

The Meaning of
The Glorious Qur'an

by

Abdullah Yusuf Ali

With introduction by

Sayyid Abdul A'la Mawdudi

**Islamic Information Center
Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque
Sultanate of Oman
2020**

This edition 2020 by
Islamic information Center
Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque
Sultanate of Oman
Telefax +968 2450 5170
www.introducingislam.com
www.iicomman.om
Email: info@iicomman.om

NOT FOR SALE

The Glorious Qur'an is God's final revelation to mankind. It was revealed in the beginning of the 7th. Century to the last messenger of God, Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. The Glorious Qur'an came to confirm the messages of Jesus, Moses and all the prophets of God who came before them, peace be upon them all, and to complete God's message to mankind.

The Glorious Qur'an was written down in its entirety during the lifetime of the prophet and was memorized by his companions as it was revealed. This tradition of memorizing the Glorious Qur'an amongst the Muslims continues to this day. This background renders The Glorious Qur'an as the most authentic and pure divine revelation existing on Earth today.

Islamic information Center
Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque
Sultanate of Oman



Understanding the Qur'ān— An Introduction

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi

This piece has been written with two objectives, First, to acquaint the reader with certain matters which he should grasp at the very outset, so as to achieve a more than superficial understanding of the Holy Book, Second, to clarify those disturbing questions that commonly arise in the mind of the reader during the study of the Qur'ān.

I

We are accustomed to reading books which present information, ideas and arguments systematically and coherently. So when we embark on the study of the Qur'ān, we expect that this book too will revolve around a definite subject, that the subject matter of the book will be clearly defined at the beginning and will then be neatly divided into sections and chapters, after which discussion will proceed in a logical sequence. We likewise expect a separate and systematic arrangement of instruction and guidance for each of the various aspects of human life.

However, as soon as we open the Qur'ān we encounter a hitherto completely unfamiliar genre of literature. We notice that it embodies precepts of belief and conduct, moral directives, legal prescriptions, exhortation and admonition, censure and condemnation of evil-doers, warnings to deniers of the Truth, good tidings and words of consolation and good cheer to those who have suffered for the sake of God, arguments and corroborative evidence in support of its basic message, allusions to anecdotes from the past and to signs of God visible in the universe. Moreover, these myriad subjects alternate without any apparent system—quite unlike the books to which we are accustomed, the Qur'ān deals with the same subjects over and over again, each time couched in a different phraseology.

The reader also encounters abrupt transitions between one subject matter and another. Audience and speaker constantly change as the message is directed now to one and now to another group of people. There is no trace of the familiar division into chapters and sections. Likewise, the treatment of different subjects is unique. If an historical subject is raised, the narrative does not follow the pattern familiar in historical accounts. In discussions of philosophical or metaphysical questions, we miss the familiar expressions and terminology of formal logic and philosophy. Cultural and political matters, or questions pertaining to man's social and economic life, are discussed in a way very different from that usual in works of social sciences. Juristic principles and legal injunctions are elucidated, but quite differently from the manner of conventional works. When we come across an ethical instruction, we find its form differs entirely from anything to be found elsewhere in the literature of ethics.

The reader may find all this so foreign to his notion of what a book should be that he may become so confused as to feel that the Qur'ān is a piece of disorganized, incoherent and unsystematic writing, comprising nothing but a disjointed conglomeration of comments of varying lengths put together arbitrarily. Hostile critics use this as a basis for their criticism, while those more favourably inclined resort to far-fetched explanations, or else conclude that the Qur'ān consists of unrelated pieces, thus making it amenable to all kinds of interpretation, even interpretations quite opposed to the intent of God Who revealed the Book.

II

What kind of book, then, is the Qur'ān? In what manner was it revealed? What underlies its arrangement? What is its subject? What is its true purposes? What is the central theme to which its multifarious topics are intrinsically related? What kind of reasoning and style does it adopt in elucidating its central theme? If we could obtain clear, lucid answers to these and other related questions we might avoid some dangerous pitfalls, thus making it easier to reflect upon and to grasp the meaning and purpose of the Qur'ānic verses. If we begin studying the Qur'ān in the expectation of reading a book on religion we shall find it hard, since our

notions of religion and of a book are naturally circumscribed by our range of experience. We need, therefore, to be told in advance that this Book is unique in the manner of its composition, in its theme and in its contents and arrangement. We should be forewarned that the concept of a book which we have formed from our previous readings is likely to be a hindrance, rather than a help, towards a deep understanding of the Qur'ān. We should realise that as a first step towards understanding it we must disabuse our minds of all preconceived notions.

III

The student of the Qur'ān should grasp, from the outset, the fundamental claims that the Qur'ān makes for itself. Whether one ultimately decides to believe in the Qur'ān or not, one must recognize the fundamental statements made by the Qur'ān and by the man to whom it was revealed, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him), to be the starting point of one's study. These claims are:

1. The Lord of creation, the Creator and Sovereign of the entire universe, created man on earth (which is merely a part of His boundless realm). He also endowed man with the capacity for cognition, reflection and understanding, with the ability to distinguish between good and evil, with the freedom of choice and volition, and with the power to exercise his latent potentialities. In short, God bestowed upon man a kind of autonomy and appointed him His vicegerent on earth.

2. Although man enjoys this status, God made it abundantly plain to him that He alone is man's Lord and Sovereign, even as He is the Lord and Sovereign of the whole universe. Man was told that he was not entitled to consider himself independent and that only God was entitled to claim absolute obedience, service and worship. It was also made clear to man that life in this world, for which he had been placed and invested with a certain honour and authority, was in fact a temporary term, and was meant to test him; that after the end of this earthly life man must return to God, Who will judge him on the basis of his performance, declaring who has succeeded and who has failed.

The right way for man is to regard God as his only Sovereign and the only object of his worship and adoration, to follow the guidance

revealed by God, to act in this world in the consciousness that earthly life is merely a period of trial, and to keep his eyes fixed on the ultimate objective—success in God's final judgement. Every other way is wrong.

It was also explained to man that if he chose to adopt the right way of life—and in this choice he was free—he would enjoy peace and contentment in this world and be assigned, on his return to God, the abode of eternal bliss and happiness known as Paradise. Should man follow any other way—although he was free to do so—he would experience the evil effects of corruption and disorder in the life of this world and be consigned to eternal grief and torment when he crossed the borders of the present world and arrived in the Hereafter.

3. Having explained all this, the Lord of the Universe placed man on earth and communicated to Adam and Eve, the first human beings to live on earth, the guidance which they and their offspring were required to follow. These first human beings were not born in a state of ignorance and darkness. On the contrary, they began their life in the broad daylight of Divine Guidance. They had intimate knowledge of reality and the law which they were to follow was communicated to them. Their way of life consisted of obedience to God (*i.e.*, Islam) and they taught their children to live in obedience to Him (*i.e.*, to live as Muslims).

In the course of time, however, men gradually deviated from this true way of life and began to follow various erroneous ways. They allowed true guidance to be lost through heedlessness and negligence and sometimes, even deliberately, distorted it out of evil perversity. They associated with God a number of beings, human and non-human, real as well as imaginary, and adored them as deities. They adulterated the God-given knowledge of reality (*al-'ilm* in Qur'anic terminology) with all kinds of fanciful ideas, superstitions and philosophical concepts, thereby giving birth to innumerable religions. They disregarded or distorted the sound and equitable principles of individual morality and of collective conduct (*Shari'ah* in Qur'anic terminology) and made their own laws in accordance with their base desires and prejudices. As a result, the world became filled with wrong and injustice.

4. It was inconsistent with the limited autonomy conferred upon man by God that He should exercise His overwhelming power and compel man to righteousness. It was also inconsistent with the fact that

God had granted a term to the human species in which to show their worth that He should afflict men with catastrophic destruction as soon as they showed signs of rebellion. Moreover, God had undertaken from the beginning of creation that true guidance would be made available to man throughout the term granted to him and that this guidance would be available in a manner consistent with man's autonomy. To fulfil this self-assumed responsibility God chose to appoint those human beings whose faith in Him was outstanding and who followed the way pleasing to Him. God chose these people to be His envoys. He had His messages communicated to them, honoured them with an intimate knowledge of reality, provided them with the true laws of life and entrusted them with the task of recalling man to the original path from which he had strayed.¹

5. These Prophets were sent to different people in different lands and over a period of time covering thousands and thousands of years. They all had the same religion; the one originally revealed to man as the right way for him. All of them followed the same guidance; those principles of morality and collective life prescribed for man at the very outset of his existence. All these Prophets had the same mission—to call man to this true religion and subsequently to organize all who accepted this message into a community (*ummah*) which would be bound by the Law of God, which would strive to establish its observance and would seek to prevent its violation. All the Prophets discharged their missions creditably in their own time. However, there were always many who refused to accept their guidance and consequently those who did accept it and became a 'Muslim' community² gradually degenerated, causing the Divine Guidance either to be lost, distorted or adulterated.

6. At last the Lord of the Universe sent Muḥammad (peace be on him) to Arabia and entrusted him with the same mission that He had entrusted to the earlier Prophets. This last Messenger of God addressed the followers of the earlier Prophets (who had by this time deviated from

1. These men were Prophets and Messengers of God—*Ed.*

2. That is, a group of people committed to obey the true guidance of God as revealed to His Prophets. Here the word 'Muslim' is not used in the sense of followers of the last Messenger of God, Muḥammad (peace be on him), but in the wider sense, meaning all those who, at various periods, both before and after the advent of the Last Prophet, committed themselves to live in submission to God—*Ed.*

their original teachings) as well as the rest of humanity. The mission of each Prophet was to call men to the right way of life, to communicate God's true guidance afresh and to organise into one community all who responded to his mission and accepted the guidance vouchsafed to him. Such a community was to be dedicated to the two-fold task of moulding its own life in accordance with God's guidance and striving for the reform of the world. The Qur'ān is the Book which embodies this mission and guidance, as revealed by God to Muḥammad (peace be on him).

IV

If we remember these basic facts about the Qur'ān it becomes easy to grasp its true subject, its central theme and the objective it seeks to achieve. Insofar as it seeks to explain the ultimate causes of man's success or failure the subject of the Book is MAN.

Its central theme is that concepts relating to God, the universe and man which have emanated from man's own limited knowledge run counter to reality. The same applies to concepts which have been either woven by man's intellectual fancies or which have evolved through man's obsession with animal desires. The ways of life which rest on these false foundations are both contrary to reality and ruinous for man. The essence of true knowledge is that which God revealed to man when He appointed him His vicegerent. Hence, the way of life which is in accordance with reality and conducive to human good is that which we have characterized above as 'the right way'. The real object of the Book is to call people to this 'right way' and to illuminate God's true guidance, which has often been lost either through man's negligence and heedlessness or distorted by his wicked perversity.

If we study the Qur'ān with these facts in mind it is bound to strike us that the Qur'ān does not deviate one iota from its main subject, its central theme and its basic objective. All the various themes occurring in the Qur'ān are related to the central theme; just as beads of different sizes and colour may be strung together to form a necklace. The Qur'ān speaks of the structure of the heavens and the earth and of man, refers to the signs of reality in the various phenomena of the universe, relates

anecdotes of bygone nations, criticizes the beliefs, morals and deeds of different peoples, elucidates supernatural truths and discusses many other things besides. All this the Qur'ān does, not in order to provide instruction in physics, history, philosophy or any other particular branch of knowledge, but rather to remove the misconceptions people have about reality and to make that reality manifest to them.

It emphasizes that the various ways men follow, which are not in conformity with reality, are essentially false, and full of harmful consequences for mankind. It calls on men to shun all such ways and to follow instead the way which both conforms to reality and yields best practical results. This is why the Qur'ān mentions everything only to the extent and in the manner necessary for the purposes it seeks to serve. The Qur'ān confines itself to essentials thereby omitting any irrelevant details. Thus, all its contents consistently revolve around this call.

Likewise, it is not possible fully to appreciate either the style of the Qur'ān, the order underlying the arrangement of its verses or the diversity of the subjects treated in it, without fully understanding the manner in which it was revealed.

The Qur'ān, as we have noted earlier, is not a book in the conventional sense of the term. God did not compose and entrust it in one piece to Muḥammad (peace be on him) so that he could spread its message and call people to adapt an attitude to life, consonant with its teachings. Nor is the Qur'ān one of those books which discusses their subjects and main themes in the conventional manner. Its arrangement differs from that of ordinary books, and its style is correspondingly different. The nature of this Book is that God chose a man in Makkah to serve as His Messenger and asked him to preach His message, starting in his own city (Makkah) and with his own tribe (Quraysh). At this initial stage, instructions were confined to what was necessary at this particular juncture of the mission. Three themes in particular stand out:

1. Directives were given to the Prophet (peace be on him) on how he should prepare himself for his great mission and how he should begin working for the fulfilment of his task.

2. A fundamental knowledge of reality was furnished and misconceptions commonly held by people in that regard—misconceptions which gave rise to wrong orientation in life—were removed.

3. People were exhorted to adopt the right attitude toward life. Moreover, the Qur'ān also elucidated those fundamental principles which, if followed, lead to man's success and happiness.

In keeping with the character of the mission at this stage the early revelations generally consisted of short verses, couched in language of uncommon grace and power, and clothed in a literary style suited to the taste and temperament of the people to whom they were originally addressed, and whose hearts they were meant to penetrate. The rhythm, melody and vitality of these verses drew rapt attention, and such was their stylistic grace and charm that people began to recite them involuntarily.

The local colour of these early messages is conspicuous, for while the truths they contained were universal, the arguments and illustrations used to elucidate them were drawn from the immediate environment familiar to the first listeners. Allusions were made to their history and traditions and to the visible traces of the past which had crept into the beliefs, and into the moral and social life of Arabia. All this was calculated to enhance the appeal the message held for its immediate audience. This early stage lasted for four or five years, during which period the following reactions to the Prophet's message manifested themselves:

1. A few people responded to the call and agreed to join the *ummah* (community) committed, of its own volition, to submit to the Will of God.

2. Many people reacted with hostility, either from ignorance, or egotism, or because of chauvinistic attachment to the way of life of their forefathers.

3. The call of the Prophet, however, did not remain confined to Makkah or to the Quraysh. It began to meet with favourable response beyond the borders of that city and among other tribes.

The next stage of the mission was marked by a hard, vigorous struggle between the Islamic movement and age-old Ignorance³ (*Jāhiliyyah*) of Arabia. Not only were the Makkans and the Quraysh bent upon preserving their inherited way of life, they were also firmly resolved to suppress the new movement by force. They stopped at nothing in the pursuit of this objective. They resorted to false propaganda; they spread doubt and suspicion and used subtle, malicious insinuations to sow distrust in people's minds. They tried to prevent people from listening to the message of the Prophet. They perpetrated savage cruelties on those who embraced Islam. They subjected them to economic and social boycott, and persecuted them to such an extent that on two occasions a number of them were forced to leave home and emigrate to Abyssinia, and finally they had to emigrate *en masse* to Madīnah.

In spite of this strong and growing resistance and opposition, the Islamic movement continued to spread. There was hardly a family left in Makkah one of whose members at least had not embraced Islam. Indeed, the violence and bitterness of the enemies of Islam was due to the fact that their own kith and kin—brothers, nephews, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers-in-law and so on—had not only embraced Islam, but were even ready to sacrifice their lives for its sake. Their resistance, therefore, brought them into conflict with their own nearest and dearest. Moreover, those who had forsaken the age-old Ignorance of Arabia included many who were outstanding members of their society. After embracing Islam, they became remarkable for their moral uprightness, their veracity and their purity of character that the world could hardly fail to notice the superiority of the message which was attracting people of such qualities.

During the Prophet's long and arduous struggle God continued to inspire him with revelations possessing at once the smooth, natural flow

3. The author uses the term 'Ignorance' (*Jāhiliyyah*) to denote all those world-views and ways of life which are based on the rejection or disregard of the heavenly guidance which is communicated to mankind through the Prophets and Messengers of God; the attitude of treating human life—either wholly or partly—as independent of the directives revealed by God. For this see the writings of the author especially *Islam and Ignorance* (Lahore, 1976), and *A Short History of the Revivalist Movements in Islam*, tr. Al-Ash'ari, III edition, Lahore, 1976. —Ed.

of a river, the violent force of a flood and the overpowering effect of a fierce fire. These messages instructed the believers in their basic duties, inculcated in them a sense of community and belonging, exhorted them to piety, moral excellence and purity of character, taught them how to preach the true faith, sustained their spirit by promises of success and Paradise in the Hereafter, aroused them to struggle in the cause of God with patience, fortitude and high spirits, and filled their hearts with such zeal and enthusiasm that they were prepared to endure every sacrifice, brave every hardship and face every adversity.

At the same time, those either bent on opposition, or who had deviated from the right way, or who had immersed themselves in frivolity and wickedness, were warned by having their attentions called to the tragic ends of nations with whose fates they were familiar. They were asked to draw lessons from the ruins of those localities through which they passed every day in the course of their wanderings. Evidence for the Unity of God and for the existence of the After-life was pointed to in signs visible to their own eyes and within the range of their ordinary experience. The weaknesses inherent in polytheism, the vanity of man's ambition to become independent even of God, the folly of denying the After-life, the perversity of blind adherence to the ways of one's ancestors regardless of right or wrong, were all fully elucidated with the help of arguments cogent enough to penetrate the minds and hearts of the audience.

