suppress the rights of women or do some unjust acts, they would resort to an oath to do so, and then plead that they were bound by their oath when pressure was brought to bear on them to desist from their injustice. Thus, they doubly dishonoured oaths: they took the name of Allah lightly, and on the other hand, they made an oath an excuse for not doing what was right and just. It is much to be feared that our own contemporaries are not free from such forms of disrespect to Allah.

5. Such practices are condemned in the strongest terms in the Qur-ān. “Make not Allah’s name an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons” ii. 224). Perjury is condemned as deception which hurts both the deceiver and the deceived. “Take not your oaths to practise deception between yourselves, with the result that someone’s foot may slip after it was firmly planted, and ye may have to taste the evil consequences of having hindered men from the Path of Allah, and a mighty Wrath descend on you” (xvi. 94). See also iii. 77. You must not only fulfil your oaths, but you must fulfil all convenants, express or implied, and all your obligations of every kind, without reference to an oath: v. 1, n. 682.

6. Considering the harm caused by thoughtless oaths, in which there was no intention to deceive or to do wrong, it is provided that they may be expiated for. “Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation feed ten indigent persons....or clothe them, or give a slave his freedom. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths” (v. 89). See also ii. 225 and lxvi. 2.
7. Some examples may be cited of the false oaths which were used for deception. The Hypocrites, "in whose hearts is a disease", "swore their strongest oaths by Allah" that they would be with the Muslims, but treachery was in their hearts (v. 52-53). See also xxiv. 53. On the other hand, the oath of Joseph's wicked brethren, "By Allah!", in speaking to their father, xii. 85), seems to be a mere expletive, used lightly, and therefore worthy of condemnation.

8. In passages like the following, the oath seems to be emphatic and solemn as in a court of law:-

xii. 66 ... By Joseph's brethren, at Jacob's request.

xii. 73 ... By Joseph's brethren, to the Egyptians.

xxii. 57 ... By Abraham, to the Polytheists.

xxvi. 97 ... By the denizens of Hell, when they realise their wrong.

xxxvii. 56 ... By the righteous one in heaven, when he realises the great danger he escaped in life.

xxxviii. 82 ... By the Power of Evil, who solemnly swears by the power of Allah.

xlvi. 34 ... By the denizens of Hell, when they realise the Truth.

9. In the following passages addressed by Allah to men, an appeal is made to man's realisation of Allah's own greatness, goodness, and glory, or Allah's special relationship to man as Creator, Cherisher, and Protector, to teach him the lesson of truth and right conduct. In English phrase it might be rendered: "As I am thy Lord Allah, believe in Me and follow My Word."

iv. 65 ... "By thy Lord" (they can have no real faith until...).

xv. 92 ... "By thy Lord" (We will call them to account).

xvi. 56 ... "By Allah" (ye shall be called to account).

xvi. 63 ... "By Allah" (We sent apostles).

xix. 68 ... "By thy Lord" (We shall gather them together).

xxiv. 3 ... "By my Lord" (said by the Prophet to assure men of the coming of the Hour of Judgment).

lxiv. 7 ... Do.

li. 23 ... "By the Lord of heaven on earth" (this is the very Truth). See also lxx. 40 (paragraph 12 below).

10. Another way in which an appeal is made to men is by the evidence of the life of the Holy Prophet, whose truth and purity were known to them, or by the holy Qur-an, whose wonderful power over men's hearts was a miracle which they witnessed before their eyes:-

xv. 72 ... "By thy life" (to enforce the lesson of the unspeakable crime of Lot's people).
12. *Lā Uqsimu* (with the first person singular) implies that special attention is drawn to something by a personal and beneficent God, and an appeal is made to His creatures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lxxvi.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“By the Qur-ān, Full of Wisdom” (to show the Prophet’s inspiration).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lxxviii.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“By the Qur-ān, Full of admonition” (to show the error of the Unbelievers).</td>
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<tr>
<td>lxxiii.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“By the Book that Makes things clear” (to show that Revelation is reasonable and conformable to truth).</td>
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<td>lxxiv.</td>
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<td>l.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“By the Glorious Qur-ān” (to quell the wonder of the ignorant).</td>
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11. Now we come to the great passages in the Makkan Sūras, in which men are adjured to turn to the wonders of the spiritual world by striking phrases full of sublimity, and using the wonders of the heavens and the earth by way of illustration. They are the despair of the translator, because the words used are widely comprehensive, with little that is precise in them. There are layers upon layers of meaning, and only the profoundest spiritual experience can probe their depths. An attempt has been made in the notes to analyse and explain some of their meanings. All that we can do here is to bring them together into juxtaposition, to help the earnest student. They may be divided into three categories: (1) those introduced by the words “*Lā uqīsmu*” (I do swear or I do call to witness), (2) those introduced by the particle *wa*, which is the general form of adjuration, and (3) those, mainly concerned with the Judgment to come, which are introduced by the adverb “*i̇zā*” (when).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lxi.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>“The setting of the stars.” Other glories may set, but not the glory of Revelation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lxix.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>“What ye see and what ye see not.” Revelation is good for both outer and inner life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lxx.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>“The Lord of all points in the East and the West.” Allah’s Kingdom extends everywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lxxv.</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>“The Resurrection Day and the self-reproaching spirit.” Evil should be eschewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lxxxi.</td>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>“Planets, Night, and spirit.” Nature may vary, but Allah’s Light is ever the same.</td>
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<tr>
<td>lxxxiv.</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>“The ruddy glow of sunset, the Night, the Moon.” Man must travel from stage to stage.</td>
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</tbody>
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xc. 1-3 ... "This City (of Makkah) Man is created for toil and struggle, but Allah has given him guidance.

13. The great Signs, introduced by the particle wa, by which man is adjoined to turn to the higher life, are rich in suggestive imagery, which loses part of its charm by any attempt at precise definition:-

xxxvii. 1 ... "By those who range themselves in ranks".
li. 1-4 ... "By the (Winds) that scatter broadcast" etc.
lii. 7 ... "By the heaven with its numerous Paths" etc.
liii. 1-6 ... "By the Mount (of Revelation)" etc.
liii. 1 ... "By the Star when it goes down."
lxxviii. 1 ... "By the Pen and by the Record which men write".
lxxiv. 32-34 ... "By the Moon, the Night, the Dawn".
lxxvii. 1-5 ... "By the (Winds) sent forth (to man's profit)" etc.
lxxix. 1-5 ... "By the (angles) who tear out" etc.
lxxxv. 1-3 ... "By the Sky (displaying) the Zodical Signs" etc.
lxxxvi. 1 ... "By the Sky and the Night-Visitant (therein)".
lxxxvi. 11-12 ... "By the Firmament which returns (in its round), and by the Earth" etc.
lxxxix. 1-5 ... "By the Break of Day", etc.
xcii. 1-8 ... "By the Sun and its (glorious) splendour, By the Soul..." etc.

xcii. 1-3 ... "By the Night as it conceals (the light); By the Day as it appears in glory" etc.

xcii. 1-3 ... "By the Fig and the Olive" etc.
c. 1-5 ... "By the (Steeds) that run with panting breath" etc.
c. 1 ... "By the (Token of) Time (through the Ages)".

14. The great Signs introduced by the adverb "when" (ižd) do not in form belong to the category of Adjurations, but their meaning and imagery bring them within this category. They refer to the end of the present order of things, and the inauguration of the new world of perfect eternal values, but they need not necessarily be understood in a definite sequence of time such as we know it, for the spiritual world overlaps the material:-

lxxvii. 8-11 ... "When the Stars become dim" etc.
lxxxi. 1-13 ... "When the Sun is folded up" etc.
lxxxii. 1-4 ... "When the Sky is cleft asunder" etc.
lxxxiv. 1-5 ... "When the Sky is rent asunder" etc.
xcix. 1-3 ... "When the Earth is shaken" etc.
15. Every Sign is connected with the argument of the passage concerned, by way of metaphor or illustration. See n. 5798 to lxxiv. 32. The appropriate meaning suggested is explained in the notes to each passage as it occurs.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Humāza, 104.

This Makkan Sūra condemns all sorts of scandal, backbiting, and selfish hoarding of wealth, as destroying the hearts and affections of men.
Al-Humaza, or the Scandal-monger.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Woe to every (Kind of) scandal-monger And backbiter, 6266
2. Who pileth up wealth And layeth it by,
3. Thinking that his wealth Would make him last For ever!
4. By no means! He will Be sure to be thrown into That which Breaks to Pieces. 6267
5. And what will explain To thee That which Breaks To Pieces?
6. (It is) the Fire Of Allah Kindled (to a blaze),
7. The which doth mount (Right) to the Hearts: 6268

6266. Three vices are here condemned in the strongest terms: (1) scandal-mongering, talking or suggesting evil of men or women by word or innuendo, or behaviour, or mimicry, or sarcasm, or insult; (2) detracting from their character behind their backs, even if the things suggested are true, where the motive is evil; (3) piling up wealth, not for use and service to those who need it, but in miserly hoards, as if such hoards can prolong the miser’s life or give him immortality: miserliness is itself a kind of scandal.

6267. *Hutama*: that which smashes or breaks to pieces: an apt description of the three anti-social vices condemned. For scandal-mongering and backbiting make any sort of cohesion or mutual confidence impossible; and the miser’s hoards up the channels of economic service and charity, and the circulation of goodwill among men.

6268. The Fire of Punishment mounts right up to the hearts and minds of such men, and shuts them out of the love of their fellows. “Heart” in Arabic means not only the seat of affection, pity, charity, etc., but also of understanding and intelligent appreciation of things.
8. It shall be made
   Into a vault over them,
9. In columns outstretched. 6269

6269. Those guilty of these vices will be choked and suffocated, for this Vault of Fire will cover them all over, and its scorching columns will extend over a far wider area than they imagine.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT AL-FI, 105.

This early Makkah Sūra refers to an event that happened in the year of the birth of our holy Prophet, say about 570 A.D. Yaman was then under the rule of the Abyssinians (Christians), who had driven out the Jewish Ḥīmyar rulers. Abraha Ashram was the Abyssinian governor or viceroy. Intoxicated with power and fired by religious fanaticism, he led a big expedition against Makkah, intending to destroy the Ka'ba. He had an elephant or elephants in his train. But his sacrilegious intentions were defeated by a miracle. No defence was offered by the custodians of the Ka'ba as the army was too strong for them. But a shower of stones, thrown by flocks of birds, destroyed the invading army almost to a man.
Al-Fil, or The Elephant.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Seest thou not
   How thy Lord dealt
   With the Companions
   Of the Elephant?6270

2. Did He not make
   Their treacherous plan
   Go astray?

3. And He sent against them
   Flights of Birds,6272

4. Striking them with stones6273
   Of baked clay.

5. Then did He make them
   Like an empty field6274
   Of stalks and straw,
   (Of which the corn)
   Has been eaten up.6275

6270. Seest thou not?—i.e. with thy mental vision. The incident happened in the very year of the holy Prophet’s birth, barely two months before it.

6271. These were the troops of Abraha the Abyssinian, who invaded Makkah with a large army, in which were some elephants. See Introduction to this Surah.

6272. The miracle consisted in the birds coming in large flights and flinging stones at the army which destroyed the whole of Abraha’s army.

6273. Sijil: see n. 1579 to xi. 82. The word also occurs at xv. 74. Stones of baked clay, or hard as baked clay, are part of the miracle in the story.

6274. A field, from which all the corn has been eaten up and only straw with stalks or stubble is left, is a field dead and useless. And such was the army of Abraha,—dead and useless. Another possible rendering would be: “like eaten straw and stubble found in the dung of animals”. The meaning would be the same, but much more emphatic.

6275. The lesson to be drawn is twofold. For the Pagan Quraish of Makkah it was: Allah will protect His own; if you persecute the holy Prophet, he is greater than the mere building of the Ka’ba: will not Allah protect him? For men in all ages it is: ‘a man intoxicated with power can prepare armies and material resources against Allah’s holy Plan; but such a man’s plan will be his own undoing; he cannot prevail against Allah’.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÚRAT Quraisb, 106.

This Makkan Sūra may well be considered as a pendant to the last. If the Qurais were fond of Makkah and proud of it, if they profited, by its central position and it guaranteed security, from their caravans of trade and commerce, let them be grateful, adore the One True God, and accept His Message.
Quraish or The Quraish, (Custodians of the Ka'ba)

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. For the familiarity of The Quraish,

2. Their familiarity with the journeys By winter and summer,

3. Let them worship the Lord Of this House,

4. Who provides them With food against hunger, And with security Against fear (of danger).

6276. The Quraish were the noblest tribe of Arabia, the tribe to which belonged the holy Prophet himself. They had the custody of the Ka'ba, the central shrine of Arabia, and their possession of Makkah gave them a triple advantage: (1) they had a commanding influence over other tribes; (2) their central position facilitated trade and intercourse, which gave them both honour and profit; and (3) the Makkah territory being by Arabian custom inviolable from the ravages of war and private feuds, they had a secure position, free from fear of danger. This honour and advantage they owed to their position as servants of the sacred shrine of the Ka'ba. They owed it to Allah. Was it not therefore right and fitting that they should adore the One True God, and listen to His Message of Unity and Purity, brought by His Prophet?

In those days of general insecurity, their prestige as custodians of Makkah enabled them to obtain Covenants of security and safeguard from the rulers of neighbouring countries on all sides—Syria, Persia, Yaman, and Abyssinia—protecting their trade journey in all seasons.

6277. See last note, especially section (2). On account of their trade journeys to the warmth of Yaman in the winter and the cooler regions of Syria and the north in the summer, the Quraish became practised travellers and merchants, acquired much knowledge of the world and perfected their language as a polished medium of literary expression.

6278. The Ka'ba.

6279. Their trade caravans enriched them, and drew people from distant parts to visit Makkah and bring their merchandise and gifts thither.

6280. Their territory being inviolable, they did not suffer from the dangers of constant warfare nor from private feuds of vengeance or breaches of the peace in their secure homes.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Ma'ān, 107.

This Sūra—at least the first half of it—belongs to the early Makkan period. The subject-matter is the meaning of true worship, which requires Faith, the practical and helpful love of those in need, and sincerity rather than show in devotion and charity.
7. But refuse (to supply) (Even) neighbourly needs.

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6281. *Din* may mean either (1) the Judgment to come, the responsibility in the moral and spiritual world, for all actions done by men, or (2) Faith, Religion, the principles of right and wrong in spiritual matters, which often conflict with selfish desires or predilections. It is men who deny Faith or future responsibility, that treat the helpless with contempt and lead arrogant selfish lives.

6282. The Charity or Love which feeds the indigent at the expense of Self is a noble form of virtue, which is beyond the reach of men who are so callous as even to discourage or forbid or look down upon the virtue of charity or kindness in others.

6283. True worship does not consist in the mere form of prayer, without the heart and mind being earnestly applied to seek the realisation of the presence of Allah, and to understand and do His holy Will.

6284. Cf. iv. 142: “When they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance.”

6285. Hypocrites make a great show of hollow acts of goodness, devotion, and charity. But they fail signally if you test them by little acts of neighbourly help or charity, the thousand little courtesies and kindesses of daily life, the supply of needs which cost little but mean much.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Kauthar, 108.

This very brief early Makkan Sūra sums up in the single meaningful word Kauthar (Abundance) the doctrine of spiritual Riches through devotion and sacrifice. The converse also follows: indulgence in hatred means the cutting off of all hopes of this life and the Hereafter.
1. To thee have We
   Granted the Abundance. 6286

2. Therefore to thy Lord
   Turn in Prayer
   And Sacrifice. 6287

3. For he who hateth thee, 6288
   He will be cut off
   (From Future Hope).

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6286. *Al-Kauthar* literally means “good in abundance”. It is the abundant bounty which Allah bestowed on Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). This includes a river (or fountain) in heaven of this name which Allah has promised the Prophet (peace be on him).

6287. He who grants these blessings is Allah, and to Allah alone must we turn in adoration and thanksgiving, and in sacrifice. *Nahr=sacrifice*: in a restricted ritual sense, the sacrifice of camels: see n. 2813 to xxii. 36. But the ritual is a mere Symbol. Behind it is a deep spiritual meaning: the meat slaughtered feeds the poor, and the slaughter is a symbol of the self-sacrifice in our hearts. “It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him” (xxii. 37).

6288. Hatred and spite are not constructive contributions to the work of this world, but its opposites. Abū Jahl and his Pagan confederates vented their personal spite and venom against the holy Prophet by taunting him with the loss of his two infant sons by Khadija, but where were these venomous detractors a few years afterwards, when the divine Light shone more brilliantly than ever? It was these that were cut off from all future hope, in this world and the next.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Kāfirūn, 109.

This is another early Makkah Sūra. It defines the right attitude to those who reject Faith: in matters of Truth we can make no compromise, but there is no need to persecute or abuse anyone for his faith or belief.
Faith is a matter of personal conviction, and does not depend on worldly motives. Worship should depend on pure and sincere Faith, but often does not: for motives of worldly gain, ancestral custom, social conventions or imitative instincts, or a lethargic instinct to shrink from enquiring into the real significance of solemn acts and the motives behind them, reduce a great deal of the world's worship to sin, selfishness, or futility. Symbolic idols may themselves be merely instruments for safeguarding the privileges of a selfish priestly class, or the ambitions, greed, or lust of private individuals. Hence the insistence of Islam and its Prophet on the pure worship of the One True God.

The Prophet firmly resisted all appeals to worldly motives, and stood firm to his Message of eternal Unity.

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6290. Verses 2-3 describe the conditions as they were at the time when this Sūra was revealed, and may be freely paraphrased: 'I am a worshipper of the One True God, the Lord of all, of you as well as of myself; but you on account of your vested interests have not the will to give up your false worship, of idols and self'. Verses 4-5 describe the psychological reasons: 'I, being a prophet of Allah do not and cannot possibly desire to follow your false ancestral ways; and you, as custodians of the false worship, have not the will to give up your ways of worship, which are wrong'. The "will" in the translation represents less the future tense than the will, the desire, the psychological possibility: it tries to reproduce the Arabic noun-agent.
6. To you be your Way,
   And to me mine.\textsuperscript{6291}

\textsuperscript{6291} ‘I, having been given the Truth, cannot come to your false ways: you, having your vested interests, will not give them up. For your ways the responsibility is yours: I have shown you the Truth. For my ways the responsibility is mine: you have no right to ask me to abandon the Truth. Your persecutions will be vain: the Truth must prevail in the end’. This was the attitude of Faith then: but it is true for all time. Hold fast to Truth, “in scorn of consequence”.

- 2022 -
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT An-Naṣr, 110.

This beautiful Sūra was the last of the Sūras to be revealed as a whole, though the portion of the verse v. 4, “This day have I perfected your religion for you” etc., contains probably the last words of the Qur-ān to be revealed.

The date of this Sūra was only a few months before the passing away of the holy Prophet from this world, Rabi’ I, A.H. 11. The place was either the precincts of Makkah at his Farewell Pilgrimage, Zulhijja, A.H. 10, or Madinah after his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage.

Victory is the crown of service, not an occasion for exultation. All victory comes from the help of Allah.
6292. The Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madinah, a persecuted man. In Madinah all the forces of truth and righteousness rallied round him, and the efforts by the Makkans and their confederates to destroy him and his community recoiled on their own heads. Gradually all the outlying parts of Arabia ranged themselves round his standard, and the bloodless conquest of Makkah was the crown and prize of his patience and constant endeavour. After that, whole tribes and tracts of country gave their adhesion to him collectively, and before his ministry was finished, the soil was prepared for the conquest of the wide world for Islam. What was the lesson to be learnt from this little epitome of the world’s history? Not man’s self-glory, but humility; and power but service; not an appeal to man’s selfishness or self-sufficiency, but a realisation of Allah’s Grace and Mercy, and the abundant outpouring of Allah’s Praises in word and conduct.

6293. Every man should humble himself before Allah, confess his human frailties, and seek Allah’s grace;—attributing any success that he gets in his work, not to his own merits, but to the goodness and mercy of Allah. But the Prophet of Allah had also another duty and privilege,—to pray for grace and forgiveness for his people in case of them had exulted in their victory or done anything that they should not have done.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Lahab or Al-Masad 111

This very early Makkah Sūra, though it is referred in the first instance to a particular incident in a cruel and relentless persecution, carries the general lesson that cruelty ultimately ruins itself. The man who rages against holy things is burnt up in his own rage. His hands, which are the instruments of his action, perish, and he perishes himself. No boasted wealth or position will save him.
Al-Lahab, or The Flame.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful._

1. Perish the hands
   Of the Father of Flame! 6294
   Perish he!

2. No profit to him
   From all his wealth,
   And all his gains!

3. Burnt soon will he be
   In a Fire
   Of blazing Flame!

4. His wife shall carry
   The (crackling) wood—
   As fuel! 6295

5. A twisted rope
   Of palm-leaf fibre
   Round her (own) neck!

6294. _Abū Lahab_, “Father of Flame”, was the nick-name of an uncle of the holy Prophet, from his fiery hot temper and his ruddy complexion. He was one of the most inveterate enemies of early Islam. When the holy Prophet called together the Ouraish and his own kith and kin to come and listen to his preaching and his warning against the sins of his people, the “Father of Flame” flared up and cursed the holy Prophet, saying “Perdition to thee!” According to the English saying, “the causeless curse will not come”. His words were futile, but his power and strength were equally futile. The star of Islam rose higher and higher every day, and its persecutors dwindled in strength and power. Many of the leaders of persecution perished at Badr, and Abū Lahab himself perished a week after Badr, consumed with grief and his own fiery passions. Verse 3 was prophetic of his end in this very life, though it also refers to the Hereafter.

6295. Abū Lahab’s wife was a woman of equally passionate spite and cruelty against the sacred person of the holy Prophet. She used to tie bundles of thorns with ropes of twisted palm-leaf fibre and carry them and strew them about on dark nights in the paths which the Prophet was expected to take, in order to cause him bodily injury. “To carry firewood” may also be symbolical for carrying tales between people to embroil them. This was also one of her vices. But she was laying up for herself another kind of Fire and another kind of Rope, the Fire of Punishment, and the Rope of Slavery to Evil. Thus does Evil prepare its own fate. This is the general lesson of sustained craft and cruel wrong-doing recoiling on the wrong-doer’s head. See also Introduction to this Sūra.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÚRAT Al-‘Ikhlás, 112.

This early Makkah Sūra sums up in a few terse words the Unity of the Godhead—often professed, but frequently mixed up in the popular mind with debasing superstitions.
Al-Ikhlas, or Purity (of Faith).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Say: He is Allah,\(^{6296}\) The One;\(^{6297}\)

2. Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;\(^{6298}\)

3. He begetteth not, Nor is He begotten;\(^{6299}\)

4. And there is none Like unto Him.\(^{6300}\)

6296. The nature of Allah is here indicated to us in a few words, such as we can understand. The qualities of Allah are described in numerous places elsewhere, e.g., in lix. 22-24, lixii. 1, and ii. 255. Here we are specially taught to avoid the pitfalls into which men and nations have fallen at various times in trying to understand Allah. The first thing we have to note is that His nature is so sublime, so far beyond our limited conceptions, that the best way in which we can realise Him is to feel that He is a Personality, “He”, and not a mere abstract conception of philosophy. He is near us; He cares for us; we owe our existence to Him. Secondly, He is the One and Only God, the Only One to Whom worship is due; all other things or beings that we can think of are His creatures and in no way comparable to Him. Thirdly, He is Eternal, without beginning or end, Absolute, not limited by time or place or circumstance, the Reality. Fourthly, we must not think of Him as having a son or a father, for that would be to import animal qualities into our conception of Him. Fifthly, He is not like any other person or thing that we know or can imagine; His qualities and nature are unique.

6297. This is to negative the idea of Polytheism, a system in which people believe in gods many and lords many. Such a system is opposed to our truest and profoundest conceptions of life. For Unity in Design, Unity in the fundamental facts of existence, proclaim the Unity of the Maker.

6298. Samad is difficult to translate by one word. I have used two, “Eternal” and “Absolute”. The latter implies: (1) that absolute existence can only be predicated of Him; all other existence is temporal or conditional; (2) that He is dependent on no person or things, but all persons or things are dependent on Him, thus negating the idea of gods and goddesses who ate and drank, wrangled and plotted, depended on the gifts of worshippers, etc.

6299. This is to negative the Christian idea of the godhead, “the Father”, “the only-begotten Son” etc.

6300. This sums up the whole argument and warns us specially against Anthropomorphism, the tendency to conceive of Allah after our own pattern, an insidious tendency that creeps in at all times and among all peoples.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT Al-Falaq, 113.

This early Makkah Sûra provides the antidote to superstition and fear by teaching us to seek refuge in Allah from every kind of ill arising from outer nature and from dark and evil plottings and envy on the part of others.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Say: I seek refuge

   With the Lord of the Dawn,

2. From the mischief

   Of created things;

3. From the mischief

   Of Darkness as it overspreads;

4. From the mischief

   Of those who blow on knots;

6301. In Allah's created world, there are all kinds of forces and counter-forces, especially those put in motion by beings who have been endowed with some sort of will. The forces of good may be compared to light, and those of evil to darkness. Allah can cleave the depths of darkness and produce light (vi. 96), and therefore we should cast off fear and take refuge in divine guidance and goodness.

6302. Falaq is the Dawn or Daybreak, the cleaving of darkness and the manifestation of light. This may be understood in various senses: (1) literally, when the darkness of the night is at its worst, rays of light pierce through and produce the dawn; (2) when the darkness of ignorance is at its worst, the light of Allah pierces through the soul and gives it enlightenment: xxiv. 35; (3) non-existence is darkness, and life and activity may be typified by light. The author and source of all true light is Allah, and if we seek Him, we are free from ignorance, superstition, fear, and every kind of evil.

6303. See n. 6301 above. Our trust in Allah is the refuge from every kind of fear and superstition, every kind of danger and evil. Three special kinds of mischief are specified in the next three verses, against which our best guard is our trust in Allah, the Light of the heavens and the earth. They are: (1) physical dangers, typified by darkness. (2) physical dangers within us, typified by Secret Arts, and (3) physical dangers from without us, resulting from a perverted will, which seeks to destroy any good that we enjoy.

6304. The darkness of the night, physical darkness, is a good type of physical dangers and difficulties. Many people are afraid of physical darkness, and all are afraid of physical injuries, accidents, and calamities. We should not fear, but having taken reasonable precautions, trust in Allah.

6305. 'Those (feminine) who blow on knots', this having been a favourite form of witchcraft practised by perverted women. Such secret arts cause psychological terror. They may be what is called magic, or secret plottings, or the display of false and seductive charms (iii. 14), or the spreading of false and secret rumours or slanders to frighten men or deter them from right action. There is fraud in such things, but men are swayed by it. They should cast off fear and do their duty.
5. And from the mischief
    Of the envious one
    As he practises envy. 6306

6306. Malignant envy, translated into action, seeks to destroy the happiness or the material or spiritual good enjoyed by other people. The best guard against it is trust in Allah with purity of heart.
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT An-Nās, 114.

This early Makkan Sūra is a pendant to the last Sūra, and concludes the Holy Qur-ān, with an appeal to us to trust in Allah, rather than man, as our sure shield and protection. It warns us specially against the secret whispers of evil within our own hearts.
6307. The previous Sūra pointed to the necessity of seeking Allah's protection against external factors which might affect an individual. Here the need of protection from internal factors, mankind being viewed as a whole, is pointed out. For this reason the threefold relation in which man stands to Allah is mentioned, as explained in the next note.

6308. Man's relation to Allah may be viewed in three aspects: (1) Allah is his Lord, Maker, and Cherisher; Allah sustains him and cares for him; He provides him with all the means for his growth and development, and for his protection against evil; (2) Allah is his king or ruler; more than any earthly king, Allah has authority to guide man's conduct, and lead him to ways which will make for his welfare; and He has given him laws; and (3) Allah is He to Whom mankind must return, to give an account of all their deeds in this life (ii. 156); Allah will be the Judge; He is the goal of the Hereafter, and the only Being entitled to man's worship at any time. From all these aspects man could and should seek Allah's protection against evil.

6309. Evil insinuates itself in all sorts of insidious ways from within so as to sap man's will, which was given to man by Allah. This power of evil may be Satan, or evil men or the evil inclinations within man's own will: for there are "evil ones among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception" (vi. 112). They secretly whisper evil and then withdraw, to make their net the more subtle and alluring.
6. Among Jinns
   And among Men.\textsuperscript{6310}

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\textsuperscript{6310}. This last clause amplifies the description of the sources from which the whisper of evil may emanate: they may be men whom you may see or invisible spirits of evil working within. See last note. So long as we put ourselves in Allah's protection, and trust in Allah, evil cannot really touch us in our essential and inner life.
INDEX

Abbreviations used in the Index

App. = Appendix;
Intro. = Introduction to Sūra;
n. = note;
nn. = notes;
p. = page;
pp. = pages;
S. = Sūra.

Aaron, 6:84; 20:29-36, 90-94.
‘Abasa, S. 80.
Ablutions, 4:43; 5, 6.
Abraham, fulfilled God’s Commands, 2:124;
   and Ka’ba, 2:125-127; 3:96, 97;
   religion of, 2:130, 135;
   not Jew or Christian, 3:67;
   nor Pagan, 3:95;
   rejects worship of heavenly bodies, 6:75-79;
   argues with sceptic, 2:258;
   argues with his father against idolatry, 6:74; 19:41-50;
   argues with his people against idols, 21:51-71; 26:70-82;
   29:16-18, 24-25; 37:83-98;
   on life to the dead, 2:260;
   preaches to his people, 6:80-83;
   prays for father, 9:113-114; 26:86;
   sacrifice of son, 37:99-111;
   angels visit him to announce son, 11:69-73; 15:51-56; 51:24-30,
   pleads for Lūṭ’s people, 11:74-76;
   his prayer, 14:35-41; 26:83-87;
   a model, 16:120-123;
   safe in the fire, 21:69;
   Book of, 53:37; 87:19; n. 6094;
   his example in dealing with Unbelievers, 60:4-6.
Abū Lahab (Father of Flame), 111:1-5; Intro. 111:p. 2025; n. 6294.
‘Ād people, 7:65-72; n. 1040; 11:50-60; 25:38; 26:123-140; 29:38;
Adam, creation, 2:30-34;
   fall, 2:35-39; 7:19-25;
INDEX

Adam (contd.)
  two sons (Abel and Cain), 5:27-31;
  tempted by Satan, 20:120-121.
"Adiyāt, S. 100.
Admonition, 87:9-13; 88:21-26,
Adultery, 17:32; 24:2-3, 4-10.
Ahqāf, S. 46.
Ahzāb, S. 33.
'Āishah, n. 2962 to 24:11; n. 5529 to 66:1.
Akala, n. 776 to 5:66; 13:35.
A'īlà, S. 87.
'Alaq, S. 96.
Āl-i'Imrān, S. 3.
Allah, see God.
Ahmad, coming prophesied, 61:6; n. 5438.
'An'ām, S. 6.
Anbiyāa, S. 21.
Anfūl, S. 8.
Angels, plea to God, 2:30-34;
  Gabriel and Michael, 2:97-98;
  not sent except for just cause, 15:7-8;
  sent for warning to men, 16:2;
  the impious and the angels, 25:21-22;
  on the Day of Judgment, 25:25;
  as messengers with wings, 35:1;
  pray for forgiveness for all on earth, 42:5, n. 4531.
unbelievers give female names to, 53:27;
and the Spirit ascend to God, 70:4;
on errands of justice and mercy, 79:1-5;
to protect men, 82:10-12;
recording angels, 50:17-18.
Animals, form communities, 6:38;
  serve man, 16:5-8;
  dumb animals, duty to, n. 5839 to 76:8.
Ankabūt, S. 29.
Anšār, n. 5383 to 59:9; n. 5474 to 63:7.
Apes, transgressors become as, 2:65; 7:166.
INDEX

Apostates, 47:25.
Apostles, see Prophets.