Moreover, every misgiving was removed, a reasonable answer was provided to every objection, all confusion and perplexity was cleared up, and Ignorance was besieged from all sides till its irrationality was totally exposed. Along with all this went the warning of the wrath of God. The people were reminded of the horrors of Doomsday and the tormenting punishment of Hell. They were also censured for their moral corruption, for their erroneous ways of life, for their clinging to the ways of Ignorance, for their opposition to Truth and their persecution of the believers. Furthermore, these messages enunciated those fundamental principles of morality and collective life on which all sound and healthy civilizations enjoying God's approval had always rested.

This stage was unfolded in several phases. In each phase, the preaching of the message assumed ever wider proportions, as the

struggle for the cause of Islam and opposition to it became increasingly intense and severe, and as the believers encountered people of varying outlooks and beliefs. All these factors had the effect of increasing the variety of the topics treated in the messages revealed during this period. Such, in brief, was the situation forming the background to the Makkan *sūrah*s of the Qur'ān.

V

For thirteen years the Islamic movement strove in Makkah. It then obtained, in Madīnah a haven of refuge in which to concentrate its followers and its strength. The Prophet's movement now entered its third stage.

During this stage, circumstances changed drastically. The Muslim community succeeded in establishing a fully-fledged state; its creation was followed by prolonged armed conflict with the representatives of the ancient Ignorance of Arabia. The community also encountered followers of the former Prophets, *i.e.*, Jews and Christians. An additional problem was that hypocrites began to join the fold of the Muslim community; their machinations needed to be resisted. After a severe struggle, lasting ten years, the Islamic movement reached a high point of achievement when the entire Arabian peninsula came under its sway and the door was open to world-wide preaching and reform. This stage, like the preceding one, passed through various phases each of which had its peculiar problems and demands.

It was in the context of these problems that God continued to reveal messages to the Prophet. At times these messages were couched in the form of fiery speeches; at other times they were characterized by the grandeur and stateliness of majestic proclamations and ordinances. At times they had the air of instructions from a teacher; at others the style of preaching of a reformer. These messages explained how a healthy society, state and civilization could be established and the principles on which the various aspects of human life should be based.

They also dealt with matters directly related to the specific problems facing the Muslims. For example, how should they deal with the hypocrites (who were harming the Muslim community from within) and with the non-Muslims who were living under the care of the Muslim society? How should they relate to the people of the Book? What treatment should be meted out to those with whom the Muslims were at war, and how should they deal with those with whom they were bound by treaties and agreements? How should the believers, as a community, prepare to discharge their obligations as vicegerents of the Lord of the Universe? Through the Qur'ān the Muslims were guided in questions like these, were instructed and trained, made aware of their weaknesses, urged to risk their lives and property for the cause of God, taught the code of morality they should observe in all circumstances of life—in times of victory and defeat, ease and distress, prosperity and adversity, peace and security, peril and danger.

In short, they were being trained to serve as the successors of the mission of the Prophet, with the task of carrying on the message of Islam and bringing about reform in human life. The Qur'ān also addressed itself to those outside the fold of Islam, to the People of the Book, the hypocrites, the unbelievers, the polytheists. Each group was addressed according to its own particular circumstances and attitudes. Sometimes the Qur'ān invited them to the true faith with tenderness and delicacy; on other occasions, it rebuked and severely admonished them. It also warned them against, and threatened them with punishment from God. It attempted to make them take heed by drawing their attention to instructive historical events. In short, people were left with no valid reason for refusing the call of the Prophet.

Such, briefly, is the background to the Madīnan *sūrah*s of the Qur'ān. It is now clear to us that the revelation of the Qur'ān began and went hand in hand with the preaching of the message. This message passed through many stages and met with diverse situations from the very beginning and throughout a period of twenty-three years. The different parts of the Qur'ān were revealed step by step according to the multifarious, changing needs and requirements of the Islamic movement during these stages. It therefore could not possibly possess the kind of coherence and systematic sequence expected of a doctoral dissertation. Moreover, the various fragments of the Qur'ān which were revealed in

harmony with the growth of the Islamic movement were not published in the form of written treatises but were spread orally. Their style, therefore, bore an oratorical flavour rather than the characteristics of literary composition.

Furthermore, these orations were delivered by one whose task meant he had to appeal simultaneously to the mind, to the heart and to the emotions, and to people of different mental levels and dispositions. He had to revolutionize people's thinking, to arouse in them a storm of noble emotions in support of his cause, to persuade his Companions and inspire them with devotion and zeal, and with the desire to improve and reform their lives. He had to raise their morale and steel their determination, turn enemies into friends and opponents into admirers, disarm those out to oppose his message and show their position to be morally untenable. In short, he had to do everything necessary to carry his movement through to a successful conclusion. Oration \ddot{s} revealed in conformity with the requirements of a message and movement will inevitably have a style different from that of a professorial lecture.

This explains the repetitions we encounter in the Qur'ān. The interests of a message and a movement demand that during a particular stage, emphasis should be placed only on those subjects which are appropriate at that stage, to the exclusion of matters pertaining to later stages. As a result, certain subjects may require continual emphasis for months or even years. On the other hand, constant repetition in the same manner becomes exhausting. Whenever a subject is repeated, it should therefore be expressed in different phraseology, in new forms and with stylistic variations so as to ensure that the ideas and beliefs being put over find their way into the hearts of the people.

At the same time, it was essential that the fundamental beliefs and principles on which the movement was based should always be kept fresh in people's minds; a necessity which dictated that they should be repeated continually through all stages of the movement. For this reason, certain basic Islamic concepts about the unity of God and His Attributes, about the Hereafter, about man's accountability and about reward and punishment, about prophethood and belief in the revealed scriptures, about basic moral attributes such as piety, patience, trust in God and so on, recur throughout the Qur'ān. If these ideas had lost their hold on the

hearts and minds of people, the Islamic movement could not have moved forward in its true spirit.

If we reflect on this, it also becomes evident why the Prophet (peace be on him) did not arrange the Qur'ān in the sequence in which it was revealed. As we have noted, the context in which the Qur'ān was revealed in the course of twenty-three years was the mission and movement of the Prophet; the revelations correspond with the various stages of this mission and movement. Now, it is evident that when the Prophet's mission was completed, the chronological sequence of the various parts of the Qur'ān—revealed in accordance with the growth of the Prophet's mission—could in no way be suitable to the changed situation. What was now required was a different sequence in tune with the changed context resulting from the completion of the mission.

Initially, the Prophet's message was addressed to people totally ignorant of Islam. Their instruction had to start with the most elementary things. After the mission had reached its successful completion, the Qur'ān acquired a compelling relevance for those who had decided to believe in the Prophet. By virtue of that belief they had become a new religious community—the Muslim *ummah*. Not only that, they had been made responsible for carrying on the Prophet's mission, which he had bequeathed to them, in a perfected form on both conceptual and practical levels. It was no longer necessary for the Qur'ānic verses to be arranged in chronological sequence. In the changed context, it had become necessary for the bearers of the mission of the Prophet (peace be on him) to be informed of their duties and of the true principles and laws governing their lives. They also had to be warned against the deviations and corruptions which had appeared among the followers of earlier Prophets. All this was necessary in order to equip the Muslims to go out and offer the light of Divine Guidance to a world steeped in darkness.

It would be foreign to the very nature of the Qur'ān to group together in one place all verses relating to a specific subject; the nature of the Qur'ān requires that the reader should find teachings reverted during the Madīnan period interspersed with those of the Makkan period, and vice versa. It requires the juxtaposition of early discourses with instructions from the later period of the life of the Prophet. This blending of teachings from different periods helps to provide an overall view and

an integrated perspective of Islam, and acts as a safeguard against lopsidedness. Furthermore, a chronological arrangement of the Qur'ān would have been meaningful to later generations only if it had been supplemented with explanatory notes and these would have had to be treated as inseparable appendices to the Qur'ān. This would have been quite contrary to God's purpose in revealing the Qur'ān; the main purpose of its revelation was that all human beings—children and young people, old men and women, town and country dwellers, laymen and scholars—should be able to refer to the Divine Guidance available to them in composite form and providentially secured against adulteration. This was necessary to enable people of every level of intelligence and understanding to know what God required of them. This purpose would have been defeated had the reader been obliged solemnly to recite detailed historical notes and explanatory comment along with the Book of God.

Those who object to the present arrangement of the Qur'ān appear to be suffering from a misapprehension as to its true purpose. They sometimes almost seem under the illusion that it was revealed merely for the benefit of students of history and sociology!

VI

The present arrangement of the Qur'ān is not the work of later generations, but was made by the Prophet under God's direction. Whenever a *sūrah* was revealed, the Prophet summoned his scribes, to whom he carefully dictated its contents, and instructed them where to place it in relation to the other *sūrahs*. The Prophet followed the same order of *sūrahs* and verses when reciting during ritual Prayer as on other occasions, and his Companions followed the same practice in memorizing the Qur'ān. It is therefore a historical fact that the collection of the Qur'ān came to an end on the very day that its revelation ceased. The One who was responsible for its revelation was also the One who fixed its arrangement. The one whose heart was the receptacle of the Qur'ān was also responsible for arranging its sequence. This was far too important and too delicate a matter for anyone else to dare to become involved in.

Since Prayers were obligatory for the Muslims from the very outset of the Prophet's mission, and the recitation of the Qur'ān was an⁴ obligatory part of those Prayers, Muslims were committing the Qur'ān to memory while its revelation continued. Thus, as soon as a fragment of the Qur'ān was revealed, it was memorized by some of the Companions. Hence the preservation of the Qur'ān was not solely dependent on its verses being inscribed on palm leaves, pieces of bone, leather and scraps of parchment—the materials used by the Prophet's scribes for writing down Qur'ānic verses. Instead those verses came to be inscribed upon scores, then hundreds, then thousands, then hundreds of thousands of human hearts, soon after they had been revealed, so that no scope was left for any devil to alter so much as one word of them.

When after the death of the Prophet the storm of apostasy convulsed Arabia and the Companions had to plunge into bloody battles to suppress it, many Companions who had memorized the Qur'ān suffered martyrdom. This led 'Umar to plead that the Qur'ān ought to be preserved in writing as well as orally. He therefore impressed the urgency of this upon Abū Bakr. After slight hesitation, the latter agreed and entrusted that task to Zayd ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī, who had worked as a scribe of the Prophet.⁵

The procedure decided upon was to try and collect all written pieces of the Qur'ān left behind by the Prophet, as well as those in the possession of his Companions.⁶ When all this had been done, assistance was sought from those who had memorized the Qur'ān. No verse was incorporated into the Qur'ānic codex unless all three sources were found to be in complete agreement, and every criterion of verification had been

4. It should be noted that while the five daily Prayers were made obligatory several years after the Prophet was commissioned, Prayers were obligatory from the very outset: not a single moment elapsed when Prayers, as such, were not obligatory in Islam.

5. For an account of the early history of the Qur'ān, see Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥiṯ fi 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Beirut, 1977, pp. 65 ff. —Ed.

6. There are authentic Traditions to the effect that several Companions had committed the entire Qur'ān, or many parts of it to writing during the lifetime of the Prophet. Especially mentioned in this connection are the following Companions of the Prophet: 'Uthmān, 'Alī, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Anṣ ibn al-'Āṣ, Ṣālim the *mawlā* of Ḥudhayfah, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, Ubayy b. Ka'b and Abū Zayd Qays b. al-Sakan.

satisfied. Thus an authentic version of the Qur'ān was prepared. It was kept in the custody of Ḥafṣah (a wife of the Holy Prophet) and people were permitted to make copies of it and also to use it as the standard of comparison when rectifying the mistakes they might have made in writing down the Qur'ān.

In different parts of Arabia and among its numerous tribes there existed a diversity of dialects. The Qur'ān was revealed in the language spoken by the Quraysh of Makkah. Nevertheless, in the beginning, people of other areas and other tribes were permitted to recite it according to their own dialects and idioms, since this facilitated its recitation without affecting its substantive meaning. In the course of time, in the wake of the conquest of a sizeable part of the world outside of the Arabian peninsula, a large number of non-Arabs entered the fold of Islam. These developments affected the Arabic idiom and it was feared that the continuing use of various dialects in the recitation of the Qur'ān might give rise to grave problems. It was possible, for instance, that someone hearing the Qur'ān recited in an unfamiliar dialect might pick a fight with the reciter, thinking that the latter was deliberately distorting the Word of God. It was also possible that such differences might gradually lead to tampering with the Qur'ān itself. It was also not inconceivable that the hybridization of the Arabic language, due to the intermixture between Arabs and non-Arabs, might lead people to introduce modifications into the Qur'ānic text, thus impairing the grace of the Speech of God. As a result of such considerations, and after consultation with the Companions of the Prophet, 'Uthmān decided that copies of the standard edition of the Qur'ān, prepared earlier on the order of Abū Bakr, should be published, and that publication of the Qur'ānic text in any other dialect or idiom should be proscribed.

The Qur'ān that we possess today corresponds exactly to the edition which was prepared on the orders of Abū Bakr and copies of which were officially sent, on the orders of 'Uthmān, to various cities and provinces. Several copies of this original edition of the Qur'ān still exist today. Anyone who entertains any doubt as to the authenticity of the Qur'ān can satisfy himself by obtaining a copy of the Qur'ān from any bookseller, say in West Africa, and then have a *ḥāfiẓ* (memorizer of the Qur'ān) recite it from memory, compare the two, and then compare these with the copies of the Qur'ān published through the centuries since the time of

'Uthmān. If he detects any discrepancy, even in a single letter or syllable, he should inform the whole world of his great discovery!

Not even the most sceptical person has any reason to doubt that the Qur'ān as we know it today is identical with the Qur'ān which Muḥammad (peace be on him) set before the world; this is an unquestionable, objective, historical fact, and there is nothing in human history on which the evidence is so overwhelmingly strong and conclusive. To doubt the authenticity of the Qur'ān is like doubting the existence of the Roman Empire, the Mughals of India, or Napoleon! To doubt historical facts like these is a sign of stark ignorance, not a mark of erudition and scholarship.

VII

The Qur'ān is a Book to which innumerable people turn for innumerable purposes. It is difficult to offer advice appropriate to all. The readers to whom this work is addressed are those who are concerned to acquire a serious understanding of the Book, and who seek the guidance it has to offer in relation to the various problems of life. For such people we have a few suggestions to make, and we shall offer some explanations in the hope of facilitating their study of the Qur'ān.

Anyone who really wishes to understand the Qur'ān, irrespective of whether or not he believes in it, must divest his mind, as far as possible, of every preconceived notion, bias and prejudice, in order to embark upon his study with an open mind. Anyone who begins to study the Qur'ān with a set of preconceived ideas is likely to read those very ideas into the Book. No book can be profitably studied with this kind of attitude, let alone the Qur'ān which refuses to open its treasure-house to such readers.

For those who want only a superficial acquaintance with the doctrines of the Qur'ān one reading is perhaps sufficient. For those who want to fathom its depths several readings are not even enough. These people need to study the Qur'ān over and over again, taking notes of everything that strikes them as significant. Those who are willing to study the Qur'ān in this manner should do so at least twice to begin with, so as to obtain a broad grasp of the system of beliefs and practical

prescriptions that it offers. In this preliminary survey, they should try to gain an overall perspective of the Qur'ān and to grasp the basic ideas which it expounds, and the system of life that it seeks to build on the basis of those ideas. If, during the course of this study, anything agitates the mind of the reader, he should note down the point concerned and patiently persevere with his study, he is likely to find that, as he proceeds, the difficulties are resolved. (When a problem has been solved, it is advisable to note down the solution alongside the problem.) Experience suggests that any problems still unsolved after a first reading of the Qur'ān are likely to be resolved by a careful second reading.

Only after acquiring a total perspective of the Qur'ān should a more detailed study be attempted. Again the reader is well advised to keep noting down the various aspects of the Qur'ānic teachings. For instance, he should note the human model that the Qur'ān extols as praiseworthy, and the model it denounces. It might be helpful to make two columns, one headed 'praiseworthy qualities', the other headed 'blameworthy qualities', and then to enter into the respective columns all that is found relevant in the Qur'ān. To take another instance, the reader might proceed to investigate the Qur'ānic point of view on what is conducive to human success and felicity, as against what leads to man's ultimate failure and perdition. An efficient way to carry out this investigation would be to note under separate headings, such as 'conducive to success' and 'conducive to failure' any relevant material encountered. In the same way, the reader should take down notes about Qur'ānic teachings on questions of belief and morals, man's rights and obligations, family life and collective behaviour, economic and political life, law and social organization, war and peace, and so on. Then he should use these various teachings to try to develop an image of the Qur'ānic teachings *vis-a-vis* each particular aspect of human life. This should be followed by an attempt at integrating these images so that he comes to grasp the total scheme of life envisaged by the Qur'ān.

Moreover, anyone wishing to study in depth the Qur'ānic viewpoint on any particular problem of life should, first of all, study all the significant strands of human thought concerning that problem. Ancient and modern works on the subject should be studied. Unresolved problems where human thinking seems to have got stuck should be noted. The Qur'ān should then be studied with these unresolved problems in mind,

with a view to finding out what solutions the Qur'ān has to offer. Personal experience again suggests that anyone who studies the Qur'ān in this manner will find his problem solved with the help of verses which he may have read scores of times without it ever crossing his mind that they could have any relevance to the problems at hand.

It should be remembered, nevertheless, that full appreciation of the spirit of the Qur'ān demands practical involvement with the struggle to fulfil its mission. The Qur'ān is neither a book of abstract theories and cold doctrines which the reader can grasp while seated in a cosy armchair, nor is it merely a religious book like other religious books, the secrets of which can be grasped in seminaries and oratories. On the contrary, it is the blueprint and guidebook of a message, of a mission, of a movement. As soon as this Book was revealed, it drove a quiet, kind-hearted man from his isolation and seclusion, and placed him upon the battlefield of life to challenge a world that had gone astray. It inspired him to raise his voice against falsehood, and pitted him in a grim struggle against the standard-bearers of unbelief, of disobedience to God, of waywardness and error. One after the other, it sought out everyone who had a pure and noble soul, mustering them together under the standard of the Messenger. It also infuriated all those who by their nature were bent on mischief and drove them to wage war against the bearers of the Truth.

This is the Book which inspired and directed that great movement which began with the preaching of a message by an individual, and continued for no fewer than twenty-three years, until the Kingdom of God was truly established on earth. In this long and heart-rending struggle between Truth and falsehood, this Book unfailingly guided its followers to the eradication of the latter and the consolidation and enthronement of the former. How then could one expect to get to the heart of the Qur'ānic truths merely by reciting its verses, without so much as stepping upon the field of battle between faith and unbelief, between Islam and Ignorance? To appreciate the Qur'ān fully one must take it up and launch into the task of calling people to God, making it one's guide at every stage.

Then, and only then, does one meet the various experiences encountered at the time of its revelation. One experiences the initial rejection of the message of Islam by the city of Makkah, the persistent

hostility leading to the quest for a haven of refuge in Abyssinia, and the attempt to win a favourable response from Ṭā'if which led, instead, to cruel persecution of the bearer of the Qur'ānic message. One experiences also the campaigns of Badr, of Uḥud, of Ḥunayn and of Tabūk, one comes face to face with Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab, with hypocrites and with Jews, with those who instantly respond to this call as well as those who, lacking clarity of perception and moral strength, were drawn into Islam only at a later stage.

This will be an experience different from any so-called 'mystic experience'. I designate it the 'Qur'ānic mystic experience'. One of the characteristics of this 'experience' is that at each stage one almost automatically finds certain Qur'ānic verses to guide one, since they were revealed at a similar stage and therefore contain the guidance appropriate to it. A person engaged in this struggle may not grasp all the linguistic and grammatical subtleties, he may also miss certain finer points in the rhetoric and semantics of the Qur'ān, yet it is impossible for the Qur'ān to fail to reveal its true spirit to him.

Again, in keeping with the same principle, a man can neither understand the laws, the moral teachings, and the economic and political principles which the Qur'ān embodies, nor appreciate the full import of the Qur'ānic laws and regulations, unless he tries to implement them in his own life. Hence the individual who fails to translate the Qur'ānic precepts into personal practice will fail to understand the Book. The same must be said of any nation that allows the institutions of its collective life to run contrary to the teachings of the Qur'ān.

VIII

It is well known that the Qur'ān claims to be capable of guiding all mankind. Yet the student of the Qur'ān finds that it is generally addressed to the people of Arabia, who lived in the time of its revelation. Although the Qur'ān occasionally addresses itself to all mankind its contents are, on the whole, vitally related to the taste and temperament, the environment and history, and the customs and usages of Arabia. When one notices this, one begins to question why a Book which seeks to guide all mankind to salvation should assign such importance to

certain aspects of a particular people's life, and to things belonging to a particular age and clime. Failure to grasp the real cause of this may lead one to believe that the Book was originally designed to reform the Arabs of that particular age alone, and that it is only people of later times who have forced upon the Book an altogether novel interpretation, proclaiming that its aim is to guide all mankind for all time.

Some might say this with no other purpose than to vent their irrational prejudice against Islam. But leaving such people aside, a word may be said to those whose critical comments are motivated by the desire to understand things better. The latter would do well to study the Qur'ān carefully, noting down any place where they find that it has propounded either some doctrine or concept, or laid down some rule for practical conduct, relevant for the Arabs alone and exclusively conditioned by the peculiarities of a certain place or time. If, while addressing the people of a particular area at a particular period of time, attempting to refute their polytheistic beliefs and adducing arguments in support of its own doctrine of the unity of God, the Qur'ān draws upon facts with which those people were familiar, this does not warrant the conclusion that its message is relevant only for that particular people or for that particular period of time.

What ought to be considered is whether or not the Qur'ānic statements in refutation of the polytheistic beliefs of the Arabs of those days apply as well to other forms of polytheism in other parts of the world. Can the arguments advanced by the Qur'ān in that connection be used to rectify the beliefs of other polytheists? Is the Qur'ānic line of argument for establishing the unity of God, with minor adaptations, valid and persuasive for every age? If the answers are positive, there is no reason why a universal teaching should be dubbed exclusive to a particular people and age merely because it happened to be addressed originally to that people and at that particular period of time. No philosophy, ideology or doctrine consists of mere abstractions and is totally unrelated to the circumstances in which it developed. Even if such an absolute abstraction were possible it would remain confined to the scraps of paper on which it was written and would fail totally to have any impact on human life.

Moreover, if one wishes to spread any intellectual, moral and cultural movement on an international scale, it is by no mean essential, in fact it is not even useful, for it to start on global scale. If one wishes to propagate certain ideas, concepts and principles as the right bases for human life, one should begin by propagating them vigorously in the country where the message originates, and to the people whose language, temperament, customs and habits are familiar to its proponents. It will thus be possible to transform the lives of the people into a practical model of the message. Only then will it be able to attract the attention of other nations, and intelligent people living elsewhere will also try to understand it and to spread it in their own lands.

Indeed, what marks out a time-bound from an eternal, and a particularistic national doctrine from a universal one, is the fact that the former either seeks to exalt a people or claims special privileges for it or else comprises ideas and principles so vitally related to that people's life and traditions as to tender it totally inapplicable to the conditions of other peoples. A universal doctrine, on the other hand, is willing to accord equal rights and status to all, and its principles have an international character in that they are equally applicable to other nations. Likewise, the validity of those doctrines which seek to come to grips merely with questions of a transient and superficial nature is time-bound. If one studies the Qur'ān with these considerations in mind, can one really conclude that it has only a particularistic national character, and that its validity is therefore time-bound?

IX

Those who embark upon a study of the Qur'ān often proceed with the assumption that this Book is, as it is commonly believed to be, a detailed code of guidance. However, when they actually read it, they fail to find detailed regulations regarding social, political and economic matters. In fact, they notice that the Qur'ān has not laid down detailed regulations even in respect of such oft-repeated subjects as Prayers and *Zakāh* (Purifying Alms). The reader finds this somewhat disconcerting and wonders in what sense the Qur'ān can be considered a code of guidance.

The uncasiness some people feel about this arises because they forget that God did not merely reveal a Book, but that He also designated a Prophet. Suppose some laymen were to be provided with the bare outlines of a construction plan on the understanding that they would carry out the construction as they wished. In such a case, it would be reasonable to expect that they should have very elaborate directives as to how the construction should be carried out. Suppose, however, that along with the broad outline of the plan of construction, they were also provided with a competent engineer to supervise the task. In that case, it would be quite unjustifiable to disregard the work of the engineer, on the expectation that detailed directives would form an integral part of the construction plan, and then to complain of imperfection in the plan itself. (This analogy should elucidate the position of the Prophet *vis-a-vis* the Qur'ān, for he clarified and elaborated the Qur'ān, supplementing its broad general principles by giving them precise and detailed forms, and incorporating them into practical life, his own as well as that of his followers—*Ed.*)

The Qur'ān, to put it succinctly, is a Book of broad general principles rather than of legal minutiae. The Book's main aim is to expound, clearly and adequately, the intellectual and moral foundations of the Islamic programme for life. It seeks to consolidate these by appealing both to man's mind and to his heart. Its method of guidance for practical Islamic life does not consist of laying down minutely detailed laws and regulations. It prefers to outline the basic framework for each aspect of human activity, and to lay down certain guidelines within which man can order his life in keeping with the Will of God. The mission of the Prophet was to give practical shape to the Islamic vision of the good life, by offering the world a model of an individual character and of a human state and society, as living embodiments of the principles of the Qur'ān.

X

The Qur'ān is strong in its condemnation of those who indulge in schismatic squabbling after the Book of Allah has been revealed, so

causing a weakening of faith;⁷ yet there has been considerable disagreement over the correct interpretations of the Qur'ānic injunctions, not only among later scholars, but even among the founders of the legal schools and the Successors.⁸ Indeed, disagreement can be traced back even to the times of the Companions⁹ of the Prophet. One can hardly point to a single Qur'ānic verse of legal import which has received complete unanimity as regards its interpretation. One is bound to ask whether the Qur'ānic condemnation applies to all who have disagreed in this way. If it does not, then what kind of schism and disagreement does the Qur'ān denounce?

This is quite a problem and its ramifications cannot be considered at length here. The reader may rest assured that the Qur'ān is not opposed to differences of opinion within the framework of a general agreement on the fundamentals of Islam and the broad unity of the Islamic community. In addition it is not opposed to disagreement arising from an earnest endeavour to arrive at the right conclusions on a particular subject; the only disagreements condemned by the Qur'ān are those arising out of egotism and perversity, leading to mutual strife and hostility.

The two sorts of disagreement are different in character and give rise to different results. The first kind is a stimulus to improvement and the very soul of a healthy society. Differences of this kind are found in every society whose members are endowed with intelligence and reason. Their existence is a sign of life, while their absence only serves to demonstrate that a society is made up not of intelligent men and women but rather of blocks of wood. Disagreements of the second kind, however, are of an altogether different character and lead to ruin and destruction of the people among whom they arise. Far from being a sign of health, their emergence is symptomatic of a grave sickness.

The first kind of disagreement exists among scholars who are all agreed that it is their duty to obey God and His Prophet. They also agree

7. See the Qur'ān 3:105; 8:46—*Ed.*

8. The word 'Successors' has been used as the equivalent of *Tābi'ūn*, i.e. those who benefited from the Companions of the Prophet—*Ed.*

9. The word 'Companions' has been used as the equivalent of *Ṣaḥābah*, i.e. those who, in a state of belief, enjoyed the companionship of the Prophet (peace be upon him)—*Ed.*

that the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are their main sources of guidance. Thus, when scholarly investigation on some subsidiary question leads two or more scholars to disagree, or when two judges disagree in their judgement on some dispute, they regard neither their judgement, nor the questions on which their opinion has been expressed, as fundamentals of faith. They do not accuse those who disagree with their opinion of having left the fold of true faith. What each does is rather to proffer his arguments showing that he has done his best to investigate the matter thoroughly. It is then left to the courts (in judicial matters) and to public opinion (if the matter relates to the community at large) either to prefer whichever opinion seems the sounder, or to accept both opinions as equally permissible.

Schism occurs when the very fundamentals are made a matter of dispute and controversy. It may also happen that some scholar, mystic, *muftī*, or leader pronounces on a question to which God and His Messenger have not attached fundamental importance, exaggerating the significance of the question to such an extent that it is transformed into a basic issue of faith. Such people usually go one step further, declaring all who disagree with their opinion to have forsaken the true faith and set themselves outside the community of true believers. They may even go so far as to organize those who agree with them into a sect, claiming that sect to be identical with the Islamic community, and declaring that everyone who does not belong to it is destined to hell-fire!

Whenever the Qur'ān denounces schismatic disagreements and sectarianism, its aim is to denounce this latter kind of disagreement. As for disagreements of the first category, we encounter several examples of these even during the life of the Prophet. The Prophet not only accepted the validity of such disagreements, he even expressed approval of them. For this kind of disagreement shows that a community is not lacking in the capacity for thought, for enquiry and investigation, for grasping or wrestling with the problems it faces. It also shows that the intelligent members of the community are earnestly concerned about their religion and how to apply its injunctions to the problems of human life. It shows too that their intellectual capacities operate within the broad framework of their religion, rather than searching beyond its boundaries for solutions to their problems. And it proves that the community is following the golden path of moderation. Such moderation preserves its unity by broad

agreement on fundamentals, and at the same time provides its scholars and thinkers with full freedom of enquiry so that they may achieve fresh insights and new interpretations within the framework of the fundamental principles of Islam.

XI

It is not intended here to survey all the questions which may arise in the mind of a student of the Qur'ān. Many questions relate to specific *sūrah*s or verses, and are explained in the notes to these. This introduction confines itself to basic questions related to the understanding of the Qur'ān as a whole.

Contents

Translator's Introduction	1
<i>Chapter</i>	
1 Al-Fāṭūḥah (The Opening)	17
2 Al-Baqarah (The Heifer)	21
3 Āl 'Imrān (The Family of 'Imrān)	62
4 Al-Nisā' (The Women)	85
5 A'-Mā'idah (The Table Spread)	109
6 Al-A:':ām (The Cattle)	127
7 Al-A'rāf (The Heights)	149
8 Al-Anfāl (The Spoils of War)	174
9 Al-Tawbah (The Repentance)	184
10 Yūnus (Jonah)	202
11 Hūd (The Prophet Hud)	215
12 Yūsuf (Joseph)	229
13 Al-Ra'd (The Thunder)	242
14 Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	249
15 Al-Hijr (The Rocky Tract)	255
16 Al-Nahl (Bees)	262
17 Al- Isrā' (The Night Journey) or Banī Isrā'īl (The Children of Israel)	290
18 Al-Kahf (The Cave)	272
19 Maryam (Mary)	303
20 Tā Hā	311
21 Al-Anbiyā' (The Prophets)	322
22 Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage)	331
23 Al-Mu'minūn (The Believers)	340
24 Al-Nūr (The Light)	348
25 Al-Furqān (The Criterion)	358
26 Al-Shu'arā' (The Poets)	365
27 Al-Naml (The Ants)	375
28 Al-Qaṣaṣ (The Narrations)	384
29 Al-'Ankabūt (The Spider)	394
30 Al-Rūm (The Romans)	401
31 Luqmān	409
32 Al-Sajdah (The Prostration)	414

The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an

33	Al-Aḥzāb (The Confederates)	417
34	Sabā (The City of Sabā)	431
35	Fāṭir (The Originator of Creation)	437
36	Yā Sīn	443
37	Al-Sāffāt (Those Ranged in Ranks)	450
38	Šād	459
39	Al-Zumar (Crowds)	467
40	Ghāfir (Forgiver) or Al-Mu'min (The Believer)	476
41	Fuṣṣilat (Expounded) or Hā Mīm	485
42	Al-Shūrā (Consultation)	492
43	Al-Zukhruf (The Gold Adornments)	499
44	Al-Dukhān (The Smoke)	506
45	Al-Jāthiyah (The Kneeling Down)	510
46	Al-Aḥqāf (Winding Sand-tracts)	514
47	Muḥammad	519
48	Al-Fath (The Victory)	524
49	Al-Ḥujurāt (The Chambers)	532
50	Qaf	536
51	Al-Dhāriyāt (The Winds that Scatter)	540
52	Al-Tūr (The Mount)	544
53	Al-Najm (The Star)	547
54	Al-Qamar (The Moon)	551
55	Al-Rahmān (The Most Gracious)	555
56	Al-Wāqī'ah (The Inevitable)	559
57	Al-Ḥadīd (Iron)	563
58	Al-Mujādilah (The Woman Who Pleads)	568
59	Al-Ḥaṣhr (The Mustering)	572
60	Al-Mumtaḥinah (That Which Examines)	577
61	Al-Šaff (The Battle Array)	581
62	Al-Jumu'ah (Friday)	584
63	Al-Munāfiqūn (The Hypocrites)	586
64	Al-Taghābun (The Mutual Loss and Gain)	588
65	Al-Ṭalāq (Divorce)	590
66	Al-Taḥrīm (Prohibition)	593
67	Al-Mulk (The Dominion)	596
68	Al-Qalam (The Pen) or Nūn	599
69	Al-Ḥāqqah (The Sure Reality)	603
70	Al-Ma'ārij (The Ways of Ascent)	606
71	Nūḥ (Noah)	608
72	Al-Jinn (The Spirits)	610
73	Al-Muzzammil (The Enfolded One)	613
74	Al-Muddaththir (The One Wrapped Up)	616
75	Al-Qiyāmah (The Resurrection)	619
76	Al-Insān (The Man) or Al-Dahr (The Time)	621

Contents

77	Al-Mursalāt (Those Sent Forth)	624
78	Al-Nabā' (The Great News)	626
79	Al-Nāzi'āt (Those Who Tear Out)	629
80	'Abasa (He Frowned)	631
81	Al-Takwīr (The Folding Up)	633
82	Al-Infītār (The Cleaving Asunder)	635
83	Al-Muṭaffifīn (The Dealers in Fraud)	637
84	Al-Inshiqāq (The Rending Asunder)	639
85	Al-Burūj (The Constellations)	641
86	Al-Ṭāriq (The Night Star)	643
87	Al-A'lā (The Most High)	644
88	Al-Ghāshiyah (The Overwhelming Event)	646
89	Al-Fajr (The Dawn)	647
90	Al-Balad (The City)	649
91	Al-Shams (The Sun)	651
92	Al-Layl (The Night)	653
93	Al-Ḍuḥā (The Glorious Morning Light)	655
94	Al-Sharḥ or Al-Inshirāḥ (The Expansion of the Breast)	656
95	Al-Tīn (The Fig)	657
96	Al-'Alaq (The Clinging Clot) or Iqra' (Read!)	658
97	Al-Qadr (The Night of Power)	660
98	Al-Bayyinah (The Clear Evidence)	661
99	Al-Zalzalah (The Earthquake)	663
100	Al-'Ādiyāt (Those That Run)	664
101	Al-Qāri'ah (The Great Calamity)	665
102	Al-Takāthur (The Piling Up)	666
103	Al-'Asr (Time Through the Ages)	667
104	Al-Humazah (The Scandalmonger)	668
105	Al-Fīl (The Elephant)	669
106	Quraysh (The Tribe of Quraysh)	670
107	Al-Mā'ūn (The Neighbourly Assistance)	671
108	Al-Kawthar (The Abundance)	672
109	Al-Kāfirūn (Those Who Reject Faith)	673
110	Al-Naṣr (The Help)	674
111	Al-Laḥab (The Flame) or Al-Masad (The Plaited Rope)	675
112	Al-Ikhlāṣ (The Purity of Faith)	676
113	Al-Falaq (The Daybreak)	678
114	Al-Nās (Mankind)	679
	Index	681

Transliteration

Guide to Pronouncing Arabic Words

For some Arabic vowels and sounds there is no English equivalent. In order to help readers overcome this problem some special marks have been put on certain words in this book.