5. First contact of Islam with world movements: contemporary
   Roman and Persian Empires, pp. 1198-1206.
6. Comparative chronology of the early years of Islam,
   pp. 1207-1208

A'râf, S. 7.
'Aṣr, S. 103.
Assemblies, gradations of Muslim, n. 5461 to 62:9.
Ayât, see Signs of God.
'Aziz, an attribute of God, n. 2818 to 22:40;
   title of Egyptian nobleman, n. 1677 to 12:30.

Badr (battle), 3:13; n. 352;

Baiyına, S. 98.
Bakka (Makkah) 3:96.
Balâd, S. 90.

Banî Isrâ-îl, S. 17.
Banû Nadîhîr, n. 5369; 49:2-6.

Baqara, S. 2.

Barâat, S. 9.

Beast (of the Last Days), 27:82, n. 3313.
Believers, fear God, 3:102;
   to fear nothing else, 10:67;
   hold together, 3:103;
   enjoin right and forbid wrong, 3:104, 110;
   protected from harm, 3:111; 5:105
   protected by angels, 41:30-31;
   warned against Unbelievers, 3:118-120, 196; 9:23-24; 60:13;
INDEX

Believers (contd.)

their lives sacred, 4:92-93;
not to slight those who salute, 4:94;
those who strive and fight, 4:95; 9:20-21, 88-89;
if weak and oppressed, 4:97-100;
not to sit where God’s Signs are ridiculed, 4:140; 6:68;
to prefer Believers for friends, 4:144; 5:57-58;
witnesses to fair dealing, 5:8;
duties to God, 5:35; 66:8;
not to ask inquisitive questions, 5:101-102;
grades of dignity, 8:4;
described, 8:2-4; 9:71, 111-112; 10:104-106; 13:20-24, 28-29;
to be firm, 8:45;
to obey and not lose heart, 8:46;
not to be weary and faint-hearted, 47:35;
affection between their hearts, 8:63;
to conquer against odds, 8:65-66;
adopt exile, fight for God (Muhājir), 8:72, 74-75;
help and give asylum (Afnār), 8:72;
ask for no exemption from danger, 9:43-45;
protect each other, 9:71;
rejoice in their bargain, 9:111; 61:10-11;
to be with those true in word and deed, 9:119;
to study and teach, 9:122;
will be established in strength, 14:27;
to practise prayer and charity, 14:31;
to say what is best, 17:53-55;
to be heirs, to inherit Paradise, 23:10-11;
promise to, 29:55-57;
manners, 24:62-63;
evil will be blotted out from, 29:7;
their ills removed, 47:2;
conduct, 33:69-71; 48:29;
prayer for them by those round Throne of God, 40:7-9;
not to despair or exult, 57:23;
to make peace, 49:9;
to avoid suspicion and spying, 49:12;
to remember God in humility, 57:16;
INDEX

Believers (contd.)
  sincere lovers of Truth and witnesses, 57:19;
  receive special Mercy, Light, and Forgiveness, 57:28;
  do what they say, 61:2-3;
  helpers to God's work, 61:14;
  trust in God, 64:13;
  persecuted, but will reach Salvation, 85:6-11.

Bequest, 2:180.

Birds, 67:19;

Blasphemy, monstrous, to attribute begotten son to God, 19:88-92.


Book, (Revelation), is guidance sure, 2:2;
  to be studied, 2:121;
  (Qur-ān), verses fundamental and allegorical, 3:7;
  (Qur-ān), light and guide, 5:15-16;
  People of the, 3:64-80, 98-99, 113-115, 187, 199; 4:47, 153-161;
  appeal to People of the, 5:59-60, 68;
  their hypocrisy, 5:61-63;
  forgiven if they had stood fast to their lights, 5:66;
  know but refuse to believe, 6:20;
  mother or foundation of the, 3:7; n. 347, 13:39; 43:4;
  for each period, 13:38;
  on a blessed Night, 44:3-4;
  from God, 46:2.
  See also Qur-ān, Revelation.

Booty, 48:15; see also Spoils of War.

Brotherhood, one, of the Righteous, 21:92;
  of the Prophets, 23:52-54.

Burdens, of others, none can bear, 6:164; 17:15; 29:12-13;
  35:18; 39:7; 53:38;
  unbelievers will bear double, 16:25;
  no soul has burdens greater than it can bear, 2:286; 7:42;
  23:62.

Burūj, S. 85.

Cave of Thaur, 9:40; n. 1302.


Certainty, three kinds, n. 5673 to 69:51; n. 6259 to 102:5.
INDEX

Certainty, 56:95.
Christ, see Jesus.
Christians, 2:138-140; 5:14; who became Muslims, n. 3385 to 28:53; n. 3476 to 29:47; nearest in love to Islam, 5:82-85.
Cities Overthrown, 69:9; n. 5644.
Cleanliness, 4:43; 5:6.
Commerce that will never fail, 35:29.
Confederates, p. 1235; 33:9-20, 22-27.
Consultation, mutual, 42:38, nn. 4578-4579.
Courtesy, 4:86.
Cowardice, 3:122.
Chronology, comparative, of early Islam, App. No. 6, pp. 1207-1208
Creation, words for, n. 120; n. 916, n. 923; nn. 5405-5406; begins and repeated, 10:4; n. 1389; 27:64; 29:19-20, n. 3440; a new, 13:5; 14:48; 17:49, 98; 21:104, n. 2758; 35:16; for just ends, 15:85; 16:3; 44:39; 45:22; 46:3; doth obeisance to God, 16:48-50; not for sport, 21:16-17; of man, 23:12-14, nn. 1872-1874; in six Days, 7:54, n. 1031; 32:4, n. 3632; 57:4; variety in, 35:27-28; God commands 'Be' and it is, 2:117; 16:40; n. 2066; 36:82; 40:68; also n. 5164 to 54:50; in true proportions, 39:5; of heaven and earth greater than creation of man, 40:57, n. 4431; 79:27; purpose of 51:56-58.
Dahr, S. 76.
Dahr, 76:1.
INDEX

David, 6:84; 21:78-80; 34:10-11; 38:17-26;
   fights Goliath, 2:251.
Day, 7:54; n. 1031; 22:47; 32:4, 5, n. 3634; 41:12, n. 4477; 70:4; n. 5678.
Dead will be raised to life, 6:36.
Death, by God's leave, 3:145;
   inevitable, 3:185; 4:78;
   confusion of the wicked, 6:93-94;
   angels reproach Unbelievers, 8:50-54;
   in death the transgressor will not die, 14:17; 20:74; 87:13;
   for wrong doers, 16:28-29;
   for righteous, 16:30-32;
   taste of, 3:185, n. 491; 21:35; n. 2697; 29:57; n. 3490;
   first, 37:59;
   not the end of all things, 45:24-26;
   and changed form thereafter, 56:60-61;
   scene at, 56:83-87; 75:26-29;
   sincere men flee not from death, 62:6-8.
Degrees, according to good and evil done, 6:132.
Despair, deprecated, 3:139, 146;
   not of the Mercy of God, 39:53.
Desertion in fight, 4:89-91.
Determinism, n. 5996 to 81:28-29.
DhulJáhi, S. 93.
Differences, decision with God, 42:10.
Difficulty, with every, there is relief, 94:5-8.
Discord, incited by Evil, 41:36.
Disease in the hearts of Hypocrites and Unbelievers, 2:10; 5:52;
   8:49; 9:125; 22:53; 24:50; 33:12, 32, 60;
Disputations deprecated, 29:46.
Distribution of property taken from the enemy; anfál, if after fighting, 8:41; fai if without fighting, 59:7-8, n. 5379.
Distribution of Charity, 2:177.
Divorce, 2:228-232, 236-237, 241; 65:Intro. 1-7; see also 4:35.
   See also Zihār
INDEX


_Dukhân_, S. 44.

"Earn" (*kasaba*), meaning n. 3626 to 31:34.
Earth, will be changed to a different Earth, 14:48; n. 1925;
prepared for God's creatures, 15:19-20; 26:7; 77:25-28;
spacious is God's Earth, 29:56; n. 3489;
manageable for man, 67:15;
convulsion of, a symbol, 99:1-6.


Elephant, Companions of the, Intro. 105, 105:1-5.


Elisha, 6:86; n. 905; 37:123-132.

_Evidence_, *re* transactions, 2:282-283;
*re* bequests, 5:106-108;
*re* charges against chaste women, 24:4-10

comes from ourselves, but good from God, 4:79;
makes fools of men, 6:71;
recompensed justly, 6:160;
not external, but a taint of the soul, nn. 1948-1949 to 15:15-16;
will destroy Evil, 19:83;
will come to evil end, 30:10;
deceives evil, 59:15-17;
repel evil with good, 13:22; 23:96; 41:34.

Evil Spirit, rejected, accursed, 3:36; 15:17; 16:98;

Excess forbidden, in food, 5:87;
in religion, 4:171; 5:77-81.

Eyes, ears, and skins will bear witness against sinners, 41:20-23,
nn. 4487-4490.

_Ezekiel_, n. 2743 to 21:85.


_Faith_, rejecters of, 2:6-7, 165-167; 3:4, 10, 12, 21-22, 90-91, 116,
181-184; 4:136, 137, 167-168;
ransom not accepted, 5:36-37;
follow ancestral ways, 5:104;
destroyed, 6:6;
ask for angel to be sent down, 6:8-9;
INDEX

Faith, Rejectors of (contd.)
lie against their own souls, 6:24;
will see Truth in Hereafter, 6:28-30;
will be in confusion, 6:110;
hearts inclined to deceit, 6:113;
taste evil result of conduct, 64:5-6;
their way and worship repudiated, 109:1-6;
signs of, 2:165, 285;
sellers of, 3:77, 177;
strengthened in danger and disaster, 3:173;
and righteousness, 5:69;
followed by unbelief, 16:106-109;
seven jewels of, n. 2870 to 23:9;
and charity, 57:7-11.

Fajr, S. 89.
Falaq, S. 113.
Falsehood perishes, 21:18;
deludes, 51:8-11.
Famines in Makkah, 23:75, n. 2921; 44:10, n. 4696.
Fasting, 2:184-185, 187.
Fate, man's fate on his own neck, 17:13, n. 2187.
Fat-h, S. 48.
Fāṭiha, S. 1.
Fāṭima, Hadhrat, Intro. S. 33; n. 3715 to 33:33.
Fāṭir, S. 35.
Fatra, Intro 73.
Fear of God, what is, 2:2, n. 26; 98:8, n. 6234;
as He should be feared, 3:102, n. 427;
command to People of the Book and Muslims, 4:131;
piety and restraint (Taqwā), 47:17;
unseen, 67:12, n. 5569;
of His displeasure, 70:27, n. 5692;
righteousness, 74:56, n. 5808.
Fear of men, 4:77.
Fear no evil, 3:175.
Fear as motive for reclamation, 2:74, n. 82; n. 4267 to 39:16;
in Signs of God, 17:59, n. 2247,
INDEX

Fear, none for the Righteous, 2:38;
or for Believers, 2:62;
or those who submit to God, 2:112;
or who spend for God, 2:262, 274;
or who believe and do good, 2:277; 5:69;
or who believe and amend, 6:48; 7:35;
or for friends of God, 10:62;
or for God's devotees, 43:68;
or for those who remain firm in God, 46:13.

Fig, 95:1.

Fighting, in cause of God, 2:190-193; 4:84;
prescribed, 2:216; 2:244;
in Prohibited month, 2:217;
by Children of Israel, 2:246-251;
in cause of God and oppressed men and women, 4:74-76;
till no more, 8:39;
against odds, 8:65;
in case of, 9:5-6; 12, 13-16;
those who believe not, and reject Truth, 9:29;
with firmness, 9:123;
permitted to those who are wronged, 22:39-41;
when, and till when, 47:4;
and the faint-hearted, 47:20;
exemptions from, 48:17.

Fill, S. 105.

Fire, parable, 2:17-18;
God's gift, 56:72-73.

Fire, see Hell.

Food, lawful and unlawful, 2:168, 172-173; 5:1, 3-5, 87-88; 6:118-119,
121, 145-146; 16:114-118;
less important than righteousness, 5:93.

Forbidden, conduct, 6:151-152; 7:33;
not things clean and pure, 7:32.

53:32; 57:21;
duty of Believers, 42:37, 40; 45:14;
Forgiveness, by Believers, for people of the Book, 2:109;
words for, n. 110 to 2:109;
by God, for sins other than joining gods with God, 4:48, 110, 116;
INDEX

Forgiveness (contd.)

hold to, and command the right, 7:199;
God forgives all sins, 39:53;
angels pray for forgiveness of all beings on earth, 42:5;
forgeve, even when angry, 42:37;
and reconciliation, 42:40;
Believers to forgive those who do not look forward to the days of
God, 45:14;
God forgives those who avoid great sins and shameful
deeds, 53:32;
be foremost in seeking, 57:21;

Fraud, 83:1-6.

Free-will, to train human will, n. 599 to 4:70-80;
in God’s Plan, n. 935 to 6:107;
no compulsion to believe, 10:99, n. 1480;
Truth offered, to be accepted or rejected 18:29, n. 2731;
limited by God’s Will, 74:56; 76:29-31, nn 5860-5862;
81:28-29, n. 5996;
just bias, 82:7, n. 6004.

Friday Prayers, 62:9-11.

Friends, 3:28.

Fruits and eating, meaning of 43:73, nn. 4671-4672;
47:15, n. 4834; 77:42-43, nn. 5884-5886.

Furqān, S. 25.

Gabriel, 2:97, 98; n. 3224 to 26:193; 66:4; n. 5988-89 to 81:19-21.
Gambling, 2:219; 5:90.
Game, not to be killed in Sacred Precincts, 5:94-96.

Gāshiya, S. 88.

Glad Tidings to men, 2:25; 5:19; 16:89; 48:8; etc.