For example, *ā*, *ī* and *ū* stand for the vowel sounds *aa* (as in *path*), *ee* (as in *feet*) and *oo* (as in *pool*) respectively.

Similarly, the signs (') and (‘) have been used for the Arabic letters *hamzah* (as in *Wuḏū’*) and ‘*ayn* (as in *Ka’bah*).

Arabic Alphabet and its English Equivalent

ء	'	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	‘	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

**TRANSLATOR'S
INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK**

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

- 1.— Glory to Allah Most High, full of Grace and Mercy;
He created All, including Man.
To Man He gave a special place in His Creation.
He honoured man to be His Agent,
And to that end, endued him with understanding,
Purified his affections, and gave him spiritual insight;
So that man should understand Nature,
Understand himself,
And know Allah through His wondrous Signs,
And glorify Him in Truth, reverence, and unity.

- 2.— For the fulfilment of this great trust
Man was further given a Will,
So that his acts should reflect Allah's universal Will and Law,
And his mind, freely choosing,
Should experience the sublime joy
Of being in harmony with the Infinite,
And with the great drama of the world around him,
And with his own spiritual growth.

- 3.— But, created though he was in the best of moulds,
Man fell from Unity when his Will was warped,
And he chose the crooked path of Discord.
And sorrow and pain, selfishness and degradation,
Ignorance and hatred, despair and unbelief
Poisoned his life, and he saw shapes of evil
In the physical, moral, and spiritual world,
And in himself.

- 4.— Then did his soul rise against himself,
And his self-discord made discord between kith and kin:
Men began to fear the strong and oppress the weak,
To boast in prosperity, and curse in adversity,
And to flee each other, pursuing phantoms,
For the truth and reality of Unity
Was gone from their minds.
- 5.— When men spread themselves over the earth,
And became many nations,
Speaking diverse languages,
And observing diverse customs and laws;
The evils became multiplied,
As one race or nation
Became alienated from another.
The Brotherhood of Man was now doubly forgotten—
First, between individuals, and secondly, between nations.
Arrogance, selfishness, and untruth
Were sown and reaped in larger fields;
And Peace, Faith, Love and Justice
Were obscured over masses of men,
As large tracts of land are starved
Of sunshine by clouds floating far on high.
- 6.— But Allah, in His infinite mercy and love,
Who forgives and guides individuals and nations,
And turns to good even what seems to us evil,
Never forsakes the struggling soul that turns to Him,
Nor the groups of men and women
Who join together to obey His Will and Law
And strengthen each other in unity and truth,
Nor the Nations that dwell
In mountain or valley, heat or cold,
In regions fertile or arid,
In societies that roam over land or seas,
Or hunt, or tend flocks, or till the soil,

Or seek the seas for food or oil or fat or gems,
Or dig out from the bowels of the earth
Precious stones or metals or stored-up heat and energy,
Or practise arts and crafts, or produce abundant wealth
By machines of ingenious workmanship,
Or live a frugal life of contemplation:
For all are creatures of One Allah,
And share His loving care
And must be brought within the pale
Of His eternal unity and harmony.

- 7.— And so this light of eternal Unity
Has shone in all ages and among all nations,
Through chosen Messengers of Allah, who came
As men to dwell among men,
To share their joys and sorrows,
To suffer for them and with them—
Aye, and to suffer more than falls
To ordinary mortal lot—
That so their message and their life
Might fulfil the eternal
And unchanging purpose of the Most High
To lead man to his noblest destiny.
- 8.— Ever this eternal light of Unity,
This mystic light of Allah's own Will,
Has shone and shines with undiminished splendour.
The names of many Messengers are inscribed
In the records of many nations and many tongues,
And many were the forms in which their
message was delivered,
According to the needs of the times and the
understanding of the people;
And manifold were the lives of the Messengers,
And manifold also was the response of their people;

But they all witnessed to the One Truth:
Of Allah's unity, might, grace and love.

- 9.— As the records of man are imperfect,
And the memory of man unstable:
The names of many of these messengers
Are known in one place and not in another,
Or among one people and not among others;
And some of their names may have perished utterly;
But their message stands one and indivisible,
Even though it may have been forgotten,
Or twisted by ignorance, error, superstition or perversity;
Or misunderstood in the blinding light
Of time or tortuous Circumstances.
- 10.— Many were the faiths in the composite world
Of Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Europe,
And many were the fragments of ancient wisdom,
Saved, transformed, renewed, or mingled;
And many new streams of wisdom were poured
through the crucibles
Of noble minds—prophets, poets, preachers,
Philosophers, and thinking men of action;
And many were the conflicts, and many
The noble attempts reaching out towards Unity,
And many were the subtle influences
Interchanged with the other worlds
Of further and Eastern Asia—
Aye, and perchance with the scattered Isles
Of the Pacific and the world between
The Atlantic and the Pacific.
- 11.— At length came the time when the Voice of Unity
Should speak and declare to the People,
Without the need of Priests or Priest-craft,
Without miracles save those that happen

Now and always in the spiritual world,
Without mystery, save those mysteries
Which unfold themselves in the growing
Inner experience of man and his vision of Allah—
To declare with unfaltering voice
The Unity of Allah, the Brotherhood of Man,
And Grace and Mercy, Bounty and Love,
Poured out in unstinted measure for ever and ever.

- 12.— And this great healing light shone
Among a people steeped in ignorance,
Brave and free, but without cohesion or union,
Simple and rude, but with an easy familiarity with Nature,
Accustomed to Nature's hardships and her rugged
resistance to man,
But dreaming of the delights of gardens and fruitful fields,
Cruel, yet with a rough sense of equality,
And wielding a tongue, flexible, beautiful,
And able to respond, with brevity and eloquence,
To the sublimest thoughts which man could conceive.
- 13.— Who were fit to be vehicles of this light?—
Not men intoxicated with words and mysteries,
Men whom politics had debauched or tyranny had subdued,
Men whose refinement had ended in vices,
Who saw Nature only through books or artificial conceits,
Or in moods which bred softness, indolence, or luxury,
Who spoke of love and justice, but practised
Gross selfishness between class and class,
Sex and sex, condition and condition;
And had perverted their language, once beautiful,
Into jargons of empty elegance and unmeaning futility.
- 14.— For the glory of Hellas, and her freedom and
wisdom had departed;
Rome's great systems of law, organisation,

and universal citizenship
Had sunk into the mire of ecclesiastical formalism,
And dogmatism, and exclusive arrogance;
The living fire of Persia's prophet scarce smouldered
In her votaries of luxury;
In India, countless castes and kingdoms
Cancelled the unity of Buddha's teaching;
The wounds of China had not yet been healed
by T'ang culture;
And Japan was still a disciple of China.

- 15.— Then, in the sacred city of pagan Arabia,
Shone a light that spread in all directions.
It was centrally placed for the bounds of the world
Of men's habitations in Asia, Europe, and Africa.
It made the Arabs the leading nation of culture and science,
Of organised enterprise, law, and arts,
With a zeal for the conquest of Nature and her mysteries.
- 16.— Behold! There was born into the world of sense
The unlettered Prophet, the comely child,
Noble of birth, but nobler still
In the grace and wisdom of human love
And human understanding; dowered with the key
Which opened to him the enchanted palace
Of nature; marked out to receive—
To receive and preach in burning words
The spiritual truth and message of the Most High.
- 17.— Others before him had been born
In darkness, beyond the reach
Of history; others again it pleased Allah
To send as Messengers, preaching, working
In the dim twilight of history,
Wherein men fashion legends
After their own hearts and dimly seek

A light afar, remote from the lives
Mean and sordid, such as they knew.

- 18.— But Muhammad came in the fullest blaze
Of history; with no learning he put to shame
The wisdom of the learned; with pasture folk
He lived and worked, and won their love; in hills
And valleys, caves and deserts, he wandered,
But never lost his way to truth and righteousness;
From his pure and spotless heart the Angels washed
Off the dust that flew around him; through the ways
Of crooked city folk, he walked upright and straight,
And won from them the ungrudging name
Of the Man of Faith¹ who never broke his word.
- 19.— To the Praiseworthy² indeed be praise:
Born in the Sacred City³ he destroyed
Its superstition; loyal to his people to the core,
He stood for all humanity; orphan-born
And poor, he envied not the rich,
And made his special care all those
Whom the world neglected or oppressed—
Orphans, women, slaves, and those in need
Of food or comforts, mental solace, spiritual strength,
Or virtues downtrodden in the haunts of men.
- 20.— His mother⁴ and his foster-mother⁵
Loved and wondered at the child;
His grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib,

-
1. Al-Amīn.
 2. Muḥammad.
 3. Makkah.
 4. Āminah.
 5. Hafimah.

Of all his twice-eight children and their offspring,
 Loved him best and all his sweet and gentle ways;
 His uncle Abū Tālib, loath though he was
 To give up the cult of his fathers,
 Knew well the purity of Muhammad's
 Mind and soul, and was his stoutest champion
 When the other chiefs of Makkah sought to kill
 The man who challenged in his person
 Their narrow Pagan selfish lives.

- 21.— To his cousin 'Alī, the well-beloved,⁶
 Born when he was thirty, he appeared
 As the very pattern of a perfect man,
 As gentle as he was wise and true and strong,
 The one in whose defence and aid
 He spent his utmost strength and skill,
 Holding life cheap in support of a cause so high,
 And placing without reserve his chivalry,
 His prowess, his wit and learning, and his sword
 At the service of this mighty Messenger of Allah.
- 22.— Not till the age of forty⁷ did he receive
 The Commission to stand forth and proclaim
 The Bounty of Allah, and His gift, to lowly Man,
 Of knowledge by Word and Pen; but all through
 His years of preparation he did search for
 The Truth: he sought it in Nature's forms and laws,
 Her beauty and her stern unflinching ways;
 He sought it in the inner world
 Of human lives, men's joys and sorrows,
 Their kindly virtues and their sins
 Of pride, injustice, cruel wrong,

6. Murtadā.

7. The Arabian year preceding 10 A.H. was roughly luni-solar.

And greed of gain, scarce checked by the inner voice
That spoke of duty, moral law, and higher still,
The Will Supreme of Allah, to which the will
Of man must tune itself to find its highest bliss.

- 23.— But he grew steadfastly in virtue and purity;
Untaught by men, he learnt from them, and learned
To teach them; even as a boy of nine,
When he went in a trade caravan with Abū Tālib
To Syria,⁸ his tender soul marked inwardly
How Allah did speak in the wide expanse
Of deserts, in the stern grandeur of rocks,
In the refreshing flow of streams, in the smiling
Bloom of gardens, in the art and skill with which
Men and birds and all life sought for light
From the Life of Lives, even as every plant
Seeks through devious ways the light of the Sun.
- 24.— Nor less was he grieved at Man's ingratitude
When he rebelled and held as naught the
Signs of Allah, and turned His gifts to baser uses,
Driving rarer souls to hermit life,
Clouding the heavenly mirror of pure affections
With selfish passions, mad unseemly wrangles,
And hard unhallowed loathsome tortures of themselves.
- 25.— He worked, and joyed in honest labour;
He traded with integrity to himself and to others;
He joined the throngs of cities and their busy life,

8. It was on such visits that he met and conversed with Nestorian Christian monks like Bahīrah who were quick to recognise his spiritual worth. Perhaps the meeting was in Busra in the Jabal Druze district of Syria, some 70 miles south of Damascus. There was another Busra in Edom, north of Petra in Transjordan. Busra was famous for trade in costly red dyes, and is referred to as Bozrah in Isaiah, lxiii:1. Neither of these towns is to be confused with the modern Basra. [The Prophet, peace be on him, went to Syria twice, and the incident of meeting Bahīrah took place during one of these visits. (*Eds.*)].

But saw its good and evil as types
 Of an inner and more lasting life hereafter;
 People gladly sought his help as umpire
 And peacemaker because they knew his soul
 Was just and righteous: he loved the society
 Of old and young, but oft withdrew to solitude
 For Prayer and inward spiritual strength;
 He despised not wealth but used it for others;
 He was happy in poverty and used it as his badge
 And his pride⁹ when wealth was within his reach
 But not within his grasp, as a man among men.

- 26.— At twenty-five he was united in the holy bonds
 Of wedlock with Khadijah the Great, the noble lady
 Who befriended him when he had no worldly resources,
 Trusted him when his worth was little known,
 Encouraged and understood him in his spiritual struggles,
 Believed in him when with trembling steps
 He took up the Call and withstood obloquy,
 Persecution, insults, threats, and tortures,
 And was a life-long helpmate till she was gathered
 To the saints in his fifty-first year—
 A perfect woman, the mother of those that believe.

- 27.— There is a cave in the side of Mount Hirā'
 Some three miles north of the city of Makkah,
 In a valley which turns left from the road to 'Arafāt,
 To which Muḥammad used to retire
 for peaceful contemplation:
 Often alone, but sometimes with Khadijah.¹⁰
 Days and nights he spent there with his Lord.
 Hard were the problems he revolved in his mind—

9. *Al-faqrū fakhri*: "Poverty is my pride."

10. Who would sometimes bring him provision [Ed.]

Harder and more cross-grained than the red granite
 Of the rock around him—problems not his own,
 But his people's, yea, and of human destiny,
 Of the Mercy of Allah, and the age-long conflict
 Of evil and righteousness, sin and abounding Grace.

- 28.— Not till forty years of earthly life had passed
 That the veil was lifted from the Preserved Tablet
 And its contents began to be transferred to
 the tablet of his mind,
 To be proclaimed to the world, and read and studied
 For all time—a fountain of mercy and wisdom,
 A warning to the heedless, a guide to the erring,
 An assurance to those in doubt, a solace to the suffering,
 A hope to those in despair—to complete the chain
 Of Revelation through the mouths
 Of divinely inspired Prophets.

- 29.— The Chosen One¹¹ was in the Cave of Hira'.
 For two years and more he had prayed there and adored
 His Creator and wondered at the mystery
 Of man with his corruptible flesh, just growing
 Out of a clot,¹² and the soul in him
 Reaching out to knowledge sublime, new
 And ever new, taught by the bounty
 Of Allah, and leading to that which man himself
 Knoweth not. And now, behold! a dazzling
 Vision of beauty and light overpowered his senses,
 And he heard the word "Iqra'!"

- 30.— "Iqra'!" which being interpreted may mean
 "Read!" or "Proclaim!" or "Recite!"

11. Al-Mustafā.

12. See 96:2.

The unlettered Prophet was puzzled;
 He could not read. The Angel seemed
 To press him to his breast in a close embrace,
 And the cry rang clear "Iqra'!"
 And so it happened three times; until
 The first overpowering sensation yielded
 To a collected grasp of the words which made clear
 His Mission; its Author, Allah, the Creator,
 Its subject, Man, Allah's wondrous handiwork,
 Capable, by Grace, of rising to heights sublime;
 And the instrument of that mission, the sanctified Pen,
 And the sanctified Book, the Gift of Allah,
 Which men might read, or write, or study, or
 treasure in their souls.

- 31.— The veil was lifted from the Chosen One's eyes,
 And his soul for a moment was filled with divine Ecstasy...
 When this passed, and he returned to the world of Time
 And Circumstance and this world of Sense,
 He felt like one whose eyes had seen
 A light of dazzling beauty, and felt dazed
 On his return to common sights.
 The darkness now seemed tenfold dark;
 The solitude seemed tenfold empty;
 The mount of Hira', henceforth known
 As the Mountain of Light,¹³ the mere shell
 Of an intense memory. Was it a dream?
 Terror seized his limbs and he straightway sought
 Her who shared his inmost life,
 And told her of his sense of exaltation,
 And the awful void when the curtain closed.
- 32.— She understood, rejoiced, and comforted him;
 Gave strength to his shaken senses;

13. Jabal al-Nūr (the place where Prophet Muḥammad received the first revelation).

Wrapped up in warmth his shivering body,
 Unused as yet to bear the strain and stress
 Of an experience rare to mortal men.
 She knew it was no dream or delusion.
 She went and consulted her cousin Waraqah,
 A devout worshipper of Allah in the Faith of Christ,
 Learned in spiritual lore. He listened
 And with her rejoiced that he, Muhammad,
 Was Allah's Chosen One to renew the Faith.

- 33.— She said: 'Blessed be you, Chosen One!
 Do we not see your inner life—true and pure?
 Do not all see your outer life—kind and gentle?—
 Loyal to kin, hospitable to strangers?
 No thought of harm or mischief ever stained your mind
 Nor word ever passed your lips that was not true
 Or stilled not the passions of narrower men.
 Ever ready in the service of Allah, you are he
 Of whom I bear witness: there's no god but He,
 And you are His Chosen Prophet.'
- 34.— Khadijah believed, exalted in faith
 Above all women; 'Alī, the well-beloved,
 Then a child of ten, but lion-hearted,
 Plighted his faith, and became from that moment
 The right hand of Islam; Abū Bakr, the Sincere,¹⁴
 The True-hearted, the man of wealth and influence,
 Who used both without stint for the Cause,
 The sober counsellor, the inseparable friend,
 Never hesitated to declare his faith;
 And Zayd, the freedman of Muhammad,
 Counted his freedom as naught compared
 With the service of Muhammad and Islam.
 These were the first fruits of the mission:

14. Ṣadiq or Ṣiddīq, the title of Abū Bakr.

A woman, a child, a man of affairs, and a freedman,
All banded together in the equality of Islam.

- 35.— The revelation had come, the mission
And the inspiration. But what was it leading to?
It was a miracle, but not in the sense
Of a reversing of Nature: Al-Mustafā's vision
Was linked with Eternity, but he was no soothsayer
Foretelling passing events; the mysteries
Of knowledge were being opened out, but his message
Was no mere esoteric doctrine, to be grasped
By a few in contemplation, fleeing from action;
Nor was it the practice of single or social monasticism,
Undisturbed by the whims or passions of life.
He was asked to stand forth, to preach, to declare
The One Universal Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful,
And to lead men to the Right and forbid the Wrong.
- 36.— The wrong?—The selfish pride of birth,
The massing of power and wealth in the hands
Of a few, the slaughter of female infants,
The orgies of gambling and drunkenness,
The frauds of temples and idols and priests,
The feuds and arrogance of tribes and races,
The separation of Sacred and Profane,
As if the unity of All Life and All Truth
Did not flow from the unity of Allah, Most High.
- 37.— He was loyal to his family, but could he support
Their monopoly of power?—To his tribe,
But were the Quraysh the only creatures
Of Allah? To the temple of Makkah, but
Could he wink at Lāt and 'Uzzā, and the other monsters,
Whose worship killed the spiritual growth of Man?—
To the earlier Revelations, but could he hold
With the superstitions and falsehoods, the dogmas and creeds

Which went against reason and nature, and the inner light
Which was now fanned into flame by the Will of Allah?

- 38.— And so his very virtues and loyalties pointed
To offence and conflict, mockery and misrepresentation,
Hatred and persecution, threats, tortures, and exile
For him and his, and martyrdoms, wars, revolutions,
And the shaking of the foundations of history
And the social order. But Islam meant
The willing submission of his will to Allah,
The active attainment of Peace through Conflict.
- 39.— And he gave that submission, not without effort,
Even as Moses¹⁵ did before him,
And Jesus¹⁶ in the agony of the garden of Gethsemane.
- 40.— For three and twenty years, in patience,
Conflict, hope, and final triumph,
Did this Prophet of Allah receive
And teach the Message of the Most High.
It came, like the fruit of the soul's own yearning,
To teach profound spiritual truths,
Answer questions, appeal to men
In their doubts and fears, help and put heart
In them in moments of trial, and ordain
For them laws by which they could live
In society lives of purity, goodness and peace.
- 41.— These messages came as inspiration
To Muhammad as the need arose,
On different occasions and in different places:
He recited them, and they were recorded

15. Qur'ān 20:25-32.

16. Matt. xxvi.

By the Pen: they were imprinted on his heart
And mind, and on the memory
Of his loving disciples: as the body
Of sacred Scripture grew, it was arranged
For purposes of public prayer and reading:
This is the Book, or the Reading, or the Qur'ān.

*** **

Chapter 1

AL-FĀTIHAH (The Opening)

Introduction

First comes that beautiful Sūrah,¹⁷
The Opening Chapter¹⁸ of Seven Verses,¹⁹
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 judgement: 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 for His guidance;
And we know the straight from the crooked path
By the light of His grace that illumines the righteous.

*** **

17. Each chapter or portion of the Qur'ān is called a Sūrah, which means a Degree or Step, by which we mount up. Sometimes whole Sūrahs were revealed, and sometimes portions, which were arranged under the Prophet's directions. Some Sūrahs are long, and some are short, but a logical thread runs through them all. Each verse of the Sūrah is called an *Āyah* (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 *Āyāt* are long, and some are short. The *Āyah* is the true unit of the Qur'ān. [15]

[Throughout this book "Sūrah" will be used for Chapter in the text.—Ed.]

18. *Fātihah* = Opening Chapter: See note 1 at the end of this Sūrah. [16]

18a. 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 God 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 into union with God's Will. 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 God's attributes better (verses 2-4). This leads us to the attitude of worship and acknowledgement (verse 5). And finally comes prayer for guidance, and a contemplation of what guidance means (verses 6-7).

God 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 for our own spiritual education, consolation, and confirmation.

That is why the words in this Sūrah are given to us in the form in which we should utter them. When we reach enlightenment, they flow spontaneously from us. [18]

19. These seven verses form a complete unit by themselves, and are recited in every prayer and on many other occasions. Cf. 15:87. [17]

- 1 In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.²⁰
- 2 Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer²¹ of the Worlds; 3 Most Gracious, Most Merciful; 4 Master of the Day of Judgement.
- 5 You do we worship, and Your aid we seek.²²
- 6 Show us the straight way,²³ 7 The way of those on whom You bestowed Your Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath,²⁴ and who go not astray.²⁵ □

20. The Arabic words *Rahmān* and *Rahīm*, 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, and He is independent of Time and Place. 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 clearer light and higher life. For this reason the attribute *Rahmān* (Most Gracious) is not applied to any but Allah, but the attribute *Rahīm* (Merciful), is a general term, and may also be applied to Men. To make us contemplate these boundless gifts of Allah, the formula: "In the name of Allah Most Gracious, Most Merciful": is placed before every Sūrah of the Qur'ān (except the ninth), and repeated at the beginning of every act by the Muslim who dedicates his life to Allah, and whose hope is in His Mercy.

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. Therefore it is better to give it an independent number in the first Sūrah. For subsequent Sūrahs it is treated as an introduction or headline, and therefore not numbered. [19]

21. 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.

There are many worlds, astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual world, and so on. In every one of them, Allah is all-in-all. We express only one aspect of it when we say: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." The mystical

division between (1) *Nāsūt*, the human world knowable by the senses, (2) *Malakūt*, the invisible world of angels, and (3) *Lāhūt*, the divine world of Reality, requires a whole volume to explain it. [20]

22. On realising in our souls Allah's love and care, His grace and mercy, and His power and justice (as Ruler of the Day of Judgement), 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. [21]

23. 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 (90:11). 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 judgement. [22]

24. Note that 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. [23]

25. 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 *ghayr* should be construed as applying not to the way, but as describing men protected from two dangers by Allah's Grace. [24]

Chapter 2

AL-BAQARAH (The Heifer)

Introduction

As the Opening Sūrah (Chapter) sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qur'ān, so this Sūrah sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qur'ān. 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 (2:30-39).

Israel's story is then told according to their own records and traditions, what privileges they received and how they abused them (2:40-86), 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 their own lights and in their pride rejected Muḥammad, who came in the true line of Prophets (2:87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imām, but he was the progenitor of Ismā'il's line (Arabs) as well as of Israel's line, and he with Ismā'il built the Ka'bah (the House of Allah in Makkah) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (2:122-141). The Ka'bah was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (2:142-167).

The Islamic *Ummah* (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 (2:177) 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. (2:168-242).

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 (2:243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (2:254-283), and Allah's nature [Allah's Attributes— *Ed.*] is called to mind in the sublime *Āyah al-Kursī*, the Verse of

the Throne (2:255).

The Sūrah ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal Responsibility, and Prayer (2:284-286).

This is the longest Sūrah of the Qur'ān, and in it occurs the longest verse (2:282). The name of the Sūrah is from the Parable of the Heifer in 2:67-71, 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 fossilised, 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 Sūrah.

This is in the main an early Madīnan Sūrah.

*** **

SECTION 1: Fundamental Principles of Islam

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lam Mim.*²⁶

2 This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear²⁷ Allah; 3 Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; 4 And who believe in the Revelation sent to you, and sent before your time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter.

5 They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper. 6 As to those who reject Faith,²⁸ it is the same to them

26. These are abbreviated letters, the *Muqāṭa'āt*. Certain Sūrahs have certain initials prefixed to them. 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.

The particular letters, *Alif, Lām, Mim*, are found prefixed to this Sūrah, and Sūrahs 3, 29, 30, 31 and 32 (six in all). In 2 and 3 the argument is about the rise and fall of nations, their past, and their future in history, with ordinances for the new universal people of Islam. In 29 a similar argument about nations leads off to the mystery of Life and Death, Failure and Triumph, Past and Future, in the history of individual souls. The burden of 30 is that Allah is the source of all things and all things return to Him. In 31 and 32 the same lesson is enforced: Allah is the Creator and He will be the Judge on the Last Day. There is therefore a common thread, the mystery of Life and Death, Beginning and End.

Much has been written about the meaning of these letters, but most of it is pure conjecture. Some commentators are content to recognise them as some mystic symbols of which it is unprofitable to discuss the meaning by mere verbal logic. [25]

27. Arabic *Taqwā*, and the verbs and nouns connected with the root, signify: (1) the fear of Allah, *whic'*, 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 47:17 and 74:56. [26]

28. Arabic *Kafara*, *kufr*, *kāfir*, and derivative forms of the word, imply a deliberate
(continued...)

whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe. 7 Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur).

SECTION 2: **Lip Profession**

8 Of the people there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day;" but they do not (really) believe. 9 Fain would they deceive Allah and those who believe, but they only deceive themselves, and realise (it) not! 10 In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease: and grievous is the penalty they (incur), because they are false (to themselves). 11 When it is said to them: "Make not mischief on the earth," they say: "Why, we only want to make peace!" 12 Of a surety, they are the ones who make mischief, but they realise (it) not. 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. 14 When they meet those who believe, 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 from the sky: in it are zones of darkness, and thunder

28. (...continued)

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, and the possibility of rejection follows from the grant of free will. The consequence of the rejection is that the spiritual faculties become dead or impervious to better influences. [30]

and lightning: they press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunderclap, 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 has power over all things.

SECTION 3: Divine Unity

21 O you people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, Who created you and those who came before you, that you may have the chance to learn righteousness; **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 you know (the truth). **23** And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sūrah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true. **24** But if you cannot—and of a surety you 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, 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 companions pure (and holy); and they abide therein (for ever).

26 Allah disdains not to use the similitude of things, lowest as well as highest. Those who believe know that it is 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)—**27** Those who break Allah's Covenant²⁹ after it is ratified, and who sunder what

29. Verses 26 and 27 form one sentence and should be read together. "Forsaking the path" is defined in 2:27; viz., breaking solemn covenants which the sinner's own soul
(continued...)

Allah has ordered to be joined, and do mischief on earth: these cause loss (only) to themselves. **28** How can you reject the faith in Allah?—seeing that you 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 you return. **29** It is He Who has created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things He has perfect knowledge.

SECTION 4: Greatness of Man and Need of Revelation

30 Behold, your Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?—whilst we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?" He said: "I know what you know not." **31** And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: "Tell Me the nature of these if you are right." **32** They said: "Glory to You, of knowledge we have none, save what You have taught us: in truth it is You Who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom." **33** He said: "O Adam! Tell them their natures." When he had told them, Allah said: "Did I not tell you that

29. (...continued)

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 (2:27) has a particular and 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 Muḥammad 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. [45]

I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?" 34 And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblīs:³⁰ he refused and was haughty; he was of those who reject Faith.

35 We said: "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; but approach not this tree, or you run into harm and transgression."³¹ 36 Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. We said: "Get you down, all (you people), with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood—for a time." 37 Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. 38 We said: "Get you down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, 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."

SECTION 5: Israelite Prophecies Fulfilled in the Qur'ān

40 O Children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your Covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me. 41 And believe in what I reveal, 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

30. The Arabic may also be translated: "They bowed down, except Iblīs." In that case Iblīs (Satan) would be one of the angels. But the theory of fallen angels is not accepted in Muslim theology. In 18:50, Iblīs is spoken of as a *Jinn*. We shall discuss later the meaning of this word. [49]

31. *Zulm* in Arabic (for transgression) 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. [51]

conceal the Truth when you know (what it is). **43** And be steadfast in prayer; practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship). **44** Do you enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (to practise it) yourselves, and yet you study the Scripture? Will you not understand? **45** Nay, seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance³² and prayer: it is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit—**46** Who bear in mind the certainty that they are to meet their Lord, and that they are to return to Him.

SECTION 6: Divine Favours on Israel

47 O Children of Israel! Call to mind the (special) favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message). **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 anyone be helped (from outside).

49 And remember, We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh: they set you hard tasks and punishments, slaughtered your sons and let your womenfolk live; therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord.

50 And remember We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people within your very sight.

51 And remember We appointed forty nights for Moses, and in his absence you took the calf (for worship), and you did grievous wrong.

52 Even then We did forgive you; there was a chance for you to be grateful.

32. The Arabic word *Ṣabr* (translated here "patient perseverance") 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 by the element of constancy or steadfastness. [61]

53 And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the Criterion (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! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf: so turn (in repentance) to your Maker, and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers); 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.

55 And remember you said: "O Moses! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly," but you were dazed with thunder and lightning even as you looked on. **56** Then We raised you up after your death: you had the chance to be grateful. **57** And We gave you the shade of clouds and sent down to you 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.

58 And remember We said: "Enter this town, and eat of the plenty therein as you wish; but enter the gate with humility, in posture and in words, and 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: Divine Favours on Israel

60 And remember Moses prayed for water for his people; We said: "Strike the rock with your 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.

61 And remember you said: "O Moses! We cannot endure one kind of food (always); so beseech your Lord for us to produce for us of what the earth grows,—its pot-herbs, and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils, and onions." He said: "Will you exchange the better for the worse? Go you

down to any town, and you shall find what you want!" 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: The Israelites' Degeneration

62 Those who believe (in the Qur'ān), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,³³—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.

63 And remember We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai) (saying): "Hold firmly to what We have given you and bring (ever) to remembrance what is therein:

33. 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 *Ṣubḥī* (plural, *Ṣubbā*). They are also called Sabians and Nasoraean, 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 *Sābi'ūn* mentioned in the Qur'ān, but are not probably identical with them.

The pseudo-Sabians of Ḥarrān, who attracted the attention of Khalīfah Ma'mūn al-Rashīd in A.C.830. by their long hair and peculiar dress probably adopted the name as it was mentioned in the Qur'ān, 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 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 A.C.350. and to Persia about A.C.579. Their capital was near Ṣan'ā. They had beautiful stone buildings, in which the pointed arch is noticeable. Cf. 5:69. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on Sabaeans.) [76]

perchance you may fear Allah." **64** But you turned back thereafter: had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah to you, you had surely been among the lost. **65** And well you knew those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. We said to them: "Be you apes, despised and rejected." **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 that you sacrifice a heifer." They said: "Make you a laughing-stock of us?" He said: "Allah save me from being an ignorant (fool)!" **68** They said: "Beseech on our behalf your 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 you are commanded!" **69** They said: "Beseech on our behalf your 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 your Lord to make plain to us what she is: to us are all heifers alike: we wish indeed for guidance, if Allah wills." **71** He said: "He says: a heifer not trained to till the soil or water the fields; sound and without blemish." They said: "Now have you brought the truth." Then they offered her in sacrifice, but not with goodwill.