God, Cherisher, 1:2; 6:164;
Guardian-Lord, 2:21-22;
as a Guardian on a Watch-Tower, 89:14;
protector, 2:257; 3:150; 22:78;
sets guardians over man, 6:61;
Helper, 3:150; 4:45; 40:51;
help of, how to be celebrated, 110:1-5;
refuge to Him from all ills and mischiefs, 113:1-5; 114:1-6;
Creator of all, 2:29, 117; 6:73;
INDEX

God (contd.)
creates and sustains all, 7:54; 11:6-7; 13:16-17; 21:30-33;
66:2-3;
created all nature, 25:61-62;
to Him belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth, 3:180;
gives Sustenance, 29:60-62; 51:58;
Lord of Bounties, 3:174;
His Bounties open to all, 17:20-21;
Most Bountiful, 96:3;
Merciful, 4:26; 5:74; 6:12, 54, 133;
Most Kind, 9:117-118;
Full of loving kindness, 85:14;
Beneficent, 52:28;
His love bestowed on the Righteous, 19:96;
guides, 6:71, 88; 92:12;
ordains laws and grants guidance, 87:3;
calls to Home of Peace, 10:25;

God, His favours, Gardens and fruits, 6:141;
cattle, 6:142;
mercy after adversity, 10:21;
traverse through land and sea, 10:22;
in life and death, 10:31, 56; 22;
Cherisher and Sustainer, 10:32;
direction, healing, guidance, mercy, 10:57;
gifts from heaven and earth, 14:32-33;
numberless, 14:34; 16:18;
cattle and things ye know not, 16:5-8;
rain, corn, and fruit, 16:10-11;
night and day, sun, moon and stars, gifts from heaven and earth,
16:12-13;
sea and ships, 16:14; 17:66;
mountains, rivers, roads, 16:15-16;
cattle and fruits, 16:66-67;
the Bee, 16:68-69;
bestowed variously; be grateful, 16:71-73;
in our birth, our faculties and affections, 16:77-78;
in our homes and in the service of animals, 16:80-81;
INDEX

God, His favours (contd).

blessings from heaven and earth, 23:17-22;
long line of prophets, 23:23;
faculties, and progeny, 23:78-79;
shadows and the sun, 25:45-46;
night and day, sleep, 25:47;
wind and rain, 25:48-50;
the bodies of water: 25:53;
man's creation, lineage and marriage, 25:54;
creation of heavens and earth and man's benefits, 27:60-61;
listens to the soul and makes man inherit the earth, 27:62;
guides through darkness, winds as heralds, 27:63;
originates and repeats creation, gives sustenance, 27:64;
feeds creation, 29:60-62;
sends rain and revives the earth, 29:63;
created heaven and earth with all its produce, 31:10;
subjected all things to your use, 31:20; 36:71-73; 45:12-13;
His Mercy gifts, none can withhold, 35:2-3;
life, grain, fruits, and springs, 36:33-35;
earth and the heavens, 41:10-12; 51:47-48;
accepts repentance and forgives, 42:25;
listens and gives increase, 42:26-28;
heavens and earth, rain and life 43:9-11;
creation in pairs, ships and cattle, 43:12-13; 51:49;
created man and taught him speech, 55:3-4;
set up justice, 55:7-9;
spread out earth, with fruit, corn, and plants, 55:10-12;
two bodies of water, 55:19-20;
the pearls and coral, 55:22;
the ships, 55:24;
grants the need of every creature, 55:29;
settles their affairs, 55:31;
stream and flowing water, 67:30;
given heaven's canopy its order and perfection, 79:27-28;
night, its darkness and splendour, 79:29,
expanse of the earth, its moisture, pasture, and mountains,
79:30-33;
orphan's shelter, 93:6;
wanderer's guide, 93:7;
satisfies need, 93:8;
INDEX

God, His favour (contd.)
expanded thy breast, 94:1.
removed thy burden, 94:2;
raised high thy esteem, 94:4;
God, present everywhere, 2:115; 7:7;
gave you life, 2:28; 6:122;
gives life and death, 3:156; 6:95; 15:23;
takes the souls of men, 39:42;
to Him go back all questions for decision, 3:109, 128;
to Him tend all affairs, 42:53, n. 4603;
to Him is the Goal, 53:42;
to Him is the return of all, 96:8;
112:1-4;
One, not one in a Trinity, 5:72;
nor one of two, 16:51;
no begotten son, 2:116; 6:100; 10:68; 19:35; 23:91;
nor consort nor daughters, 6:100-101; 16:57; 37:149-157;
43:16-19;
no partners, 6:22-23, 136-137, 163;
Wise, 4:26; 6:18;
best Disposer of Affairs, 3:173; 73:9;
Most High, Great, 4:34; 87:1;
Irresistible, 6:18, 61;
Doer of all He intends, 85:16;
power, 2:284; 3:29; 6:12-13, 65; 10:55;
16:77-81; 53:42-54; 85:12-16;
Self-Sufficient, 6:133;
Ready to appreciate service, 14:5; 35:30; 64:7;
22:59; 64:17;
Wisest of Judges, 95:8;
Justice, 21:47;
ever unjust, 4:40;
Best of planners, 3:54; 13:42;
will separate evil from good, 3:179;
His Wrath, 1:7; 7:97-99;
quick in retribution, but forgiving and merciful, 7:167; 13:6;
Swift in taking account, 24:39;
Best to decide, 10:109;
INDEX

God (contd.)

Best of those who show mercy, 23:109, 118;
Most Merciful of those who show mercy, 7:151; 12:64, 92; 21:83;
decision with Him, 42:10;
Exalted in power, Wise, 31:9; 39:1;
Free of all wants, 31:26; 35:15;
Worthy of all praise, 31:26;
Ample in forgiveness, 53:32;
Living, 2:255; 40:65;
Eternal, 2:255; 20:111;
His Artistry, 27:88, n. 3319
His Face will abide for ever, 55:27;
all will perish except His own Self, 28:88;
His knowledge, 2:284; 3:5, 29; 6:3, 117; 13:8-10;
16:23; 21:4; 31:34; 34:2; 64:4;
His dominion, 3:189; 4:126; 5:120; 67:1;
Command rests with him, 6:57; 13:41;
Lord of the Throne of Glory Supreme, 9:129; 23:86; 40:15; 85:15;
Lord of the Throne of Honour, 23:16;
Lord of the heaven and earth, 16:77;
Lord of Power, 51:58, n. 5034;
Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests, 55:17; 70:40; 73:9;
Lord of the Dawn, 113:1; n. 6302;
Lord of the Ways of Ascent, 70:3;
God in heaven and God on earth, 43:84;
To Him belong the End and the Beginning, 92:13;
listens to prayer, 2:186;
sends calm or tranquillity, 3:154; 9:26; 48:4, 18, 26;
purges, 3:141, 154;
tests, 3:142, 154, 166; 6:53; 29:2-5; 67:2;
sees all, 3:163;
sufficeth, 3:173; 8:64; 39:36; 65:3;
will lighten difficulties, 4:28;
sanctifies, 4:49;
recognises all good, 4:147;
will accept from the Good the best of their deeds, and pass by their ill deeds, 29:7; 46:16;
removes affliction, 6:17;
delivers from dangers, 6:63-64;
INDEX

God (contd.)

sends revelations, 6:91;
orders all things, 6:95-99;
gives Light to men, 6:122;
His Light will be perfected, 9:32-33; 61:8;
is the Light of heavens and earth, 24:35-36;
changes not His Grace unless people change themselves, 8:53; 13:11;
will not mislead, 9:115;
suffers not reward to be lost, 9:120-121; 11:115,
sufferers in His Cause to be rewarded, 16:41-42;
doeth provide without measure, 24:38;
witnesses all things, 10:61;
understands the finest mysteries, 67:14;
will show them the truth of their conduct: meaning, n. 5340 to 58:6;
nature of, 2:255; 3:2-3, 6, 18; 6:95-103; 25:2-3, 6; 32:2-9;
40:2-3; 43:84-85; 57:1-6; 59:22-24; 112:1-4; nn. 6296,
6300; 114:1-3; n. 6308;
close to man, 2:186;
ever near, 34:50;
earn near, 50:16; 56:85;
compasses mankind round about, 17:60;
with you wherever ye may be, 57:4;
only Reality, 6:62; 31:30;
the Truth, 20:114;
to Him belong the Forces of heavens and earth, 48:7;
decrees unalterable, 6:34; 18:27;
His word finds fulfilment, 6:115;
no vision can grasp Him, 6:103;
most beautiful names, 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24;
worship of, 2:114, 152;
to be worshipped and trusted, 11:123;
sincere devotion due to Him, 39:3, 11; 40:14;
we trust in Him, 67:29;
His promise is true, 4:122; 14:47;
seek His Face, 6:52; 18:28;
dedicate life to Him, 6:162;
call on Him humbly, with fear and longing, 7:55-56;
forget Him not, 59:19;
to God, turn thy attention, 94:8;
INDEX

God (Contd.)

all Creation speaks of Him, 13:12-13; 17:44; 24:41-46; 57:1;
praise and glory to Him, 1:1; 17:111; 30:17-19, 34:1;
37:180-182; 45:36-37; 55:78; 56:74, 96; 59:1; 61:1;
62:1; 64:1; 87:1;
and His Signs, 10:3-6; 13:2-4; see Signs of God;
His Command must come to pass, 16:1;
His command is but a single Act, 54:50, and n. 5164;
all good from Him, 16:53;
what He commands, 16:90-91;
what is with Him will endure, 16:96;
His words inexhaustible, 18:109; 31:27;
rejecters of, will not injure God, 47:32;
rejecter of, described, 50:24-26;
who are His servants, 25:63-76;
those most devoted to God, 92:17-21;
claim to exclusive friendship of, condemned, 62:6;

Golden Rule, n. 6011 to 83:1.

Goliath, 2:249-251.

Good, rewarded double, 4:40;
rewarded ten times, 6:160;
increased progressively, 42:23.

Good and Evil, 4:79, 85.

Good for evil, 23:96; 28:54; 41:34; n. 4504.


Hādid, S. 57.

Hafṣa and ‘Āisha, n. 5529 to 67:1.

Hajj, see Pilgrimage.

Hajj, S. 22.


Hā-Mīm, S. 41.

Hands and feet will bear witness against sinners, 36:65, n. 4011.

Hāqqa, S. 69

Hārūt, 2:102.

Hashr, S. 59.

Heaven, as gardens, in nearness to God, rivers flowing, eternal home,
3:15, 198;
Maidens pure and holy, cool shades, 4:57;
INDEX

Heaven (contd.)

for righteous deeds, 4:124;
truthful to profit from truth; gardens with flowing rivers; eternal home; God well pleased with them, and they with God; the great Salvation, 5:119;
no lurking sense of injury in hearts, 7:43;
mercy from God, Good Pleasure, Gardens, eternity, 9:21-22;
Gardens, mansions, Good Pleasure of God, 9:72;
Gardens, fountains, peace and security, no lurking sense of injury, nor fatigue, 15:45-48;
Gardens of Eternity, rivers, adornments, thrones, 18:31; 22:23;
Gardens of Eternity, no vain discourse, peace, sustenance, 19:61-63;
Gardens as hospitable homes, 32:19;
Gardens of eternity; adornments; sorrow removed; no toil or weariness, 35:33-35;
joy; associates; cool shade; couches; all they call for; Peace, 36:55-58;
fruits; honour and dignity; gardens; couches; cup; chaste women, 37:41-49;
final return, gardens of eternity, ease, fruit and drink, chaste women, 38:49-52;
lofty mansions, rivers, 39:20;
garden, peace, eternity, angels singing, 39:73-75;
meads of gardens; all they wish for; Bounty, 42:22;
no fear nor grief; Gardens; rejoicing; dishes and goblets of gold; eternity; satisfaction, 43:68-73;
security, gardens and springs, adornments, companions, fruit, no further death; supreme achievement, 44:51-57;
parable of garden, rivers, Grace from God, 47:15;
Garden; peace and security; more than all they wish; In Our Presence, 50:31-35;
Garden, happiness, food and drink; couches; maidens;
lanterns; service, 52:17-24;
Gardens and Rivers; Assembly of Truth; Presence of Sovereign Omnipotent, 54:54-55;
Gardens, Springs, Fruits, Carpets, Chaste maidens, 55:46-77;
nearest to God; Gardens; couches; Service; Fruits and Meat;
Companions; no frivolity nor taint of ill; Peace, 56:11-38;
nearest to God; Rest and Satisfaction; Garden of Delights;
Companions; Salutation of Peace, 56:88-91;
INDEX

Heaven (contd.)
Light runs before them; Gardens; Eternity; Highest Achievement, 57:12;
Bliss; Garden; Fruits, 69:21-24;
Cup; Fountain of Abundance, 76:5-6;
Garden; Adornments; Couches; No Excess of Heat or Cold; Shades;
Cup; Fountain; Service; Realm Magnificent, 76:5-22;
Fulfilment of heart's desires; Gardens; Companions; Cup; no-Vanity or Untruth, 78:31-35;
Garden, 79:41;
Thrones (Couches); In their faces the Beaming Brightness of Bliss, Pure Wine; Spring, 83:22-28;
Joy; Striving; Garden; no-Vanity; Spring; Couches; Cushions; Carpets, 88:8-16;
Rest and Satisfaction; coming back to God; well-pleased and well-pleasing to Him; among God's Devotees; God's Heaven, 89:27-30; Gardens of Eternity; Rivers; God well pleased with them, and they with Him, 98:8;
in its highest sense, n. 6174 to 92:17-20;
salutation in, 10:10; 15:46; 56:91;
“My Heaven,” said by God, 89:30, n. 6129.
Hell, skins roasted and renewed, 4:56;
of no profit are hoards and arrogant ways, 7:48;
for such as took religion to be amusement, and were deceived by the life of the world, 7:51;
filled with jinns and men, 11:119;
drink, boiling fetid water, 14:16-17;
Death will come, but will not die, 14:17;
 fetters, liquid pitch, faces covered with Fire, 14:49-50;
garment of Fire, boiling water, maces of iron, 22:19-22;
Blazing fire, furious, 25:11-12;
Sinners bound together; will plead for destruction, but the destruction will be oft-repeated, 25:13-14;
Punishment to cover them from above and below, 25:55;
Fire, wicked forced into it every time they wish to get away, 32:20;
men repeatedly warned, 36:63;
Tree of Zaqqum, and boiling water, 37:62-67; 44:43-48; 56:52-55;
to burn in Hell and taste of boiling fluid; and other Penalties, 38:55-58;
INDEX

Hell (contd.)

Unbelievers led in crowds; previously warned; abode of the arrogant; 39:71-72;
dispute and self-recrimination, 40:47-50;
to dwell for aye; punishment not lightened; overwhelming despair, 43:74;
God not unjust; sinners unjust themselves, 43:76;
capacity unlimited, 50:30;
Sinners known by their marks, 55:41;
Hell, which they denied; boiling water, 55:43-44;
Blast of Fire, Boiling Water, Shades of Black Smoke, 56:42-44;
drawing in its breath, bursting with fury, 67:6-8;
record in left hand; vain regrets, 69:25-29;
seize him, bind him, burn him, make him march in a chain, 69:30-37;
naught doth it permit to endure, and naught doth it leave alone, 74:26-29;
Over it are Nineteen, 74:30-31;
a place of ambush; destination for transgressors; to dwell therein for ages; taste there nothing cool nor drink, save boiling fluid, or intensely cold, 78:21-25;
Day when hell-fire shall be placed in full view, 79:35-39;
stain on sinners' hearts; Light of God veiled from them; enter the Fire, 83:14-16;
faces humiliated, enter the Fire; drink boiling water; food bitter Dhari, 88:2-7;
brought face to face; will then remember; chastisement and bonds, 89:23-26;
bottomless Pit; fire blazing fiercely, 2:9-11;
That which Breaks to Pieces; wrath of God, 104:4-9;
they will neither die nor live, 20:74; 87:13;
to it are seven Gates, 15:44, n. 1977;
is it eternal? n. 951 to 6:128; 11:107, n. 1608;
Hereafter, not a falsehood, 6:31;
man must meet God, 6:31,
Home in the 6:32;
Wrath of God, 6:40-41; 12:107;
Home of Peace, 6:127;
wrong-doers will not prosper, 6:135;
INDEX

Hereafter (contd.)
prophets and those to whom Message was sent will be questioned,
7:6;
deeds will be balanced, 7:8-9;
no intercession for those who disregarded Hereafter, 7:53;
Fire and Garden endure, except as God wills, 11:107-108;
the arrogant and the weak in the, 14:21;
wrong-doers will ask for respite, 14:44-46;
Home of the, 28:83; 29:64;
better than silver and gold, 43:33-35;
denied by men, 50:12-14;
better than the present, 93:4.

Hijr, see Rocky Tract.

Hijr, S. 15.
Ḥimyarites, nn. 3263, 3264 and 4715.
Houses, manners about entering, 24:27-29.