SECTION 9: They Grow in Hard-heartedness

72 Remember you slew a man and fell into a dispute among yourselves as to the crime: but Allah was to bring forth what you did hide. **73** So We said: "Strike the (body) with a piece of the (heifer)." Thus Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His Signs: perchance you may understand.

74 Thenceforth were your hearts hardened: they became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks 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 you do.

75 Can you (O you 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 meet the men of Faith, they say: “We believe” but when they meet each other in private, they say: “Shall you tell them what Allah has revealed to you, that they may engage you in argument about it before your Lord?”—Do you not understand (their aim)? **77** Do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal? **78** And there are among them 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.

80 And they say: “The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.” Say: “Have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know?” **81** Nay, those who seek gain 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: Their Covenant and its Violation

83 And remember We took a Covenant from the Children 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 practise regular charity. Then did you turn back, except a few among you, and you backslide (even now). **84** And remember We took³⁴ your Covenant (to this effect): shed no blood

34. 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 Madīnah by the newborn Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is given in Ibn Hishām's *Strat-ur-Rasūl*, and comments on it will be found in Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* (London, 1922), pp.57-61. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijrah, and was
(continued...)

amongst you, nor turn out your own people from your homes: and this you solemnly ratified, and to this you can bear witness. **85** After this it is you, the same people, who slay among yourselves, and banish a party of you from their homes; assist (their enemies) against them, in guilt and rancour; and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, though it was not lawful for you to banish them. Then is it only a part of the Book that you believe in, and do you reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life?—and on the Day of Judgement they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what you do. **86** These are the people who buy the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter: their penalty shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped.

SECTION 11: They reject the Prophet

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 you yourselves desire not, you are puffed up with pride?—some you called impostors, and others you slay! **88** They say, "Our hearts are the wrappings (which preserve Allah's Word: we need no more)." Nay, Allah's curse is on them for their blasphemy: little is it they believe. **89** And when there comes to them a Book 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 recognised, 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: thus have they drawn on themselves Wrath upon Wrath. And humiliating is the punishment of those who reject Faith. **91** When it is said to them, "Believe in what Allah has sent down," they say, "We

34. (...continued)

treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards. [88]

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 you slain the prophets of Allah in times gone by, if you did indeed believe?" **92** There came to you Moses with clear (Signs); yet you worshipped the Calf (even) after that, and you did behave wrongfully. **93** And remember We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai): (saying): "Hold firmly to what We have given you, and hearken (to the Law)": they said: "We hear, and we disobey:" and they had to drink into their hearts (of the taint) of the Calf because of their faithlessness. Say: "Vile indeed are the behests of your Faith if you have any faith!" **94** Say: "If the last Home, with Allah, be for you specially, and not for anyone else, then seek you for death, if you are sincere." **95** But they will never seek for death, on account of the (sins) which their hands have sent on before them, and Allah is well-acquainted with the wrong-doers. **96** You will indeed find them, of all people, most greedy of life,—even more than the idolaters: each one of them wishes he could be given a life of a thousand years: but the grant of such life will not save him from (due) punishment. For Allah sees well all that they do.

SECTION 12: Their Enmity Towards the Prophet

97 Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel—for he brings down the (revelation) to your 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 messengers, to Gabriel and Michael,—lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith. **99** We have sent down to you 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 threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs, as if (it had been something) they did not know! **102** They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon: the blasphemers were, not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men magic, and such things as came down at Babylon to the

angels Hārūt and Mārūt.³⁵ But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: "We are only for trial; so do not blaspheme." They learned from them 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 their Lord, if they but knew!

SECTION 13: Previous Scriptures are Abrogated

104 O you of Faith! Say not (to the Messenger) words of ambiguous import, but words of respect; 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 Pagans, 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

35. Hārūt and Mārūt lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to be anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened; probably even earlier, as Mā-rū-tu 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 any one 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 Tafsirs*) 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 tempting 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.) [104]

grace abounding. **106** None of Our revelations³⁶ do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: Do you not know that Allah has power over all things? **107** Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? And besides Him you have neither patron nor helper.

108 Would you question your Messenger as Moses was questioned of old? But whoever changes from Faith to Unbelief, has 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 you have believed, from selfish envy, after the Truth has become manifest unto them: but forgive and overlook, till Allah accomplishes His purpose; for Allah has power over all things. **110** And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity: and whatever good you send forth for your souls before you, you shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that you 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 you are truthful." **112** Nay,—whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of good,—he will get his reward

36. The word which I have translated by the word "revelations" is *Āyât*. It is not only used for verses of the Qur'ân, but in a general sense for Allah's revelations, as in 2:39 and for other Signs of Allah in history or nature, or miracles, as in 2:61. It has even been used for human signs and tokens of wonder, as, for example, monuments or landmarks built by the ancient people of 'Ād (26:128). 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 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 Muḥammad. Some commentators apply it also to the *Āyât* of the Qur'ân. There is nothing derogatory in this if we believe in progressive revelation. In 3:7 we are told distinctly about the Qur'ân, 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 2:115 as if it were abrogated by 2:144 about the *Qiblah*.

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. [107]

with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

SECTION 14: Perfect Guidance is Only in Islam

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; but Allah will judge between them in their quarrel on the Day of Judgement. **114** And who is more unjust than he who forbids that in places for the worship of Allah, Allah's name should be 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: wherever you turn, there is the presence of Allah. For Allah is All-pervading, All-knowing. **116** They say: "Allah has 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.³⁷ **117** To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: when He decrees a matter, He says to it: "Be," and it is. **118** Say those without knowledge: "Why does Allah not speak unto us? Or why comes 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 you in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: but of you no question shall be asked of the companions of the blazing Fire. **120** Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with you unless you follow their form of religion. Say: "The Guidance of Allah,—that is the (only) Guidance." Were you to follow their desires after the knowledge which has reached you, then would you find neither protector nor helper against Allah. **121** Those to whom We have sent the Book study it as

37. 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. In a spiritual sense, we are all children of Allah. And all Creation celebrates His glory. Verse 117 should be read with this to complete the argument. [119]

it should be studied: they are the ones that believe therein: those who reject faith therein,—the loss is their own.

SECTION 15: Covenant with Abraham

122 O Children of Israel! Call to mind the special favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others (for My Message). **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).

124 And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain Commands, which he fulfilled: He said: "I will make you an Imām to the Nations." He pleaded: "And also (Imāms) from my offspring!" He answered: "But My Promise is not within the reach of evil-doers." **125** Remember We made the House³⁸ a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take you the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted 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

38. The Ka'bah, 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 certain 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 man-slayers could flee (Num. xxxv.6), or the Sanctuaries in Medieval Europe, to which criminals could not be pursued, Makkah was recognised by Arab custom as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence. (3) It was a place of prayer: even today 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 emphasise the personal relation of Allah, the One True God, to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which defiled it before it was *purified* again by Muhammad. [125]

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 You are the All-hearing, the All-knowing. **128** Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Your (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Your (Will); and show us our place for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for You are the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. **129** Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Your Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: for You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

SECTION 16: The Religion of Abraham

130 And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? **Him** We chose 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: "Bow (thy will to Me):" He said: "I bow (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe." **132** And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and so did Jacob; "Oh my sons! Allah has chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the Faith of Islam." **133** Were you witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship your God and the God of your fathers,—of Abraham, Ismā'īl and Isaac,—the one (True) God: to Him we bow (in Islam)." **134** That was a people that has passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and you of what you do! Of their merits there is no question in your case!

135 They say: "Become Jews or Christians if you would be guided (to salvation)." Say you: "Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined not gods with Allah." **136** Say you: "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 bow to Allah (in Islam)." **137** So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the

right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism; but Allah will suffice you as against them, and He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing. 138 (Our religion is) the Baptism of Allah: and who can baptize better than Allah? And it is He Whom we worship.

139 Say: Will you dispute with us about Allah, seeing that He is our Lord and your Lord; that we are responsible for our doings and you for yours; and that we are sincere (in our faith) in Him? 140 Or do you say that Abraham, Ismā'īl, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do you know better than Allah? Ah! Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of what you do! 141 That was a people that has passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and you of what you do! Of their merits there is no question in your case.

PART II

SECTION 17: The Ka'bah as the Spiritual Centre

142 The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from the *Qiblah*³⁹ to which they were used?" Say: To Allah belong both East and West: He guides whom He will to a Way that is straight. 143

39. *Qiblah*—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 *Imām* (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 *Qiblah* 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, the Prophet under divine direction began to organise its people as an *Ummah*, an independent people, with laws and rituals of their own. At that stage the Ka'bah was established as *Qiblah*, 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 Hijrah. [141]

Thus, have We made of you an *Ummah* justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the *Qiblah* to which you were 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 make your faith of no effect. For Allah is to all people most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful. **144** We see the turning of your face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn you to a *Qiblah* that shall please you. Turn then your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you are, turn your faces in that direction. The People of the Book know well that that is the Truth from their Lord. Nor is Allah unmindful of what they do. **145** Even if you were to bring to the people of the Book all the Signs (together), they would not follow your *Qiblah*; nor are you going to follow their *Qiblah*; nor indeed will they follow each other's *Qiblah*. If you after the knowledge has reached you, were to follow their (vain) desires,—then were you indeed (clearly) in the wrong. **146** The People of the Book know this as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know. **147** The Truth is from your Lord; so be not at all in doubt.

SECTION 17: The Ka'bah as the Spiritual Centre

148 To each is a goal to which Allah turns him; then strive together (as in a race) towards all that is good. Wheresoever you are, Allah will bring you together. For Allah has power over all things. **149** From wherever you start forth, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; that is indeed the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unmindful of what you do. **150** So from whencesoever you start forth, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; and wheresoever you 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 you may (consent to) be guided; **151** A similar (favour have you already received) in that We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to you Our Signs, and sanctifying

you, and instructing you in Scripture and Wisdom, and in new knowledge. **152** Then do you remember⁴⁰ Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.

SECTION 19: **Hard Trials Necessary to Establish Truth**

153 O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. **154** And say not of those who are slain in the Way of Allah: "They are dead." Nay, they are living, though you perceive (it) not. **155** Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings 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 Allah, and Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance.

158 Behold! Şafā and Marwah are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the House in the Season or at other times, should compass them round, it is no sin in them. And if any one obeys his own impulse to good,—be sure that Allah is He Who recognises and knows. **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,—**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** They will abide therein: their penalty will not be lightened, nor will respite be their (lot). **163** And your Allah is One Allah: there is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

40. The word "remember" is too pale a word for *dhikr*, 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. [156]

SECTION 20: Unity Must Prevail

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 trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;—(here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise. 165 Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah, as equal (with Allah): they love them as they should love Allah. But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah. If only the unrighteous could see, behold, they would see the Penalty: that to Allah belongs all power, and Allah will strongly enforce the Penalty. 166 Then would those who are followed clear themselves of those who follow (them): they would see the Penalty, 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.

SECTION 21: Prohibited Foods

168 O you people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is to you an avowed enemy. 169. For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that you should say of Allah that of which you have no knowledge. 170 When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has 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 that listen to nothing but calls and cries: deaf, dumb, and blind, they are void of wisdom. 172 O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship. 173 He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name has

been invoked besides that of Allah. 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 Penalty. **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 are in a schism far (from the purpose).

SECTION 22: Retaliation and Bequests

177 It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness—to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing.

178 O you who believe! The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and a Mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty. **179** In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) life to you, O you men of understanding; that you may restrain yourselves.

180 It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable usage; this is due from the Allah-fearing. **181** If anyone

changes the bequest after hearing it, the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For Allah hears and knows (all things). **182** But if anyone fears partiality or wrongdoing on the part of the testator, and makes peace between (the parties concerned), there is no wrong in him: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 23: Fasting

183 O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint,—**184** (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will,—it is better for him. And it is better for you that you fast, if you only knew. **185** Ramadān is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'ān, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend 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 in that He has guided you; and perchance you shall be grateful. **186** When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me: let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way. **187** Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and you are their garments. Allah knows what you used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah: approach not nigh thereto. Thus does 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 you may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property.

SECTION 24: Fighting in Defence

189 They ask you concerning the New Moons. Say: They are but Signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for Pilgrimage. It is no virtue if you enter your houses from the back:⁴¹ it is virtue if you fear Allah. Enter houses through the proper doors: and fear Allah: that you may prosper.

190 Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors. **191** And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. **192** But if they cease, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **193** And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression.

194 The prohibited month⁴² —for the prohibited month, and so for all

41. 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. [202]

42. *Harām* = prohibited, sacred. The month of Pilgrimage (*Dhū al-Hijjah*) was a sacred month, in which warfare was prohibited by Arab custom. The month preceding (*Dhū al-Qa'dah*) and the month following (*Muharram*) were included in the prohibition, and *Muharram* was specially called *al-Harām*. Possibly *Muharram* is meant in the first

things prohibited,—there is the law of equality. If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress you 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 contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for Allah loves those who do good.

196 And complete the *Hajj* or '*Umrah*' in the service of Allah. But if you are prevented (from completing it), send an offering for sacrifice, such as you may find, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice. And if any of you is ill, or has an ailment in his scalp, (necessitating shaving), (he should) in compensation either fast, or feed the poor, or offer sacrifice; and when you are in peaceful conditions (again), if any one wishes to continue the '*Umrah*' 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 of) the Sacred Mosque. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is strict in punishment.

SECTION 25: The Pilgrimage

197 For *Hajj* are the months well known. If any one undertakes that duty therein, let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the *Hajj*. And whatever good you do, (be sure) Allah knows it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, O you that are wise. 198 It is no crime in you if you seek of the bounty of your Lord (during pilgrimage).

42. (...continued)

line, and the other months and other prohibited things in 'all things prohibited'. In *Rajab*, also, war was prohibited. If the pagan enemies of Islam broke the custom and made war in the prohibited months, the Muslims were free also to break the 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. [209]

Then when you pour down from (Mount) ‘Arafāt, celebrate the praises of Allah at the Sacred Monument, and celebrate His praises as He has directed you, even though, before this, you went astray. **199** Then pass on at a quick pace from the place whence it is usual for the multitude so to do, and ask for Allah’s forgiveness. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **200** So when you have accomplished your holy rites, celebrate the praises of Allah, as you used to celebrate the praises of your fathers,—yea, with far more heart and soul. There are men who say: “Our Lord! Give us (Thy bounties) in this world!” but they will have no portion in the Hereafter. **201** And there are men who say: “Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!” **202** To these will be allotted what they have earned; and Allah is quick in account. **203** Celebrate the praises of Allah during the Appointed Days.⁴³ But if any one hastens to leave in two days, there is no blame on him, 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 you will surely be gathered unto Him.

204 There is the type of man whose speech about this world’s life may dazzle you, 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 cattle. But Allah loves 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)! **207** And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah: and Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees.

208 O you who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the Evil One; for he is to you an avowed enemy. **209** If you backslide after the clear (Signs) have come to you, then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise. **210** Will they wait until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds, with angels (in His train)

43. *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 2:200). It is optional for pilgrims to leave on the second or third day. [226]

and the question is (thus) settled? But to Allah do all questions go back (for decision).

SECTION 26: Trials and Tribulations

211 Ask the Children of Israel 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. **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. **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, after the clear Signs came to them, did not differ among themselves, except through selfish contumacy. Allah by His Grace guided the Believers to the Truth, concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight. **214** Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah?" Ah! Verily, the help of Allah is (always) near!

215 They ask you what they should spend (in charity). Say: Whatever you spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever you do that is good,—Allah knows it well.

216 Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not.

SECTION 27: Miscellaneous Questions

217 They ask you concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month.⁴⁴ Say: "Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah 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 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 of the Mercy of Allah: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

219 They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask you how much they are to spend. Say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus does Allah make clear to you His Signs: in order that you may consider—**220** (Their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter. They ask you concerning orphans. Say: "The best thing to do is what is for their good; if you 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."

221 Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe: a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe: a man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever, even though he allures you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of Bliss) and forgiveness, and makes His Signs clear to mankind: that they may celebrate His praise.

44. *Prohibited Month*: See 2:194. [237]

SECTION 28: *Divorce*

222 They ask you concerning women's courses. Say: They are a hurt and a pollution; so keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, you may approach them in any manner, time, or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean. **223** Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how you will; but do some good act for your souls beforehand; and fear Allah. And know that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give (these) good tidings to those who believe.

224 And make not Allah's (name) an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons; for Allah is One Who hears and knows all things. **225** Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; 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 hears and knows all things.

228 Divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods. Nor is it lawful for them to hide what Allah has 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. And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

SECTION 29: *Divorce*

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 you (judges) do indeed 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 (themselves 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 understand. **231** When you divorce women, and they fulfil the term of their *'Iddah*, 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 any one 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, and know that Allah is well acquainted with all things.