Hūd, S. 11.

Ḥudaibiyah, Intro. 48; Intro. 60, n. 5422.

Ḥufurāt, S. 49.
Humaza, S. 104.
Humility, 6:42-43; 7:161; 57:16;
shadows show humility to God, 13:15; 76:14.
Hūnain, 9:25-26; n. 1274.

Ḥūr, companions in heaven, 44:54, nn. 4728-29; 52:20, n. 5053.
Hypocrites, do not believe in God and the Last Day, 2:8;
deceive themselves, 2:9;
disease in their hearts, 2:10;
make mischief, 2:11-12;
fools and mockers, 2:13-15;
barter guidance for error, 2:16;
deaf, dumb, and blind, 2:17-18;
in terror and darkness, 2:19-20;
dazzling speech; led by arrogance, 2:204-206;
refuse to fight, 3:167-168;
resort to evil; turn away from Revelation; come when seized by
misfortune; to be kept clear of and admonished, 4:60-63;
tarry behind in misfortune; wish to share good fortune, 4:70-73;
Hypocrites (contd.)

thrown out of the way; reject Faith; renegades; to be seized and slain, 4:88-89;
wait events; think of overreaching God; distracted in mind, 4:141-143;
in lowest depths of Fire; no helper, 4:145;
afraid of being found out, 9:64-65;
understanding with each other; perverse; curse of God, 9:67-69;
not to be taken as friends, 58:14-19;
liars and deceivers, cowards, 59:11-14;
liars; screen misdeeds with oaths, 63:1-4.


Ibrihim, see Abraham.

Ibrahim, S. 19.


Ikhas, S. 112.

'Illiyûn, 83:18-21.

Immorality, 4:15-18.

Imrân, family of 3:35.

Infitâr, S. 82.

Inheritance, 2:180, 240; 4:7-9, 11-12, 19, 33, 176; 5:106-108.


Injury, forgiveness or self-defence, 42:39-43.

Insan, S. 76.

Inshiqaq, S. 84.

Inshirâh, S. 94.


Intoxicants, see Wine.

Iqraa, S. 96.

Iram, 89:7.


Islam, described, n. 434 to 3:110; nn. 4547-48 to 42:15;
to be first to bow in, 6:14, 163; 39:12;
vanguard of, 9:100;
heart opened to, 39:22;
a favour and privilege, 49:17.
INDEX

Israel, Children of, 2:40-86;
  favours, 2:47-53; 2:60, 122; 45:16-17;
  contumacy, 2:54-59, 61, 63-74; 5:71; 7:138-141;
  their relations with Muslims, 2:75-79;
  their arrogance, 2:80, 88, 91;
  their Covenants, 2:83, 86, 93, 100; 5:12-13, 73;
  their love of this life, 2:96;
  ask for a king, 2:246-251;
  divided and rebellious, 7:161-171;
  twice warned, 17:4-8; nn. 2174-2182;
  delivered from enemy, 20:80-82;
  origin of the name, n. 3447 to 29:27;
  given Book and Leaders, 32:23-25; 40:53-54;
  the learned among them knew the Qur-ān to be true, 26:197, n. 3227.


Jāthiya, S. 45.
Jesus, a righteous prophet, 6:85;
  birth, 3:45-47; 19:22-33;
  apostle to Israel, 3:49-51;
  disciples, 3:52-53; 5:111-115;
  taken up, 3:55-58; 4:157-159;
  like Adam, 3:59;
  not crucified, 4:157;
  no-more than apostle, 4:171; 5:75; 43:59, 63-64;
  not God, 5:17, 75;
  sent with Gospel, 5:46;
  not son of God, 9:30;
  Message and miracles, 5:110; 19:30-33;
  prays for Table of viands, 5:114;
  taught no false worship, 5:116-118;
  disciples declare themselves Muslims, 5:111;
  mission limited, n. 1861 to 13:38;
  followers have compassion and mercy, 57:27;
  disciples as God's helpers, 61:14;
  as a Sign, 23:50; 43:61;
  prophesied Ahmad, 61:6.
Jews, will listen to falsehood, 5:41-42;
INDEX

Jews (contd.)
utter blasphemy, 5:64;
enmity to Islām, 5:82;
who became Muslims, n. 3227 to 26:197; n. 3385 to 28:53;
   n. 3476 to 29:47;
   and Christians, 2:140; 4:153-161, 171; 5:18
See also Israel, Children of.
Jihād, n. 1270 to 9:20; see also Fighting; Striving.
Jinn, S. 72.
Jinns, 6:100; n. 929; 15:27; 34:41; 46:29-32; 55:15;
Job, 6:84; 21:83-84; 38:41-44.
John (the Baptist), see Yahya.
Jonah (or Jonas, or Yūnus), 4:163; 6:86; 10:98; n. 1478;
   37:139-148; n. 4119;
   (Zūn-nūn) 21:87; n. 2744; 68:48-50; (Companion of the Fish).
Joseph, 6:84;
   his story, 12:4-101;
   his vision, 12:4-6;
   jealousy of his brothers, 12:7-10;
   their plot, 12:11-18;
   sold by his brethren, 12:19-20;
   bought by 'Azīz of Egypt, 12:21;
   tempted by 'Azīz's wife, 12:22-29;
   her ruse, 12:30-34;
   in prison, 12:35-42;
   interprets King's vision, 12:43-54;
   established in power, 12:55-57;
   his dealings with his brethren, 12:58-93;
   reunion of whole family, 12:94-101;
Judgment, must come, 6:51; 6:128; 34:3-5; 40:59; 51:5-6, 12-14;
   52:7-10; 56:1-7; 64:7-10; 95:7;
   will come suddenly, 7:187; 36:48-50;
   as the twinkling of an eye, 16:77; 54:50;
   Hour known to God alone, 33:63; 67:26; 79:42-46;
   is near, 54:1-5; n. 5914 to 78:40;
   men will be sorted out into three classes, 56:7-56;
   Foremost in Faith, nearest to God, 56:11-26;
   Companions of Right Hand, 56:27-40;
INDEX

Judgment (contd.)

Companions of Left Hand, 56:41-56;
Lesser Judgment, 75:22-30; n. 5822; n. 5914 to 78:40;
the Great News, 78:1-5;

Judgment Day, full recompense only then, 3:185;
earth changed, and men gathered; Book of Deeds, 18:47-49;
mensurge like waves; trumpet blown; Unbelievers will see and hear, 18:99-101;
sectarian differences to be solved; Distress for lack of Faith 19:37-39
rejecters of the message will bear a grievous burden, 20:100-101;
tumpet will sound; sinful in terror; interval will seem short, 20:102-104;
they will follow the Caller; trump of their feet; all sounds humbled, 20:108;
no Intercession except by permission, 20:109;
no fear for the righteous, 20:112;
rejecters will be raised up blind, 20:124-127;
scales of Justice, 21:47;
True Promise will approach fulfilment; sobs of Unbelievers; the Good
will suffer no grief, 21:97-103;
heavens will be rolled up like a scroll; new creation, 21:104;
terrible convulsion; men in drunken riot; Wrath of God, 22:1-2;
Trumpet is blown; Balance of Good Deeds, heavy or light, 23:101-104;
Voice of Judgment, 23:105-111;
Time will seem short, 23:112-115;
false worship will be exposed, 25:17-19;
heavens rent asunder; angels sent down; Dominion wholly for God, 25:25-26;
wrong-doer's regrets, 25:27-30;
terror for evil-doers, not for doer of good, 27:83-90;
guilty in despair, no Intercessor, 30:12-13;
justice done, 36:51-54;
joy and peace for the Good, 36:55-58;
Day of Sorting Out, 30:14-16; 37:20-21;
Wrong-doers questioned; recriminations, 37:22-23;
contrast between the righteous, with sound hearts and those straying
in evil, 37:88-102;
INDEX

Judgment Day (contd.)

Wrong-doers' arrogances, 37:33-36; retribution for evil, 37:37-39; felicity for servants of God, 37:40-61; Tree of Zaqqûm, 37:62-68; wrong-doers rushed on their fathers' footsteps, 37:69-74; trumpet; all in heaven and earth will swoon; second trumpet, renewed

Earth will shine with God's Glory; recompense, 39:67-70; no intercession; justice and truth, 40:18-20; sudden; friends will be foes, except the righteous, 43:66-67; no fear on God's devotees, 43:68-69; dealers in falsehood to perish; righteous to obtain Mercy, 45:27-35; not to be averted; Fire for the false and the triflers, 52:7-16; wrong-doers swoon in terror, 52:45-47; Caller to a terrible affair, 54:6-8; no defence for the evil; known by their Marks, 55:35-44; mutual gain and loss, 64:9-10; Shin to be laid bare, 68:42-43; trumpet; Great Event; Angels will bear the Throne; nothing hidden; Good and Evil recompensed, 69:13-37; sky like molten brass; no friend will ask after friend; no deliverance for evil, 70:8, 18; wicked will issue from sepulchres in haste, 70:43-44; Will know reality, not known whether near or far, 72:24-25; children hoary-headed; sky cleft asunder; 73:17-18; trumpet; Day of Distress for those without Faith, 74:8-10; stars become dim; apostles collect; sorting out, 77:7-15; woe to Rejecters of Truth, 77:29-50; sorting out; Trumpet; heavens opened; mountains vanish, 78:17-20; Spirit and Angels stand forth; Day of Reality, 78:38-40; commotion and agitation, 79:6-9; single Cry, 79:13-14; Deafening Noise; no one for another; some Faces beaming; some dust-stained, 80:33-42; sun, stars, mountains, outer nature change; souls sorted out; World on High unveiled, 81:1-14; sky cleft asunder; stars and Oceans scattered; Graves turned upside down; each soul will know its deeds, 82:1-5;
INDEX

Judgment Day (contd.)
no soul can do aught for another, 82:17-19;
sky and earth changed; man ever toiling on towards his Lord; Record
of Good or Ill, 84:1-15;
things secret tested, 86:9-10;
Overwhelming Event; Faces humiliated and Faces joyful,
88:1-16;
Earth pounded to powder; Lord cometh; hell and heaven shown,
89:21-30;
Earth in convulsion; man in distress; sorted out, 99:1-8;
Contents of graves scattered abroad; of human breasts made manifest;
Lord well acquainted, 100:9-11;
Noise and Clamour; Good and Evil rewarded, 101:1-11;
Jüdf, Mount, 11:44.
Jumu'a, S. 62.
Ka'ba, built by Abraham, 2:125-127;
no killing of game, 5:94-96;
asylum of security for men, 5:97.
Kàfîrûn, S. 109.
Káfûr, Cup mixed with, 76:5.
Kahf, S. 18.
Kauthar (Fount of Abundance), 108:1-2; n. 6286; Intro. 108.
Kauthar, S. 108.
Keys of heavens and earth, 39:63; 42:12.
Khadija the Great, n. 3706 to 33:28;
n. 6288 to 108:3.
Khaibar expedition, n. 3705 to 33:27; Intro. S. 33.
Khandaq, battle, Intro. S. 33; 33:9-20.
Khaul'a, pleading woman, n. 5330 to 58:1.
Kindred, rights of, 2:83, 177; 4:7-9, 36; 8:41; 16:90; 17:26;
24:22; 42:23.
Knowledge (Certainty), n. 5673 to 69:51; 102:5-7; n. 6259;
of five things, with God alone, 31:34, nn. 3625, 3627.
Lahab, S. 111.
Lail, S. 92.
Languages, variations in man's—and colours, 30:22, n. 3527.
Lât, 53:19.
INDEX

Latif, n. 2844 to 22:63; n. 4552 to 42:19.
Life sacred, 17:33.
Life of this world, 6:32; 57:20.
Light, manifest, 4:174;
and Darkness, 6:1;
parable of, 24:35-36;
goes before and with Believers, 57:12-15; 66:8;
provided by God, that Believers may walk straight, 57:28;
of God, veiled from unbelievers, 83:15.
Lingam, worship of, n. 4112 to 37:123.
Loan, beautiful, to God, 2:245, n. 276; 57:11, 18; 64:17; 73:20.
Loss (spiritual), 39:15.
Lote-tree, 34:16; n. 3814; 53:14-18; n. 5093; 56:28.
Luqmân, 31:12; n. 3593;
his teaching, 31:12-19.
Luqmân, S. 31.
Lūt (Lot), 6:86; 7:80-84; n. 1049; 11:77-83; 15:57-77; 21:74-75;
51:31-37; 54:33-39;
Ma‘ārib Dam, nn. 3812-13 to 34:16.
Ma‘ārij, S. 70.
Madyan, 7:85-93; n. 1053; 11:84-95; 29:36-37.
Magians (Majūs), 22:17, n. 2789.
Māīda, S. 5.
Man, vicegerent on earth, 2:30; 6:165;
tested by God, 2:155; 3:186; 47:31; 57:25;
things men covet, 3:14;
70:22-35;
created from clay, for a term, 6:2; 15:26;
called to account, 6:44;
will return to God, 6:60, 72; 10:45-46;
confusion of the wicked at death, 6:93-94;
plots against own soul, 6:123; 10:44;
personal responsibility, 6:164;
ungrateful, 7:10; 36:45-47; 74:15-25; 100:1-8;
INDEX

Man (contd.)

warned against Satan, 7:27;
knows of God, but misled by Evil, 7:172-175;
and family life, 7:189-190;
limited Free-will, 10:99, n. 1480;
behaviour in and out of trouble, 10:12; 11:9-11; 16:53-55;
41:49-51; 42:48; 89:15-16;
God's spirit breathed into him, 15:29;
lowly in origin, but blessed with favours, 16:4-8; 32:7-9;
35:11; 36:77-78; 76:1-3; 77:20-24; 80:17-32;
86:5-8; 96:2-5;
prays for evil, 17:11;
is given to hasty deeds, 17:11; 16:37;
his fate fastened round his neck, 17:13;
to be judged by his Record, 17:71;
his physical growth, 22:5; 23:12-14; 40:67;
death and resurrection, 23:15-16;
tongues, hands, and feet will bear witness against men, 24:24;
n. 2976;
made from water, 25:54;
relationships of lineage and marriage, 25:54;
should submit Self to God, 31:22;
not two hearts in one breast, 33:4;
to worship God, 39:64-66;
misfortunes, due to his deeds, 42:30;
angels note his doings, 50:17-18, 23;
his growth and activity depend on God, 56:57-74;
to be created again after death in new forms, 56:60-61;
riches and family may be a trial, 64:14-15;
created and provided for by God, 67:23-24; 74:12-15;
is impatient, 70:19-21;
who will be honoured ones among men, 70:22-35;
evidence against himself, 75:14-15; n. 5819;
his arrogance, 75:31-40; 90:5-7;
loves the fleeting world, 76:27;
seduced from God, 82:6-12;
painfully toiling on to God, 84:6;
travels from stage to stage, 84:16-19;
guilty of sins, 89:17-20;
INDEX

Man (contd.)
created into toil and struggle, 90:4;
gifted with faculties, 90:8-10;
strives for diverse ends, 92:4-11;
created in best of moulds, 95:4;
abased unless he believes and does righteousness, 95:5-6;
transgresses all bounds, 96:6-14.

Manāt, 53:20.
Mankind, one nation, 2:213; 10:19;
created from single pair, 4:1; 39:6; 49:13;
transgress insolently, 10:23;
heed not, though Reckoning near, 21:1-3;
pattern according to which God has made mankind, 30:30;
honour depends on righteousness, 49:13.

Manners, about entering houses, 24:27-29;
in the home, 24:58-61;
in the Prophet's presence, 29:62-63; 49:1-5;
in the Prophet's houses, 33:53;
to bless and salute the Prophet, 33:56;
not to annoy Prophet or believing men or women;
33:57-58;
require verification of news before belief, 49:6;
among the community, 49:11;
in assemblies, 58:11.