SECTION 30: Remarriage of Divorced Women and Widows

232 When you divorce women, and they fulfil the term of their *'Iddah*, 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 you know not.

233 The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years, if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child. Nor father on account of his child, an heir shall be chargeable in the same way. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. If you decide on a foster-mother for your offspring, there is no

blame on you, provided you pay (the mother) what you offered, on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what you do.

234 If any of you die and leave widows behind, they shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days: 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 you do. **235** There is no blame on you if you make an offer of betrothal or hold it in your hearts. Allah knows that you cherish them in your hearts: but do not make a secret contract with them except in terms honourable, nor resolve on the tie of marriage till the term prescribed is fulfilled. And know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, and take heed of Him; and know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

SECTION 31: Provision for Divorced Women and Widows

236 There is no blame on you if you divorce women before consummation or the fixation of their dower; but bestow on them (a suitable gift), the wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means;—a gift of a reasonable amount is due from those who wish to do the right thing. **237** And if you divorce them before consummation, but after the fixation of a dower for them, then the half of the dower (is due to them), unless they remit it or (the man's half) is remitted by him in whose hands is the marriage tie; and the remission (of the man's half) is the nearest to righteousness. And do not forget liberality between yourselves. For Allah sees well all that you do.

238 Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the Middle Prayer;⁴⁵ and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind). **239** If

45. The Middle Prayer: Arabic *Salāt al-wustā* may be translated "the best or 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 'Asr prayer (in the middle (continued...))

you fear (an enemy), pray on foot, or riding, (as may be most convenient), but when you are in security, celebrate Allah's praises in the manner He has taught you, which you knew not (before).

240 Those of you who die and leave widows should bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance and residence; 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. **241** For divorced women maintenance (should be provided) on a reasonable (scale). This is a duty on the righteous. **242** Thus does Allah make clear His Signs to you: in order that you may understand.

SECTION 32: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

243 Did you not turn your 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. 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 hears and knows all things. **245** Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan, which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times? It is Allah that gives (you) want or plenty, and to Him shall be your return.

246 Have you not turned your vision to the Chiefs of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Moses? They said to a prophet (that was) among them: "Appoint for us a king, that we may fight in the cause of Allah." He said: "Is it not possible, if you were commanded to fight, that you 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 has appointed Tālūt as king over you." They said: "How can he exercise

45. (...continued)

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. [271]

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 has chosen him above you, and has gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess: Allah grants His authority to whom He pleases. Allah cares for all, and He knows 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, with (an assurance) therein of security from your Lord, and the relics left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron, carried by angels. In this is a Symbol for you if you indeed have faith."

SECTION 33: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

249 When Tālūt set forth with the armies, he said: "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 all drank of it, except a few. When they crossed the river,—he and the faithful ones with him,—they said: "This day 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, has 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 slew Goliath; and Allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed. And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: but Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds. **252** These are the Signs of Allah: we rehearse them to you in truth: verily you are one of the messengers.

PART III

253 Those messengers We endowed with gifts, some above others: to one of them Allah spoke; others He raised to degrees (of honour); to Jesus the son of Mary We gave clear (Signs), and strengthened him with the holy spirit. 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 each other; but Allah fulfills His plan.

SECTION 34: Compulsion in Religion Forbidden

254 O you who believe! Spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you, before the Day comes when no bargaining (will avail), nor friendship nor intercession. Those who reject Faith—they are the wrong-doers.

255 Allah! There is no god but He,—the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permits? He knows what (appears to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He wills. His Throne does extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).

256 Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects Evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things. **257** Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: 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: How Dead Nations are Raised to Life

258 Have you not turned your vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had granted him power? Abraham said: "My Lord is He Who gives life and death." He said: "I give life and death." Said Abraham: "But it is Allah that causes the sun to rise from the East: do you then cause him to rise from the

West?" Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected faith. Nor does Allah give guidance to a people unjust. **259** Or (take) the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet, all in ruins to its roofs. He said: "Oh! How shall Allah bring it (ever) to life, after (this) its death?" But Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up (again). He said: "How long did you tarry (thus)?" He said: ("Perhaps) a day or part of a day." He said: "Nay, you have tarried thus a hundred years; but look at your food and your drink; they show no signs of age; and look at your donkey: and that We may make of you a Sign unto the people, look further at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh." When this was shown clearly to him, he said: "I know that Allah has power over all things." **260** Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." He said: "Do you not then believe?" He said: "Indeed! but to satisfy my own understanding." He said: "Take four birds; tame them to turn to you; put a portion of them on every hill and call to them: they will come to you (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise."

SECTION 36: Spending Money in the Cause of Truth

261 The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases: and Allah cares for all and He knows all things. **262** Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury,—for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. **263** Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is free of all wants, and He is Most Forbearing. **264** O you who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury,—like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in Parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil; on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guides not those who reject faith. **265** And the likeness of those who spend their substance,

seeking to please Allah and to strengthen their souls, is as a garden, high and fertile; heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a double increase of harvest, and if it receives not heavy rain, light moisture suffices it. Allah sees well whatever you do. **266** Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date palms and vines and streams flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruit, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves)—that it should be caught in a whirlwind, with fire therein, and be burnt up? Thus does Allah make clear to you (His) Signs, that you may consider.

SECTION 37: Spending in the Cause of Truth

267 O you who believe! Give of the good things which you have (honourably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it you may give away something, when you yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is free of all wants, and worthy of all praise. **268** The Evil One threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promises you His forgiveness and bounties. And Allah cares for all and He knows all things. **269** He grants wisdom to whom He pleases; and he to whom wisdom is granted receives indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the Message but men of understanding. **270** And whatever you spend in charity or devotion, be sure Allah knows it all. But the wrong-doers have no helpers. **271** If you disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if you 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 you do. **272** It is not required of you (O Messenger), to set them on the right path, but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleases. Whatever of good you give benefits your own souls, and you shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good you give, shall be rendered back to you, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly. **273** (Charity is) for those in need, who, in Allah's cause 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. You shall know them by their (unfailing) mark: they beg not importunately from all and sundry. And whatever of good you give, be assured Allah knows it well.

SECTION 38: Usury Prohibited

274 Those who (in charity) 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 will not stand except as stands one whom the Evil One by his touch has driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury," but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offence) are Companions of the Fire: they will abide therein (for ever). **276** Allah will deprive usury of all blessing, but will give increase for deeds of charity: for He loves not creatures ungrateful and wicked. **277** Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

SECTION 39: Contracts and Evidence

278 O you who believe! Fear Allah, and give up what remains of your demand for usury, if you are indeed believers. **279** If you do it not, take notice of war from Allah and His Messenger: but if you turn back, you shall have your capital sums; deal not unjustly, and you 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 you remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if you only knew. **281** And fear the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.

282 O you who believe! When you deal with each other, in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing, let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties; let not the scribe refuse to write: as Allah has taught him, so let him write.

Let him who incurs the liability dictate, but let him fear his Lord Allah, and not diminish aught of what he owes. If the party liable is mentally deficient, or weak, or unable himself to dictate, let his guardian dictate faithfully, and get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as you choose, for witnesses, 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 you carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if you reduce it not to writing. But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If you 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. **283** If you are on a journey, and cannot find a scribe, a pledge with possession (may serve the purpose). And if one of you deposits a thing on trust with another, let the trustee (faithfully) discharge his trust, and let him fear his Lord. Conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it,—his heart is tainted with sin. And Allah knows all that you do.

SECTION 40: Muslims shall be made Victorious

284 To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether you show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah calls you to account for it. He forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He pleases, for Allah has power over all things. **285** The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believes in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers. "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (we seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the end of all journeys." **286** On no soul does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) "Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay

on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector; help us against those who stand against Faith." □

Chapter 3

ĀL 'IMRĀN (The Family of 'Imrān)

Introduction

This Sūrah is cognate to Sūrah 2, but the matter is here treated from a different point of view. The references to Badr (Ramaḍān, A.H. 2) and Uhud (Shawwāl, A.H. 3) give a clue to the dates of those passages.

Like Sūrah 2, 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 spiritual 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 Sūrah; (2) the lessons of the battles of Badr and Uhud 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 (3:1-20).

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 (3:21-30).'

The story of the family of 'Imrān (the father of Moses) leads us from the Mosaic Dispensation to the miracles connected with the birth of Jesus and his ministry (3:31-63).

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 (3:64-120).

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 Uhud must be learnt, not in despair, but in the exercise of the higher virtues and in contempt of pain and death (3:121-148).

The misfortunes at Uhud 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 (3:149-180).

The taunts of the enemy should be disregarded, and sincere prayer offered to Allah Who would grant His servants success and prosperity (3:181-200).

*** **

SECTION 1: Rule of Interpretation

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm.*⁴⁶

2 Allah! There is no god but He,—the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. 3 It is He Who sent down to you (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgement between right and wrong). 4 Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of Allah will suffer the severest penalty, and Allah is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution. 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. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

7 He it is Who has sent down to you the Book; in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden

46. See note to 2:1.

meanings except Allah.⁴⁷ And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding. **8** "Our Lord!" (they say), "Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your own Presence; for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure. **9** Our Lord! You are He that will gather mankind together against a day about which there is no doubt; for Allah never fails in His promise."

SECTION 2: Unity the Basis of all Religions

10 Those who reject Faith,—neither their possessions nor their (numerous) progeny will avail them aught against Allah: they are themselves but fuel for the Fire. **11** (Their plight will be) no better than that of the people of Pharaoh, 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 you be vanquished 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):⁴⁸ One was fighting in the cause of Allah, the other

47. 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 of well-established meaning. It is very fascinating to take up the latter, and exercise our ingenuity about its inner meaning, but it refers to such profound spiritual matters that human language is inadequate to it, 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 *Shari'ah* (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 God's Message, as distinguished from the various illustrative parables, allegories, and ordinances. [347]

48. This refers to the battle of Badr in Ramadān in the second year of the Hijrah. The little exiled community of Makkan Muslims, with their friends in Madīnah, 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
(continued...)

resisting Allah; these saw with their own eyes twice their number. But Allah does support with His aid whom He pleases. In this is a warning for such as have eyes to see."

14 Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: 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 in nearness to 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, with rivers flowing beneath; therein is their eternal home; with companions pure (and holy); 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; 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. **18** There is no god but He: that is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise. **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, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny the Signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account. **20** So if they dispute with you, say: "I have

48. (...continued)

elements (Jews and Hypocrites) in or near Madīnah itself. The design of the Makkans was to gather all the resources they could, and with an overwhelming force, to crush and annihilate Muhammad 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 50 miles southwest of Madīnah. The Muslim force consisted of only about 313 men, mostly ill-armed, but they were led by Muhammad, and they were fighting for their Faith. The Makkan 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. [352]

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 you (also) submit yourselves?" If they do, they are in right guidance, but if they turn back, your duty is to convey the Message; and in Allah's sight are (all) His servants.

SECTION 3: **The Kingdom is Granted to Another People**

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,⁴⁹ announce to them a grievous penalty. **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** Have you not turned your vision 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). **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), You give power to whom You please, and You strip off power from whom You please: You endue with honour whom You please, and You bring low whom You please: in Your hand is all good. Verily, over all things You have power. **27** You cause the night to gain on the day, and You cause the day to gain on the night; You bring the Living out of the Dead, and You bring the Dead out of the Living;⁵⁰ and You give sustenance to

49. 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. 2.61. Again, John the Baptist (Yahyā, noble, chaste, and prophet, of the goodly company of the righteous, 3:39) was bound, imprisoned, and beheaded, and his head presented to a dancing harlot: Matt.xiv.1-11. [364]

50. 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.

(continued...)

whom You please, without measure."⁵¹

28 Let not the believers take for friends or helpers Unbelievers rather than believers: if any do that, in nothing will there be help from Allah: except by way of precaution, that you may guard yourselves from them. But Allah cautions you (to remember) Himself; for the final goal is to Allah. **29** Say: "Whether you 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 remember) Himself. And Allah is full of kindness to those that serve Him."

SECTION 4: Last Members of a Chosen Race

31 Say: "If you 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 loves not those who reject Faith. **33** Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imrān above all people,—**34** Offspring, one of the other; and Allah hears and knows all things.

35 Behold! A woman of 'Imrān said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto You what is in my womb for Your special service: so accept this of me: for You hear and know 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—"and no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her

50. (...continued)

group, or national life. And who has ever solved the mystery of Life? But Faith refers it to Allah's Will and Plan. [371]

51. 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 in 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. [372]

offspring to Your protection from the Evil One, the Rejected." 37 Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty; to the care of Zakariyā 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."

38 There did Zakariyā pray to his Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant unto me from You a progeny that is pure: for You are He that hears prayer!" 39 While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: "Allah does give you glad tidings of Yahyā, witnessing the truth of a Word from Allah,⁵² 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, "does Allah accomplish what He wills." 41 He said: "O my Lord! Give me a Sign!" "Thy Sign," was the answer, "shall be that you shall speak to no man for three days but with signals. Then celebrate the praises of your Lord again and again, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning."

SECTION 5: Birth of Jesus and His Ministry

42 Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah has chosen you and purified you—chosen you above the women of all nations. 43 O Mary! Worship your 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, which We reveal unto you (O Messenger!) by inspiration: you were not with them when they cast lots with arrows, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary: nor were you with them when they disputed (the point). 45 Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him: his

52. Notice: "a Word from Allah", not "the Word of God", the epithet that mystical Christianity uses for Jesus. As stated in 3:59 below, Jesus was created by a miracle, by Allah's word "Be", and he was. [381]

name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah; **46** "He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous." **47** She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?" He said: "Even so: Allah creates what He wills: when He has decreed a plan, He but says to it, 'Be,' and it is!" **48** And Allah will teach him the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel, **49** And (appoint him) a messenger to the Children of Israel, (with this 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: and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah's leave; and I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if you did believe; **50** (I have come to you), to attest the Law 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.'

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 you bear witness that we are Muslims. **53** Our Lord! We believe in what You have 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: Jesus Cleared of False Charges

55 Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you (of the falsehoods) of those who blaspheme; I will make those who follow you superior to those who reject faith, to the Day of Resurrection: then shall you all return unto Me, and I will judge between you of the matters wherein you dispute. **56** As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter, nor will they have anyone to help. **57** As to those

who believe and work righteousness, Allah will pay them (in full) their reward; but Allah loves not those who do wrong." 58 This is what We rehearse unto you of the Signs and the Message of Wisdom. 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 (comes) from Allah alone; so be not of those who doubt. 61 If any one disputes in this matter with you, now after (full) knowledge has come to you, 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!" 62 This is the true account; there is no god except Allah; and Allah—He is indeed the Exalted in Power, the Wise. 63 But if they turn back, Allah has full knowledge of those who do mischief.

SECTION 7: Controversy with Jews and Christians

64 Say: "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say you: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)." 65 You People of the Book! Why dispute you about Abraham, when the Law and the Gospel were not revealed till after him? Have you no understanding? 66 Ah! You are those who fell to disputing (even) in matters of which you had some knowledge! But why dispute you in matters of which you have no knowledge? It is Allah Who knows, and you who know not! 67 Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was true in Faith, 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 Messenger and those who believe: 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 You People of the Book! Why reject you the Signs of Allah, of which you are (yourselves) witnesses? 71 You People of the Book! Why do you clothe Truth with falsehood, and conceal the Truth, while you have knowledge?

SECTION 8: Machinations to Discredit Islam

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;⁵³ perchance they may (themselves) turn back; 73 And believe no one unless he follows your religion." Say: "True guidance is the Guidance of Allah: (fear you) lest a revelation 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?" Say: "All bounties are in the hand of Allah: He grants them to whom He pleases: and Allah cares for all, and He knows all things." 74 For His Mercy He specially chooses whom He pleases; 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, will (readily) pay it back; others, who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stood demanding, because, they say, "there is no call on us (to keep faith) with these ignorant (Pagans)." 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 plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter: nor will Allah (deign to) speak to them or look at them on the Day of Judgement, nor will He cleanse them (of sin): they shall have a grievous penalty. 78 There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues: (as they read) 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 you my worshippers rather than Allah's": on the contrary (he would say): "Be you worshippers of Him Who is truly the Cherisher of all: for you have taught the Book and you have studied it earnestly." 80 Nor would he instruct you to take angels and prophets for lords and patrons. What! Would he bid you to unbelief after you

53. The cynics who plotted against Islam actually asked their accomplices to join the believers and then repudiate them. [406]

have bowed your will (to Allah in Islam)?

SECTION 9: Covenant of the Prophets

81 Behold! Allah took the covenant of the prophets, saying: "I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you; do you believe in him and render him help." Allah said: "Do you 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 of Allah?—while all creatures in the heavens and on earth have, willing or unwilling, bowed to His Will (accepted Islam), and to Him shall they all be brought back. **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),⁵⁴ never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good). **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 penalty be lightened, nor respite be (their lot);—**89** Except for those that repent (even) after that, and make amends; for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **90** But those

54. 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. [418]

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 (of set purpose) gone astray. **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 penalty grievous, and they will find no helpers.