Marriage, to unbelievers or slaves, 2:221;
to how many, lawful, 4:3;
dower not to be taken back (in case of divorce), 4:20-21;
prohibited degrees, 4:22-24;
if no means to wed free believing women, 4:25;
if breach feared, two arbiters to be appointed, 4:35;
if wife fears cruelty or desertion, amicable settlement, 4:128;
turn not away from a woman, 4:129;
with chaste ones among People of the Book, 5:5;
of adulterers, 24:3;
to those who are poor, 24:32;
those who cannot afford marriage, to keep themselves chaste until God gives them means, 24:33;
Prophet's Consorts, 33:28-29, 50-52; n. 3706 to 33:28;
without cohabitation, no 'Iddat on divorce, 33:49;
conditions for the Prophet, 33:50-52; n. 3706 to 33:28.
INDEX

Martyrs, not dead, 2:154; 3:169;
  rejoice in glory, 3:170-171;
  receive forgiveness and mercy, 3:157-158;
Marût, 2:102.
Mary (mother of Jesus), birth, 3:35-37;
  annunciation of Jesus, 3:42-51; 4:156; 19:16-21;
  in child birth, 19:23-26;
  brought the babe to her people, 19:27-33;
  guarded her chastity, 21:91; 66:12.
Maryam, S. 19.
Mâd'ân, S. 107.
Measure and weight, give full, 17:35; 83:1-3.
Mecca, (MAKKAH) Bakka, 3:96;
  relation to Prophet, Intro, 90; 90:1-4;
  city of security, 95:3; n. 6197.
Medina (Madinah), Intro. 33; 33:9-27; Intro. 90.
Miracles, see Signs of God.
Mi'raj, p. 772; 17:1.
Mischief on land and sea, 30:41;
  of created things, 113:1-5; 114:4-6.
Monasticism disapproved, 57:27; n. 5321.
Months, number of, 9:35-37.
Moses, and his people, 2:51-61;
  advises Israelites, 5:23-29;
  guided by God, 6:84;
  40:23-46; 43:45-56; 51:38-40; 79:15-26;
  resists idol-worship, 7:138-141;
  sees the Glory on the Mount, 7:142-145;
  reproves his people for calf worship, and prays for them,
    7:148-156;
  his people, 7:159-162;
  his Book, doubts and differences, 11:110;
  to teach his people gratitude, 14:5-8;
  nine Clear Signs, 7:133; n. 1091; 17:101;
  to the junction of the two Seas, 18:60-82; nn. 2404-2405;
  his call, 19:51-53; 20:9-56; 28:29-35;
INDEX

Moses (contd.)

his childhood, mother, and sister, 20:38-40; 28:7-13;
converts Egyptian magicians, 20:70-73; 26:46-52;
indignant at calf-worship, 20:86-98;
and the Fire, 27:7-14; 28:29-35;
his mishap in the City, 28:14-21;
in Madyan, 28:22-28;
guided to straight way, 37:114-122;
Books of, 53:36; 87:19;
veded by his people, 61:5.

Mosque (of Qubāa), 9:107-108; n. 1355.
Mountains, 20:105-107; 21:31; 31:10; 59:21; nn. 5398-5399;
73:14; 101:5.

Muddaththir, S. 74.

Muhājirs, 59:8-9, nn. 5382-5383; n. 5474 to 63:7.

Muḥammad, the holy Prophet,

his mission, 7:158; 48:8-9;
respect due to Apostle, 2:104; 4:46;
no more than an apostle, 3:144;
gentle, 3:159;
sent as favour to Believers, 3:164; 4:170;
and to People of the Book, 5:19;
a mercy to Believers, 9:61;
mercy to all creatures, 21:107;
as a mercy from God, 28:46-47; 33:45-48; 36:6;
42:48; 72:20-23, 27-28; 76:24-26;
his work, 3:164; 4:70-71; 6:107; 7:156-157; 10:2; 52:29-34;
74:1-7;
not mad or possessed, 7:184; 68:2; 81:22;
warner, 7:184, 188; 15:89; 53:56-62;
anxious for the Believers, 9:128;
brings Message as revealed, 10:15-16;
his teaching, 11:2-4; 12:108; 34:46-50;
to deliver revelation entirely as it comes to him, 11:12-14;
46:9;
God is witness to his mission, 13:43; 29:52; 46:8;
heart distressed for men, 15:97; 16:127; 18:6; 25:30;
to invite and argue, in ways most gracious, 16:125-128;
INDEX

Muhammad (contd.)

inspired, 18:110; 53:2-18;
mocked, 25:41-42; 34:7-8;
asks no reward, 25:57; 34:47; 38:86; 42:23;
his duty, 27:91-93; 30:30;
his household (consorts), p. 1100, 33:28-34, 50-52, 53, 55, 59;
66:1, 3-6;
close to Believers, 33:6;
beautiful pattern of conduct, 33:21;
seal of the Prophets, 33:40;
universal Messenger to men, 34:28;
fealty to him is fealty to God, 48:10, 18;
apostle of God, 48:29;
resist him not, 58:20-22;
foretold by Jesus, 61:6;
foretold by Moses, 46:10; n. 4783;
his Religion to prevail over all religions, 61:9;
unlettered, 7:157; 62:2;
leads from darkness to light, 65:11;
to strive hard, 66:9;
exalted standard of character, 68:4;
not a poet or soothsayer, 69:40-43;
devoted to prayer, 73:1-8, 20; 74:3;
witness, 73:15-16;
and the blind man, 80:1-10;
saw the Angel of Revelation, 53:4-18; n. 5092; 81:22-25;
to adore God and bring himself closer to him, 96:19;
rehearsing scriptures, 98:2.

Muhammad, S. 47.
Mujādila, S. 58.
Mulk, S. 67, meaning of, n. 5555 to 67:1.
Mūmīn, S. 40.
Mūminīn, S. 23.
Mumtahana, S. 60.
Munafiqūn, S. 63.
Murder, 2:178-179; 5:32.
Mursalāt, S. 77.
Muslim men and women, befitting conduct, 33:35-36.
Muzzammil, S. 73.
INDEX

Nabaa, S. 78.
Nadhīr, Banu, Jews, Intro. S. 59; n. 5369 to 59:2; n. 5380 to 59:7;
   n. 5386 to 59:11.

Naḥl, S. 16.

Najm, S. 53.
Names, most beautiful, of God, 7:180; n. 1154; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24.

Namr, S. 27.

Nās S. 114.
Nasr, 71:23; n. 5721.

Naṣr, S. 110.
Nature declares God's praises, 24:41-44; 50:6-11;
   shows God's goodness, and that His Promise is true, 78:6-16.

Nāzi'āt, S. 79.
“Neither die nor live”, 20:74; 87:13.

New Moon, 2:189.

News, to be tested, 4:83.

Niggards condemned, 17:29, 47:38.

Night as a symbol, 79:29; 92:1; 93:2.

Night of Power, 97:1-5.

Nīsāa, S. 4.

   69:11-12; 71:1-28;
   unrighteous son not saved, 11:45-47.
   wife unrighteous, 66:10.

Notes, scope of, p. 5.

Nūḥ, S. 71.

Nūr, S. 24.

Nursing of wounded, pp. 1235.


Obligations to be fulfilled, 5:1; n. 682.

Obedience, 3:132; 4:59, 64, 66, 80-81; 5:92; 14:12; 8:20-25, 46;
   24:51-52, 54; 47:33; 64:11-12.

Olive, as a symbol, 23:20; n. 2880; 24:35; nn. 3000-3002; 95:1;
   n. 6195.

Orphans, 2:220; 4:2, 6, 10, 127; 17:34;
   guardians of, 4:6.
INDEX

Pairs, in all creatures, 13:3; n. 1804; 31:10; 36:36; n. 3981; 42:11; 43:12; 51:49; 53:45.

Parables, man who kindled a fire, 2:17-18;
   rain-laden cloud, 2:19-20;
   goat-herd, 2:171;
   hamlet in ruins, 2:259;
   grain of corn, 2:261;
   hard, barren rock, 2:264;
   fertile garden, 2:265-266;
   rope, 3:103;
   frosty wind, 3:117;
   dog who lolls out his tongue, 7:176;
   undermined sand-cliff, 9:109-110;
   rain and storm, 10:24; n. 1412;
   blind and deaf, 11:24;
   garden of joy, 13:35;
   ashes blown about by wind, 14:18;
   goodly trees, with roots, branches, and fruit, 14:24-25;
   evil tree, 14:26;
   slave versus man liberally favoured, 16:75;
   dumb man versus one who commands justice, 16:76;
   woman who untwists her yarn, 16:92;
   City favoured but ungrateful, 16:112-113;
   two men, one proud of his possessions and the other absorbed in God, 18:32-44;
   this life like rain, pleasant but transitory, 18:45-46;
   fall from Unity, like being snatched up by birds or carried off by winds, 22:31, n. 2806;
   a fly, 22:73;
   Light, 24:35-36;
   mirage, 24:39;
   depths of darkness, 24:40;
   spider, 29:41;
   partners, 30:28;
   Companions of the City, 36:13-32;
   one master and several masters, 39:29;
   Garden promised to the Righteous with four kinds of rivers, 47:15;
   seed growing, 48:29;
   rain and physical growth, 57:20;
   mountain that humbles itself, 59:21; nn. 5398-5399;
INDEX

Parables, *(contd.)*
- donkey, 62:5;
- if stream of water be lost, 67:30;
- People of the Garden, 68:17-33.


Passion or Impulse, worship of, 25:43, n. 3097.

Path, see Way,


“Peace,” the greeting of the Righteous, 7:46; 10:10; 14:23; 36:58

Peace, incline towards, 8:61.


Pearls, well-guarded, 52:24; n. 5058; 56:23; n. 5234.

Pen, 68:1; 96:4-5.


Persian Empire, p. 1174; App. No. 5 pp. 1198-1206.

Persian Capitals, pp. 1205-1206.

Personal responsibility, 6:164; 10:30; 14:51; 53:38-41.

Pharaoh, cruelty, 2:49;
- drowned, 2:50;
- people of, 54:41-42;
- dealings with Moses, 7:103-137; 10:75-92; see Moses;
- body saved, on account of repentance, 10:90-92;
- denies God, 28:38; 79:24;
- a man from his People confesses Faith, 40:28-44;
- arrogant to the Israelities, 44:17-33;
- wife righteous, 66:11; n. 5549;


Piling up (the good things of this world), 102:1-4.

Pledge, everyone in pledge for his deeds, 52:21; 74:38.

Pleiades, n. 5085 to 53:1; n. 6068 to 86:1;

Plotters, 16:45-47.
INDEX


Prayer, 1:1-7; 2:238-239; 3:8, 26-27, 147, 191-194;
73:1-8, 20;
be steadfast in, 2:110;
during travel, or in danger, 4:101-104;
for Unbelievers, 9:113-114;
due to God alone, 13:14-15;
Prayers, the five canonical, 11:144, nn. 1616-1617; 17:78-79, n. 2275;
20:130, n. 2655; 30:17-18, n. 3521;
why all prayers not answered, n. 4565 to 42:27.
Precautions in danger, 4:71.
Priests and anchorites, 9:31, 34.
Prisoners of War, 8:67-71.
Property, 2:188; 4:5, 29;
to be distributed equitably, 59:7-9.
Prophet's Consorts, extra responsibilities and duties, 33:28-34; n. 3706;
who are to be, 33:50-52; nn. 3741-3754;
respect due to them, 33:53-55; nn. 3755-3760;
respect due to Prophet's Consorts and believing men and women,
33:56-58, nn. 3761-3763.
Prophet's wives and daughters and all believing women to be modest,
Prophets, 2:253;
continuous line, 3:33-34; 4:163-165; 5:19; 4:84-90; 23:23-50;
57:26-27;
covenants from, 3:81; 33:7-8;
ever false to their trusts, 3:161;
rejected, 3:184; 6:34; 25:37; 34:45; 51:52-55;
slain, 3:183;
all to be believed in, 4:150-152;
to give account, 5:109;
why sent, 6:48, 131; 14:4-6;
had enemies, 6:112; 25:31;
rehearse God's Signs, 7:35-36;
sent to every people, 10:47; 16:36;
had families, 13:38;
INDEX

Prophets, (contd.)
human, but guided, 14:10-12; 16:43-44; 17:94-95; 21:7-8;
25:7-8, 20;
persecuted and threatened, 14:13;
Witnesses against their people, 16:89;
and Apostles, meaning, 19:51, n. 2503;
one brotherhood, 23:52-54;
some named, some not, 40:78.
Prosperity (spiritual), 87:14-15;
success, 91:9-10.
Publicity versus secrecy, 4:148.
Punishment, for man's arrogance and rebellion, 96:15-18;
abiding—for wilful rebellion, but not after repentance, nor for minor
Qadîr, n. 655 to 4:149.
Qadr, S. 97.
Qâf, S. 50.
Qalam, S. 68.
Qamar, S. 54.
Qârî'a, S. 101.
Qârûn, 28:76-82; 29:39.
Qâṣâs, S. 28.
Qibla, 2:142-145, 149-150.
Qirrâats, Basra and Kufa, n. 2666 to 21:4; n. 2948 to 23:112.
Qiyâmat, S. 75.
Qubâa (Mosque), 9:107-108; n. 1355.
Quraish, S. 106.
Quraish, unbelieving, 54:43-46, 51;
appeal to, 106:1-4; nn. 6276-6280.
Quraiza Tribe, nn. 3701-3704 to 33:26-27.
Qur'ân, punctuation marks, p. 19.
inspired Message, 4:82; 6:19;
cannot be produced by other than divine agency, 2:23; 10:38;
11:13; n. 2289 to 17:89;
verses, fundamental and allegorical, 3:7; 11:1;
God is witness, 6:19;
God's revelation, 6:92; 17:105-107; 27:6; 45:2;
follow it and do right, 6:155;
respect and attention due to, 7:204-206;
INDEX

Qur-ān (contd.)

Book of Wisdom, 10:1; 31:2; 36:2;
in Arabic, 12:2; 13:37; 41:44; 42:7; 43:30;
described, 13:31, 36-37; 14:1; 56:77-80;
makes things clear, 15:1; 25:33; 26:2; 27:1; 28:2;
36:69-70; 43:2;
not to be made into shreds, 15:91;
purpose of revelation, 16:64-65;
language pure Arabic, 16:103;
good news and warning, 17:9-10;
and the Unbelievers, 17:45-47;
healing and mercy, 17:82;
explains similitudes, 17:89; 18:54; 39:27;
no crookedness therein, 18:1-2;
teaching, 18:2-4; 19:97; 20:2-7; 26:210-220;
easy, 19:97; 44:58; 54:17, 22, 32, 40;
revealed in stages, 17:106; 25:32; 76:23; 87:6-7;
"my people took it for nonsense", 25:30;
solves Israel's controversies, 27:76;
recite Qur-ān, 73:4; and pray, 29:45;
carries own evidence, 29:47-49, 51;
guide and mercy, 31:3;
Truth from God, 32:3; 35:31;
beautiful Message consistent with itself, 39:23;
instructs mankind, 39:41; 80:11-12;
no falsehood can approach it, 41:42;
same Message to earlier prophets, 41:43; 43:44-45;
not sent to worldly leaders; 43:31-32;
seek earnestly to understand, 47:24;
admonish with, 50:45;
taught by God, 55:1-2;
to be received with humility, 59:21;
how to be read and studied, 2:121; 75:16-18;
in books of honour and dignity, 80:13-16;
Message to all the Worlds, 81:26-29;
Unbelievers reject it, 84:20-25;
Tablet Preserved, 85:21-22;
See also Book, and Revelation.

Rabb, meaning, n. 20.
INDEX

Ra'd, S. 13.
Ra'hîm, meaning, n. 19.
Ra'hîm, meaning, S. 19.
Ra'hîn, S. 55.
Raiment of righteousness is best, 7:26.
Rain, God's gift, 56:68-70.
Ramâdhâhân, 2:185.
Rass, Companions of the, 25:38; n. 3094; 50:12.
Reality, the sure, 69:1-3.
Religion, no compulsion in, 2:256;
  of Islam, 3:19-20, 83-84;
  no excesses in, 4:171; 5:77-81;
  perfected, 5:3;
  not play and amusement, 6:70;
  do not divide and make sects, 6:159; 30:32;
  universal, n. 1834 to 13:19-22;
  no difficulties imposed in, 22:78;
  standard religion is to establish pattern according to which God has
    made man, 30:30;
  same for all prophets, 42:13-15;
  ancestral, 43:22-24;
  right way of, 45:18.
Remembrance of God, what is, n. 5476 to 63:9.
Repentance, with amendment, accepted, 4:54; 42:25.
  86:15-17.
Retaliation disapproved, 5:45.
Revelation, doubts solved, 2:23;
  of Moses and Jesus, 2:87;
  abrogated or forgotten, 2:106;
  guidance, 3:73;
  to Prophet and those before him, 5:48;
  Word that distinguishes Good from Evil, 86:11-14;
  do not entertain doubt about, 6:114; 11:17;
  purpose of, 7:2, 203;
INDEX

Revelation (contd.)
   in stages, 16:101;
   through the Holy Spirit, 16:102-103; 26:192-199;
   to be proclaimed, 96:1;
   nature of, 41:2-4; 6:8; 69:50-51; 81:15-21;
See also Book, and Qur'an,
Revile not false gods, 6:108.
Reward, without measure, 3:27; 39:10;
   meaning of, n. 3070 to 25:15;
   better than deed deserves, 28:84; 30:39;
   according to best of deeds, and more, 24:38; 29:7; 39:35;
   for good, no reward other than good, 55:60.
Righteous, company of the, 4:69;
   shall inherit the earth, 21:105;
   described, 51:15-19; 76:5-12.
Righteousness, 2:177, 207-208, 212; 3:16-17, 92, 133-135, 191-195;
   4:36, 125; 5:93; 7:42-43; 16:97;
   steep path of, 90:11-18.
Rocky Tract, Companions of, 15:80-85; n. 2002;
   inscriptions at Hijr, pp. 1087-1088.
Roman Empire, p. 1049; 30:2-5; App. No. 5, pp. 1198-1206.
Rūm, S. 30.
Sabā, 27:22; n. 3263; 34:15-21; nn. 3810-3819.
Sabā, S. 34.
Sabbath, transgressors of, 7:163-166;
   made strict, 16:124.
Sabians, 2:26, n. 76; 5:69; 22:17.
Sacrifice, 22:34-37.
S'ad ibn Mu'āz, Intro. S. 33; n. 3697 to 33:23; nn. 3702-3704 to
   33:26.
Ṣād, S. 38.
Ṣafā and Marwa, 2:158.
Ṣaff, S. 61.
Ṣaffūt, S. 37.
Ṣajda, S. 32.
Salmān, Intro. S. 33.
Salsabil, 76:18.
Salvation, n. 833 to 5:119; n. 3070 to 25:15; and n. 5904 to 78:31.
INDEX

Sāmīrī, 20:85; n. 2605, 2608; 20:95-97.
Satan (see also Iblīs), 2:36; 4:117-120; 24:21;
excites enmity and hatred, 5:91;
resist his suggestions, 7:200-201;
deceives, 8:48;
reproaches own followers, 14:22;
evil spirit, rejected, accursed, 3:36; 15:17; 15:34; 16:98;
has no authority over Believers, 16:99-100;
suggests vanity, 22:52-53;
is an enemy, 35:6; 36:60.
Scandal, 24:19; 104:1.
Scriptures, people of the, 2:62;
kept pure and holy, 98:2.
Secrecy, when permissible, 4:114;
in counsels, disapproved, 58:7-10, 12-13.
Sects and divisions disapproved, 30:32; 42:13-14; 43:64-65, n. 4664;
45:17, 28.
Seed, grows by God's providence, 56:63-67.
Seven Tracts or Firmaments, 2:29; 23:17, n. 2876; 65:12, n. 5526;
67:3, n. 5559; 71:15.
Shadow, 25:45; n. 3099.
Shameful things to be shunned, 7:28.
Shams, S. 91.
She-camel as a Symbol to Thamūd, 7:73; n. 1044; 17:59; 26:155-158.
Ship, sailing of, as a Sign, 2:164, n. 166; 14:32; 16:14; n. 2034;
Shu'aib, 7:85-93; n. 1054; 11:84-95; 29:36-37.
Shu'arā, S. 26.
Shūrā, S. 42.
Siege of Madinah, 33:9-27; nn. 3679, 3680.
Signs of God, demanded by those without knowledge, clear to those with
Faith, 2:118;
in the creation of the heavens and the earth, 2:164; 3:190;
made clear, that men may consider, 2:219-220;
sign of authority to the prophet Samuel, 2:248;
denial of, 3:11, 108;
rejecters, deaf and dumb, in darkness, 6:39;
INDEX

Signs of God (contd.)
in all things, 6:95-99;
wicked demand special Signs, 6:124;
rejecters make excuse, 6:156-158;
consequences of rejection, 7:36-41; 146-147;
rejecters wrong their own souls, 7:177;
rejecters get respite, 7:182;
rejecters lose guidance, 6:186;
day and night as Signs, 17:12;
in nature and all creation, 10:5-6; 30:20-27; 45:3-6;
self evident Signs, the Book, 29:49-51, n. 3481;
winds and ships, 30:46; 42:32-35;
ships, 31:31;
the Night, sun and moon, 36:37-40;
the Ark through the Flood, and similar ships, 36:41-44;
in this life, 39:59;
rejecters are deluded, 40:63;
rain and revived Earth, 41:39-40;
in the farthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, 41:53;
rejected or taken in jest, 45:8-9;
on earth, in your own selves, and in heaven, 51:20-23;
creation of man from Seed, 56:57-59;
death, 56:60-62;
seed in the ground, 56:63-67;
water, 56:68-70;
fire, 56:71-73;
mocked, 68:15, n. 5603;
camels, sky, mountains, earth, 88:17-20;
forces of nature, 89:1-5;
no special Sign (miracle) given, 6:109; 10:20; 13:7; 17:59;
nn. 2244-2245; 21:5-6, nn. 2668-2669.

Siṣṣīn, 83:7-9.

wrong doers will be cut off, 6:45;
to be eschewed, 6:120;
causes destruction, 7:4-5; 77:16-19;
will not prosper, 10:17;
and Faith have different goals, 68:35-41;
God forgives all sins, 39:53, and n. 4324.

Sinai, 19:52; n. 2504; 95:2; n. 6196.
INDEX

Sinners, 23:63-77; 26:200-209; 83:29-36;
their hearing, sight, and skins will bear witness, 41:20-23;
different witnesses against them, n. 6054 to 85:3.
Şirāt bridge, n. 2518 to 19:71.
Sirius (Dog Star), n. 6068 to 86:1;
Solomon, 2:102; 6:84; 21:79, 81-82; 27:15-44; 34:12-14;
38:30-40;
and the ants, 27:18-19;
and the Hoopoe, 27:22-26;
and the Queen of Sabā, 27:22-44.
Son, adopted, 33:4-5.
Soul, burden not greater than it can bear, 2:286, 7:42; 23:62;
responsibility, 3:30; 74:38;
justly dealt with, 16:111;
taste of death, 21:35; n. 2697;
human, three stages of development, n. 5810 to 75:2;
enters heaven, not body, 89:27-30, n. 6128.
Spirit, the, 70:4; n. 5677; 78:38; 97:4;
the holy, God strengthened Jesus with, 2:87, 253;
God’s, breathed into man, 15:29;
of inspiration, 17:85-86, n. 2285;
God strengthens Believers with, 58:22, n. 5365.
Spoils of war, 8:1, 41; p. 467-468; n. 1179; n. 1209;
Stars, 7:54; 16:12, 16; 22:18; 37:6-10; n. 4036-4037; 67:5;
n. 5562; 77:8; 81:2; 82:2.
Straight Way, 1:6; 6:153; etc.
Striving, 9:20, 81; 22:78; 25:52; 29:69; n. 3502; 61:11;
Suffering, adversity, and prosperity, 7:94-96.
Sun, 91:1.
Superstitions, 5:103; 6:138-140, 143-144.
Sūra, revelation increases faith, 9:124-127;
meaning, p. 13; n. 15.
Sustenance, literal and figurative, 10:59, n. 1447; 16:73, n. 2105; 19:62,
n. 2513, 42:12; n. 4540; 51:57-58, n. 5033; 67:21, n. 5579.
Suwā’, 71:23; n. 5721.
INDEX

Tagābūn, S. 64.
Tâ-Hā, S. 20.
Tahrîm, S. 66.
Tâif, city, Intro. S. 72.
Takathûr, S. 102.
Takwîr, S. 81.
Talâq, S. 65.
Talh (tree), 56:29; n. 5238.
Tâlût, 2:247-249.
Taqwâ, meaning, 2:2, n. 26; 59:18-19, nn. 539-539-A.
Târiq, S. 86.
Taṣfif, S. 83.
Tauba, S. 9.
Term appointed, for every people, 7:34; 10:49; 15:4-5; 16:61; 20:129;
Thamûd, 7:73-79; n. 1013; n. 1054; 11:61-68; 25:38; 26:141-159;
27:45-53; 29:38; 41:17; 51:43-45; 54:23-31; 69:4-8;
85:17-20; 89:9-14; 91:11-15;
inscriptions at Hijr, pp. 1087-1088.
Time, n. 5678 to 70:4; Intro. 76;
76:1; 103:1-3; n. 6262.
Tîn, S. 95.
Traffic and Trade, 4:29.
Transition between second and third person, n. 6048 to 84:20;
between “We” and “Me”, see “We” and “Me”.
Travel through the earth 6:11; 22:46; 27:69; 29:20-22;
30:9, 42; 35:44; 40:21, 82; 47:10.
Trench (or Ditch), Battle of the, n. 3032 to 24:55; Intro. S. 33;
nn. 3679-3682 to 33:9-11.
Trials, 2:214-218.
Trumpet, on Day of Judgment, 6:73; 23:101; 39:68, n. 4343;
69:13.
Trust offered to Heavens, Earth, and Mountains, undertaken by Man,
33:72-73; nn. 3777-3784.
INDEX

Trusts, 4:58; 8:27.
Truth, 23:70-71, 90;
Tubba', 44:37; n. 4715.
Tūr, S. 52.

Uḥud, lessons of, 3:121-128, 140-180;
    battle, n. 442.
‘Umar, Ḥadhrat, conversion, p. 877, Intro. 20.
Ummat, 2:143-144.
‘Umra, 2:196; n. 212.

Unbelievers, plot in vain, 8:30;
    despise revelation, 8:31;
    challenge a Penalty, 8:32-35;
    prayers empty, 8:35;
    spend for wrong purposes, 8:36;
    past forgiven, if they repent, 8:38; 9:11;
    break covenants, 8:56;
    will not frustrate the godly, 8:60-61;
    protect each other, 8:73;
    described, 9:73-78; 14:3;
    will wish they had believed, 15:2;
    will bear double burdens, 16:25;
    to be covered with shame, 16:27;
    dispute vainly, 18:56-57;
    their efforts wasted, 18:102-106;
    their arrogance, 19:73-82; 35:43;
    deeds like mirage, 24:39;
    as in depths of darkness, 24:40;
    mutual recriminations at Judgment, 34:31-33;
    self-glory and separatism, 38:2-14;
    dispute about the Signs of God, 40:4-6;
    hate Truth, 43:78;
    will turn back from fight, 48:22-23;
    their high-handedness, 48:25-26;
    vain fancies, 52:35-44;
    give them not friendship but kind and just dealing, 60:1-9;
    rush madly, 70:36-39.

INDEX

‘Uzair, 9:30;
‘Uzza, 53:19.

Vain discourse to be avoided, 6:68.
Vicegerent, 2:30.
Virtues, see Righteousness, and Believers.

Wadd, 71:23; n. 5721.
Wāqī’a, S. 56.
War against God, 5:33-34.
Warning before destruction, 17:16.
given in three ways, n. 4267 to 39:16.
Water, animals created from, 21:30; n. 2691; 24:45; n. 3021; 25:54;
two seas, 25:53; n. 3111; 18:60; nn. 2404-2405; 35:12; 55:19-20; n. 5185.
God’s Throne over the waters, 11:7, and n. 1502;
circulation of, 23:18; n. 2878.
Way, the, 1:6; n. 22; 42:52-53; nn. 4602-4603; 90:10-18; etc.
“We” and “Me”, transition between the first person plural and singular
in reference to God:2:38, n. 56; 2:150-151; 31:10, 11,
nn. 3590, 3592; 68:44, n. 5625; 70:40, n. 5702.
Wicked, their faces headlong in the fire, 27:90, n. 3320; 67:22; n. 5580.
Will of God, 10:99-100; nn. 1480-1481; n. 3509 to 30:5; 81:29; 82:8.
Will of man, n. 3046 to 24:62;
free-will versus Determinism, n. 5996 to 81:28-29; n. 6004 to 82:7.
Wine, 2:219; 5:90,
heavenly wine, 47:15; 76:21; 83:25;
Witnesses, among men, 2:143; 22:78; at Judgment, n. 6054 to 85:3.
Woman, wronged, plea accepted, 58:1-2.
Women, 2:222-223; 4:15, 19-22, 34, 127;
to be reverenced, 4:11
false charges against, 24:4-5, 11-20; n. 2962; 24:23-26;
modesty, 24:30-31;
believing, refugees, 60:10-12;
INDEX

the four perfect, n. 5549 to 66:11.
World, this, but play and amusement, 6:32; 29:64; 47:36; 57:20;
deceives men, 6:130;
not to be preferred, 9:38-39; 13:26; 28:60-61;
gets its reward, but not in Hereafter, 11:15-17; 17:18; 42:20;
man loves, 75:20-21; 76:27.
Worship, true worship and charity, 107:2-7.
what is worship, n. 1626 to 11:123;
Writing, for contracts, 2:282.
See also Unbelievers.

Yagūth, 71:23; n. 5721.
Yaḥya (John the Baptist), birth, 3:39; 6:85;
his character and position, 19:12-15;
reverenced God, 21:90.
Yū-Sīn, S. 36.
Ya‘ūq, 71:23; n. 5721.
Yūnus, S. 10.
Yūnus, see Jonah.
Yūsuf, S. 12.
Yūsuf, see Joseph.
Zaid the freedman, 33:37-38, nn. 3722-3723.
Zainab, daughter of Jahsh, n. 3706 to 33:28; 33:37-38; and
nn. 3722-3723; n. 3745 to 33:50.
Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima, n. 3706 to 33:28; n. 3745 to 33:50.
Zakāt (Regular Charity), 2:43, 110, 177, 277; 4:162; 5:55.
Zanjābil, 76:17.
Zāriyāt, S. 51.
Zihār, 33:4; n. 3670; 58:2-4.
Zodiacal Signs, 15:16.
Zukhruf, S. 43.
Zhul-qarnain, 18:83-98; n. 2428.
Zūmar, S. 39.
Zhun-nūn, 21:87-88; n. 2714; 68:48-50; see also Jonah.
كُتب هذا المصحف وُضِعْت عليه ما يوافق رواية حفص بن سليمان بن المغيرة الأدِيد الكُروي لقراءة عاصم بن أبي النجود الكروي التابع عن أبي عبد الرحمن عبد الله بن حبيب السُّمَّيِّ عن عثمان بن عفان والطليّ بن أبي طالب وزيد بن ثابت وأبي بن كعب عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم.

وأخذ هجواؤه مما رواه علماء الرسم عن المصاحف التي بعث بها الخليفة الراشد عثمان بن عفان رضي الله عنه إلى البصرة والكوفة والشام ومكة، والمصحف الذي جعله لأهل المدينة، والمصحف الذي اختص به نفسه، وعن المصاحف المنشقة منها. وقد روعي في ذلك ما نقله الشيخان أبو عمرو الدانى وأبو داود سليمان بن ماج مع ترجيح الثاني عند الاختلاف.

هذا وكل حرف من حروف هذا المصحف مواقين لنظره في المصاحف العثاينية.

السِّتة السابق ذكرها.

وأخذت طريقة ضبطه مما قرره علماء الضبط على حسب ما ورد في كتاب الطراز على ضبط الخراج للإمام التَّنْسَيِّ مع الأخذ بعلامات الخليل بن أحمد وأتباعه من المشارقة، بدلاً من علامات الأندلسيين والمالاوية.

وأخذت في عد آياته طريقة الكوفيين عن أبي عبد الرحمن عبد الله بن حبيب السُّمَّيِّ عن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه على حسب ما ورد في كتاب "ناظمة الزهر" للإمام الشافعي، وغيرها من الكتب المدونة في علم الفوائد، وآية القرآن على طريقتهم 1332 آية.

وأخذ بيان أوائل أجزاء الثلاثين وأجزاء الستين وأرباعه السنت وأرباعها من كتاب "غيث النفع" للعلامة الدِّفِيقِي. و"ناظمة الزهر" للإمام الشافعي وشرحها. وتَحْقِيق البيان للشيخ محمد المتولي، و"إرشاد القراء والكتابين". لأبي عبد رضوان المخلق.

وأخذ بيان مكيّة ومدنيّة في الجدول الملحق بآخر المصحف، من "كتاب أبي القاسم عمر بن محمد بن عبد الكافي" و"كتاب القراءات والتفسير" على خلاف في بعضها.
وأحَدَ بِان وقوته وعلاماتها ما قرَّته اللَّجْنَةُ في جلستها التي عقدتتها لتحديد
هذِه الوقف على حسب ما اقتضت الاعاني التي ظهرت لها مسْتَرْشدةً في ذلك بقوال
الأئمة من المفسرين وعلماء الوقف والإبتداء.
وأحَدَّ بِان السجَّادات ومواضيعها من كتب الفقه والحديث على خلاف في
خمس منها لم نشر إليّ فيها هامش المصحف وهي السجدة الثانية بسورة الحج
والسجادات الواقعة في السور الآتية: ص والنجم والانشقاق والعلق.
وأحَدَّ بِان موضع السكأت عند حفص من "الشاطية" وشرحها وتعرَّف
كيفيتها بالتأليف من أحواج الشيخ.

اصطلاحات الضبط
وضع الصَّفر المستدير (5) فوق حرفٍ علَّهُ بَلْدَة على زيادة ذلك الحرف فلا
يُنطقُ به في الوصل ولا في الوقف، نحو:ِ يَلْتَوَأُصُفْحاً. أَوْنَكَ،
من بِنَائِهِ الرِّسَالِيَّة، بَيْنَتَهَا أبيَضَلَّ.
وضع الصَّفر المستطيل القائم (5) فوق ألف بعدُها متحرك بَلْدَة على زيادةُ
وصلا لا وقا، نحو: أَتْحَرَّك. أَبْكَا، أُحْرَكُو نَفْعٍ، وأُهَّلَ النَّفْعُ التي بعدها
سائق، نحو:ِ أَتْنَأِر. من وضع الصَّفر المستطيل فوقها وإن كان حكماً مثل
التي بعدها متحرك في أنها تسقط وصلا وثالث وفقا لعدم نظرته ووصلا.
وضع رأس خاء صغيرة (بِعدة نقطة) (5) فوق أي حرفٍ بَلْدَة على سكن
ذلك الحرف وعلى أن مَثْرَز محب يقرعه اللسان، نحو:ِ مَنْ حَرْقٍ، وَقَرْتَوَتْ عَنْهُ،
فَقَدْ سَمَعَ، أَوُنَّطَ، وَحَضَمَ.
وتعريَّة الحروف من علامة السكَّان مع تشبيه الحرف الثاني بَلْدَة على إدغام
الأول في الثاني إدغامًا كاملاً، نحو:ِ أَتْنَالَ ثَمَّ تَحَكَّساً. يَلْهَتْ ذَلِكَ. وقَالتُ
طَلَقَةً، وَمَرْيَكْهُنَّ، وكذا قوله تعالى:ِ "أَنْتَخَلُفْكُمْ" على أرجح الوجهين في
وتعريَّته مع عدم تشبيه الثاني بَلْدَة على إدغام الأول في الثاني إدغامًا ناقصًا
نحو:ِ مَنْ يَقُولُ. مِن وَالٍ. فَرَّطْهُ. بَضَطَ، أو إخفائه عنده فلا هو مظهر حتى
يقرعه اللسان ولا هو مدَّعٍ حتى يقلب من جنس تالي نحو:ِ مَنْ تَحَفَّهَا،
مِن تَمْرَة. إِلَيْهِمْ.
وضع ميم صغيرة (۰) بدلّ الحركة الثانية من المئون أو فوق النون الساكنة بدلّ السكون مع عدم تشديد الياء التالية بدلّ على قلب النون أو النون ممّا نحو: عليهُ ذكر الصدر. جرّاءٌ يُكاوَّن. مثبتًا.

وتركب الحركتين: (مضتين أو فتحتين أو كسرتين) هكذا: ﴿۰۱﴾ بدلًا

على إظهار النونين، نحو: ﴿۰۲﴾ علّم. ﴿۰۳﴾ لا، إِبِّي. ﴿۰۴﴾ وَكَلِّيَّ قَوَّامًا.

وتتابعهما هكذا ﴿۰۵﴾-۰۶﴾ مع تشديد التالى بدلًا على الإداعم الكامل نحو:

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٨٩١

٨٩٢

٨٩٣

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٨٩٥

٨٩٦

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٩٠٦

٩٠٧

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٩٢٠

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١٠٣٨

١٠٣٩
وندل هذه العلامة (۶۲) على بداية الأجزاء والأحزاب وأنصافها وأرباعها.
وضع خطٍ أفقٍ فوق كلمة يدل على موضع السجدة.
ووضع هذه العلامة (۶۲) بعد كلمة يدل على موضع السجدة نحو:

وقلِن ماكِلُون۶۳ منكِروها ونافِل الأُخرىن۶۴ وأذُنكِم۶۵.

وهم لا ينكرون۶۶ بِذَكْرِهَا ۰۶۷ وقِل على مَعْلُوبٍ۶۸ وتَلَقِّبُون مُأَمَّر۶۹.

وضع النقطة الحالية الوسط المُعتمدة الشكل (۵۷) تحت الراء في قوله تعالى:
۶۰ نَصَرَانِ بِذَرَّةٍ۶۱ ۰۶۲، وإمالة الألف إلى الياء. وكان النقطة يضمها دائرة حمراء فلما تعر ذلك في المطابع عُلَى إلى الشكل المُعتمد.
وضع النقطة المذكورة فوق آخر المُتقول النون المُستددة من قوله تعالى:
۶۳ مَالِكٌ ۰۶۴ لَا تَكُونَ عَلَيْهِ نُوحٌ۶۵. يَدَّل على الإشام (وهو ضم الشفتيين) كمن يردد النطق.
بوضحة مَثْقُولاً ۰۶۶ إلى أن الحركة المذكورة ضمة (۶۷) من غير أن يظهر ذلك آثر في النطق.
وضع نقطة مُدُورة مُسُدَّدة الوسط (۶۸) فوق الحمزة الثانية من قوله تعالى:
۶۹ أَطْمَعْنَى وَأَعْطَنِي۷۰، يَدَّل على تَسْهِيله بِنَبْنٍ أَيْ بِهِمْرَةٍ وَأَلْفٍ.
وضع حرف السين فوق الحرف الأخير في بعض الكلمات يدل على السكت.
على ذلك الحرف في حال وصله بما يعده سكتة بسيرة من غير تذكير.
وورد عن حنص عن عاصم السكت بلا خلاف من طريق الشاطبية على ألف
۷۱ عِنْجَانَ۷۲ بسورة الكهف، ولفت ۷۳ مُقَيّداً بسورة يس، ونون ۷۴ مَيْنً راقي ۷۵ بسورة القيامة، ولام ۷۶ بِّل رَّا۷۷ بسورة الطفيلين.

ويجوز له في هاء ۷۸ مَلَّا۷۹ بسورة الحاقة وجهان:
۷۸ أَحَدَهُم ۷۹ إِذْهَارُهَا مَع السكت، وثانيهما: إِدْعَامُهَا مَعَ الْهَاءِ ۸۰ بعدها في لفظ ۸۱ مَلِكٍ ۸۲.

وقد ضبط هذا الموضع على وجه الإظهار مع السكت، لأنه هو الأرجح،
وذلك بوضع علامة السكن على الهاء الأول، مع تجريد الهاء الثانية من علامة التشديد للدلالة على الإظهار، ووضع حرف السين على هاء ۸۳ مَلَّا ۸۴ للدلالة على السكت عليها سكتة بسيرة بدون تذكير، لأن الإظهار لا يتحقق وصلا إلا بالسكت.

والإلاق او صغرى بعد هاء ضمير المفرد الغائب إذا كانت مضمومة يدل على صلة هذه الهاء بها فظيلة في حال الواصل، وإلاق يا صغرى مارددة إلى خلف بعد
هاء الضمير المذكور إذا كانت مكشورة يدل على صنعتها بباء لفظية في حال الوصول.

أيضاً، وتكون هذه الصلة بنوعاً من قبل المد الطبيعي إذا لم يكن بعدها همزة، فتم بمد قدر حركتين: نحو قوله تعالى: {إنَّكُمَا بِهِمَا مِّنكُمَا نُضَيْعُونَ}. 

وتكون من قبل المد المفصل إذا كان بعدها همزة، فوضع عليها علامة المد، وتم بمد قدر أربع حركات أو خمس نحو قوله تعالى: {وَأَمَرَهُمُ إِلَى اللَّهِ} وقوله: جل وعلا: {وَالَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ للَّهِ}، وقوله: 

والقاعدة أن حفصاً عن عاصم يصل كل هاء ضمير للمفرد الغائب بوا لفظية إذا كانت مضمومة، وهي لفظية إذا كانت مكشورة بشرط أن تحرك ما قبل هذه الهاء وما بعدها، وقد استنثر من ذلك ما يأتي:

1) الهاء من لفظ {يَرَبَّضُهُ} في سورة الزمر، فإن حفصاً ضمها بدون صلة.

2) الهاء من لفظ {أَحِيَّ} في سورة الأعراف والشعراء فإنه سكناً.

3) الهاء من لفظ {فَأَلْقِهَا} في سورة النحل فإنه سكناً أيضاً.

وإذا سكن ما قبل هاء الضمير المذكورة، وتحرك ما بعدها فإنه لا يصلها إلا في لفظ {قَبَلَهَا} في قوله تعالى: {وَقَبَلَهَا مُهَكَّنَا} في سورة الفرقان.

أما إذا سكن ما بعد هذه الهاء سواء أكانا ما قبلها محركة أم ساكنة فإن الهاء لا توصل مطلقاً، لذا يجمع ساكان، نحو قوله تعالى: {فَلَا تَأْتَى}، {وَقَبَلَهَا}، {فَأَرْزَعْنَاهَا}، {فَأَرْزَعْنَاهَا}، {فَأَرْزَعْنَاهَا}.

تنيبات:

1) في سورة الروم ورد لفظ {صَفْعِف} مجزوراً في موضعين ومنصوب في موضع واحد.

وذلك في قوله تعالى: {اِنْبَذِّلْنَا مِنَ الصَّفْعِفِ شَجَعَةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهَا}

{صَفْعِف} قُوَّةً مَّجَالَةً مَّنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةَ صَفْعَةَ وَفَهْأَشَبْهَةٍ.

ويجوز حفص في هذه المواقع الثلاثة وجهان: أحدهما: فتح الضاد، وثانيهما: ضمة.

والوجهان مقرر، بما، والفتح مقدم في الأداء.
(2) - في لفظ {الائه} في سورة النمل وجهان لفظ وقفاً.
أحدهما إثبات اليماء ساكنة، ثانياً: حذفها مع الوقف على النون.
أما في حال الوصل فثبت اليماء مفتوحة.
(3) - وفي لفظ {سليمان} في سورة الإنسان وجهان أيضًا وقفاً.
أحدهما: إثبات الألف الأخيرة، ثانياً: حذفها مع الوقف على
اللام ساكنة.
أما في حال الوصل فتحذف الألف.
وهذه الأوجه التي تقدمت لحفظ عن عاصم ذكرها الإمام الشافعي في نظمه
المسمى {حرز الأماني ووجه النهاي}.
هذا، والمواد التي تختلف فيها الطرق ضربت لحفظ بما يوافق طريق النظام
المذكور.

علامات الوقف

1. علامة الوقف الملزم، نحو: {إذا كنت}. {الله يسمعون} والموثق بعينه.
2. علامة الوقف الممنوع، نحو: {الله} ونعمتهم المثيرة طبيعة يقومون سلر
عليكم أدخلوا الجنة.
3. علامة الوقف الحائز جوازة مستوى الطرفين، نحو: {عن نقص عليك} تأهلك
بالحقي {بفهمه} عما واجبهم.
4. علامة الوقف الحائز مع كون الوصل أولى، نحو: {فإن يمسك} الله يصر
فلأسكا الصواlek} فإذا {هم يمسكون} في يديهم.
5. علامة الوقف الحائز مع كون الوقف أولى، نحو: {فأعتن أعلم} {يبصرون}

6. علامة تعانق الوقف بحيث إذا وقف على أحد الموضعين لا يصح الوقف على
الآخر، نحو: {ذلك المكتوب} لآيتين {هدهما} لضمنين.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Маккан</th>
<th>السورة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Fātiha.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Baqarah.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āl-i-ʿImrān.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-Nisā.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Māidah.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-An'ām.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Aʿrāf.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Anfāl.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Tauba.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yānūs.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hūd.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yāsuf.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar-Ra’d.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrāhīm.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ḥijr.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-Nahl.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Isrā.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Kahf.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryam.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṭā-Ḥā.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Anbiyā.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ḥajj.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mūminūn.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-Nūr.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Furqān.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash-Shuʿarā.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An-Naml.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Qāṣas.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-ʿAnkabūt.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ar-Rūm.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luqmaan.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-Sajda.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ahzāb.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>Madinah</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabā.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1271</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatır.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yā-Sīn.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-Sāffāt.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sād.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1369</td>
<td>Маккан</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Names of Sūras Showing The makkan and The madinah ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sūrat</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Makkan</th>
<th>Madinah</th>
<th>رقمة الصلاة</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Az-Zumar</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1392</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٣٩٢</td>
<td>٣٩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gāfir</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1422</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٤٢٢</td>
<td>٤٠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fussilāt</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1452</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٤٥٢</td>
<td>٤١</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash-Shāra</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1472</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٤٧٢</td>
<td>٤٢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Az-Zukhruf</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1495</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٤٩٥</td>
<td>٤٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad-Dukhān</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1518</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٥١٨</td>
<td>٤٤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Jāthiya</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٥٣٠</td>
<td>٤٥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Ahqāf</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1542</td>
<td>Makkān</td>
<td>١٥٤٢</td>
<td>٤٦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1558</td>
<td>Madīnah</td>
<td>١٥٥٨</td>
<td>٤٧</td>
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