PART IV

SECTION 10: Ever-living Testimony to the Truth of Islam

92 By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you give (freely) of that which you love; and whatever you give, of a truth Allah knows it well.

93 All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel made unlawful for itself, before the Law (of Moses) was revealed. Say: “Bring you the Law and study it, if you be men of truth.” **94** If any, after this, invent a lie and attribute it to Allah, they are indeed unjust wrong-doers. **95** Say: “Allah speaks the Truth: follow the religion of Abraham, the sane in faith; he was not of the Pagans.”

96 The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka:⁵⁵ full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings: **97** In it are Signs Manifest; (for example), the Station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; 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.

98 Say: “O People of the Book! Why reject you the Signs of Allah, when Allah is Himself witness to all you do?” **99** Say: “O you People of the Book! Why obstruct you those who believe, from the path of

55. Same as Makkah; perhaps an older name. The foundation of the Ka'bah goes back to Abraham, but there are place associations in the sacred territory with the names of Adam and Eve. [422]

Allah, seeking to make it crooked, while you were yourselves witnesses (to Allah's Covenant)? But Allah is not unmindful of all that you do." **100** O you who believe! If you listen to a faction among the People of the Book, they would (indeed) render you apostates after you have believed! **101** And how would you 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: Muslims Exhorted to Remain United

102 O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be 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 you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His Signs clear to you: that you may be guided. **104** Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity. **105** Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs: for them is a dreadful penalty,—**106** On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black: to those whose faces will be black, (will be said): "Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Taste then the penalty for rejecting Faith." **107** But those whose faces will be (lit with) white,—they will be in (the light of) Allah's Mercy: therein to dwell (for ever).

108 These are the Signs of Allah: We rehearse them to you in Truth: and Allah means no injustice to any of His creatures. **109** To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; to Him do all questions go back (for decision).

SECTION 12: Relations of Jews with Muslims

110 You 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. **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;⁵⁶ 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 themselves⁵⁷ 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. **115** Of the good that they do, nothing will be rejected of them; for Allah knows 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). **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 has wronged them, but they wrong themselves.

118 O you who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin: rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if you have wisdom. **119** Ah! You are those who love them, but they love you not,—though you believe in the whole of the Book. When they meet you, they say, “We believe”: but when they are alone, they bite off the

56. Cf. 3:21 and n. 49. [56]

57. In Islam we respect sincere faith and true righteousness in whatever form they appear. [437]

very tips of their fingers at you in their rage. Say: "Perish in your rage; Allah knows 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 you are constant and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you; for Allah compasses round about all that they do.

SECTION 13: The Battle of Uḥud

121 Remember that morning you did leave your household (early) to post the faithful at their stations for battle:⁵⁸ and Allah hears and knows all things: **122** Remember two of your parties⁵⁹ meditated cowardice; but Allah was their protector, and in Allah should the faithful (ever) put their trust. **123** Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were a contemptible little force; then fear Allah; thus may you show your gratitude. **124** Remember you said to the Faithful: "Is it not enough for you that Allah should help you with three thousand angels (specially) sent down? **125** Yea,—if you remain firm, and act aright; even if the enemy should rush here on you in hot haste, your Lord would help you

58. The reference is to the Battle of Uḥud which was a great testing time for the young Muslim community. The Makkans were determined to wipe off their disgrace and to this end they collected a large force of some 3,000 men and marched to Madīnah. The Muslim leader, the Prophet himself, took his position at the foot of the Mount Uḥud and the Muslim warriors numbering 700 to 1,000 were up early. The passes in the hills at their back were filled with 50 archers to prevent an enemy attack from the rear. In the beginning the battle went well for the Muslims. The enemy wavered, and the Muslim archers, in disobedience of their orders, left their posts to join in the pursuit and share of the booty. 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 were martyred, including the Prophet's uncle, the gallant Ḥamzah. 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, inspite of his wound, and many of the wounded Muslims, inspired by his example, returned to the field the next day, and Abū Sufyān and his Makkah army withdrew. Madīnah was saved, but a lesson in faith, constancy, firmness, and steadfastness was learnt by the Muslims. [442]

59. The two parties wavering in their minds were probably the Banū Salamah Khazrajī and the Banū Ḥarithah, but they rallied under the Prophet's inspiration. [443]

with five thousand angels making a terrific onslaught." **126** Allah made it but a message of hope for you, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah, the Exalted, the Wise: **127** That He might cut off a fringe of the Unbelievers or expose them to infamy, and they should then be turned back, frustrated of their purpose. **128** Not for you, (but for Allah), is the decision: whether He turn in mercy to them, or punish them; for they are indeed wrong-doers. **129** To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgives whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases; but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 14: What Success Meant for the Muslims

130 O you who believe! Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that you may (really) prosper. **131** Fear the Fire, which is prepared for those who reject Faith: **132** And obey Allah and the Messenger; that you 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, prepared for the righteous,—**134** Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;—for Allah loves those who do good;—**135** And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins,—and who can forgive sins except Allah?—and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done. **136** For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath,—an eternal dwelling: how excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!

137 Many were the Ways of Life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth. **138** Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear Allah! **139** So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for you must gain mastery if you are true in Faith. **140** If a wound has touched you, be sure a similar wound has 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 loves not those that do wrong. **141** Allah's object also is to purge those that are true in Faith and to deprive of blessing those that resist Faith. **142** Did you think that you would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained steadfast? **143** You did indeed wish for death before you met him: now you have seen him with your own eyes, (and you flinch!)

SECTION 15: *Suffering to be Met with Perseverance*

144 Muḥammad is no more than a messenger: many were the messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will you 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.⁶⁰ **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 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. **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

60. 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 Talḥah, Abū Bakr, and 'Alī were at his side, and his own unexampled bravery saved the Muslim army from a rout. This verse was recalled again by Abū 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 we 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 the eternal Allah lives and watches over us and over all His creatures now as in all history in the past and in the future. [460]

world, and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. For Allah loves those who do good.

SECTION 16: Causes of Misfortune in Uhud Battle

149 O you who believe! If you obey the Unbelievers, they will drive you back on your heels, and you 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 companions 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 you with His permission were about to annihilate your enemy,—until you flinched and fell to disputing about the order,⁶¹ and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the booty) which you 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 but He forgave you: for Allah is full of grace to those who believe. **153** Behold! You 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, to teach you not to grieve for (the booty) that had escaped you and for (the ill) that had befallen you. For Allah is well aware of all that you do. **154** After (the excitement) of the distress, He sent down calm on a band of you overcome with slumber, while another band was stirred to anxiety by their own feelings, moved by wrong suspicions of Allah—suspicions due to ignorance. They said: "What affair is this of ours?" Say you: "Indeed, this affair is wholly Allah's." They hide in their minds what they dare not reveal to you. 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

61. The order was not to run after booty, but 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 section of the Muslims against the orders of the Prophet, ran in pursuit, attracted by the prospect of booty. See note to 3:121. [462]

would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death"; but (all this was) that Allah might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well the secrets of your hearts. **155** Those of you 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: *Battle of Uhud Afforded a Distinction*

156 O you 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 sighs and regrets in their hearts. It is Allah that gives Life and Death, and Allah sees well all that you do. **157** And if you are slain, or die, in the way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could amass. **158** And if you die, or are slain, Lo! It is unto Allah that you are brought together.

159 It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when you have taken a decision put your 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) be false to his trust. If any person is so false, he shall, on the Day of Judgement, restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul 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, sanctifying 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 you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, do you say?—"Whence is this?" Say (to them): "It is from yourselves: for Allah has power over all things." **166** What you suffered on the day the two armies met, was with the leave of Allah, in order that He might test the believers,—**167** And the Hypocrites also. These were told: "Come, fight in the way of Allah, or (at least) drive (the foe from your city)." They said: "Had we known how to fight, we should certainly have followed you." They were that day nearer to Unbelief than to Faith, saying with their lips what was not in their hearts. But Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal. **168** (They are) the ones that say, (of their brethren slain), while they themselves sit (at ease): "If only they had listened to us they would not have been slain." Say: "Avert death from your own selves, if you speak the truth."

169 Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord; **170** They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah: and with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them (in their bliss), the (Martyrs) glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they (cause to) grieve. **171** They glory in the Grace and the bounty from Allah, and in the fact that Allah suffers not the reward of the Faithful to be lost (in the least).

SECTION 18: Uḥud no Gain to the Enemy

172 Of those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward;—**173** Men said to them: "A great army is gathering against you, and so fear them": but it (only) increased their Faith; they said: "For us Allah suffices, and He is the best disposer of affairs." **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 Evil One that suggests to you the fear of his votaries: be you not afraid of them, but fear Me, if you have Faith. 176 Let not those grieve you 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 in their iniquity: but they will have a shameful punishment.

179 Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good. Nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the Unseen. But He chooses of His Messengers (for the purpose) whom He pleases. So believe in Allah and His messengers; and if you believe and do right, you have a reward without measure. 180 And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which Allah has given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them: nay, it will be the worse for them: soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgement. To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do.

SECTION 19: *Carpings of the People of the Book*

181 Allah has 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 you the penalty of the Scorching Fire! 182 This is because of the (unrighteous deeds) which your hands sent on before you: for Allah never harms those who serve Him." 183 They (also) said: "Allah took our promise not to believe in a messenger unless he showed us a sacrifice consumed by fire (from heaven)." Say: "There came to you

messengers before me, with Clear Signs and even with what you ask for: why then did you slay them, if you speak the truth?" **184** Then if they reject you, so were rejected messengers before you, who came with Clear Signs, Books of dark prophecies, and the Book of Enlightenment.

185 Every soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgement shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of Life): for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception. **186** You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if you persevere patiently, and guard against evil,—then that will be a determining factor in all affairs. **187** And remember Allah took a covenant from the People of the Book, to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it; but they threw it away behind their backs, 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,—think not that they escape the penalty. For them is a penalty grievous indeed. **189** To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allah has power over all things.

SECTION 20: Ultimate Triumph of the Faithful

190 Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day,—there are indeed Signs for men of understanding,—**191** Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): "Our Lord! Not for naught have You created (all) this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire. **192** Our Lord! Any whom You do admit to the Fire, truly You cover 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 you 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 You did promise unto us through Your messengers, and save us from shame on the Day of Judgement: for You never break Your promise." **195** And their Lord has accepted of them, and answered them: "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: you are members, one of another: those who have left their homes, or been driven out therefrom, or suffered harm in My Cause, or fought or been slain,—verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities, and admit them into Gardens with rivers flowing beneath;—a reward from the presence of Allah, and from His presence is the best of rewards."

196 Let not the strutting about of the Unbelievers through the land deceive you: **197** Little is it for enjoyment: their ultimate abode is Hell: what an evil bed (to lie on)! **198** On the other hand, for those who fear their Lord, are Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath; therein are they to dwell (for ever),—a gift from the presence of Allah; and that which is in the presence of 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 you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper. □

Chapter 4

AL-NISĀ' (The Women)

Introduction

This Sūrah is closely connected chronologically with Sūrah 3. Its subject matter deals with the social problems which the Muslim community had to face immediately after Uḥud. While the particular occasion made the necessity urgent, the principles laid down have permanently governed Muslim Law and social practice.

Broadly speaking, the Sūrah 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 Madīnah, 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 (4:1-14.)

While the decencies of family life should be enforced, women should be held in honour and their rights recognised, in marriage, property, and inheritance; and this principle of goodness should be extended to all beings, great and small (4:15-42).

The sections in Madīnah, not yet in the Muslim Community, should not go after 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 (4:43-70).

The Believers should organise in self-defence against their enemies, and beware of the secret plots and mischiefs of the Hypocrites; how deserters should be treated (4:71-91).

Caution about the taking of life; recommendations for leaving places inimical to Islam; religious duties in the midst of war (4:92-104).

Treachery and the lure of evil (4:105-126).

Women and orphans be justly dealt with; Faith must go with justice, sincerity, and moderation in speech (4:127-152).

Where People of the Book went wrong, with honourable exceptions (4:153-176).

*** **

SECTION 1: Duties of Guardians to Orphan Wards

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;—reverence Allah, through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (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 their substance (by mixing it up) with your own. For this is indeed a great sin.

3 If you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess. That will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice. **4** And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, take it and enjoy it with right good cheer.

5 To those weak of understanding make not over your property, which Allah has made a means of support for you, 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 you find sound judgement 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 you release their property to them, take witnesses in their presence: but all-sufficient is Allah in taking account.

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, feed 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 words of appropriate (comfort). 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!

SECTION 2: Law of Inheritance

11 Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's⁶² (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, 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. You know not whether 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, you get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what you leave, their share is a fourth, if you leave no child; but if you leave a child, they get an eighth; after

62. The principle 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 the 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. [516]

payment of legacies and debts.

If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to any one). Thus is it ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

13 Those are limits set by Allah; those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens with rivers flowing beneath, to abide therein (for ever) and that will be the supreme achievement. **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: Treatment of Women

15 If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (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. **16** If two men 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 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 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 punishment most grievous.

19 O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will.⁶³ Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may

63. 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 4:22 below. [527]

take away part of the dower⁶⁴ you 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 you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good. **20** But if you decide to take one wife in place of another, even if you had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, take not the least bit of it back; would you take it by slander and manifest wrong? **21** And how could you take it when you 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.

SECTION 4: What Women May be Taken in Marriage

23 Prohibited to you (for marriage) are—your mothers, daughters, sisters; father's sisters, mother's sisters; brother's daughters, sister's daughters; foster-mothers (who gave you suck), foster-sisters; your wives' mothers; your step-daughters under your guardianship, born of your wives to whom you have gone in,—no prohibition if you have not gone in;—(those who have been) wives of your sons proceeding from your loins; and two sisters in wedlock at one and the same time, except for what is past; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful;—

PART V

24 Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess;⁶⁵ thus has Allah ordained (prohibitions) against you: except for these, all others are lawful, provided you seek

64. Another trick, to detract from the freedom of married women was to treat them badly and force them to sue for a *Khul'* divorce (see 2:229) 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. [528]

65. *Whom your right hands possess i.e.*, captives in a *Jihād*, or war under the orders of the righteous Imām against those who persecute Faith. In such cases formal hostility dissolves civilities. [537]

(them in marriage) with gifts from your property,—desiring chastity, not lust, seeing that you derive benefit from them, give them their dowers (at least) as prescribed; but if, after a dower is prescribed, you 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: and Allah has full knowledge about your faith. You 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 lustful, nor taking paramours: when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, 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 you practise self-restraint. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 5: Women's Rights Over Their Earnings

26 Allah does wish to make clear to you and to show you the ordinances of those before you; and (He does wish to) turn to you (in Mercy): and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. **27** Allah does wish to turn to you, but the wish of those who follow their lusts is that you should turn away (from Him),—far, far away. **28** Allah does wish to lighten your (difficulties): for man was created weak (in flesh). **29** O you 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) yourselves: for verily Allah has been to you Most Merciful! **30** If any do that in rancour and injustice,—soon shall We cast them into the Fire: and easy it is for Allah. **31** If you (but) eschew the most heinous of the things which you are forbidden to do, We shall expel out of you all the evil in you, and admit you to a gate of great honour. **32** And in no wise covet those things in which Allah has 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 has full knowledge of all things. **33** To (benefit) every one, We have appointed sharers and heirs to property left by parents and relatives. To those, also, to whom your right hand was pledged, give their due portion. For truly Allah is witness to all things.

SECTION 6: Disagreement Between Husband and Wife

34 Men are the protectors 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. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them⁶⁶ (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, Great (above you all). 35 If you fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: for Allah has full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.

36 Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good—to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and what your right hands possess: for Allah loves

66. It is evident from many authentic Traditions that the Prophet himself intensely detested the idea of beating one's wife, and said on more than one occasion, "Could any of you beat his wife as he would beat a slave, and then lie with her in the evening?" (Bukhārī and Muslim). According to another Tradition, he forbade the beating of any woman with the words, "Never beat Allah's handmaidens" (Abū Dā'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Hibbān and Hākim, on the authority of Iyas ibn 'Abd Allāh; Ibn Hibbān, on the authority of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās; and Bayhaqī, on the authority of Umm Kulthūm). When the above Qur'ānic verse authorising the beating of a refractory wife was revealed, the Prophet is reported to have said: "I wanted one thing, but Allah has willed another thing—and what Allah has willed must be best" (see *Manār*, vol.V, p.74). With all this, he stipulated in his sermon on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, shortly before his death, that beating should be resorted to only if the wife "has become guilty, in an obvious manner, of immoral conduct", and that it should be done "in such a way as not to cause pain (*ghayr mubarrih*)"; authentic Traditions to this effect are found in Muslim, Tirmidhī, Abū Dā'ūd, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah. On the basis of these Traditions, all the authorities stress that this "beating", if resorted to at all, should be more or less symbolic—"with a toothbrush, or some such thing" (Ṭabarī, quoting the views of scholars of the earliest times), or even "with a folded handkerchief" (Rāzī); and some of the greatest Muslim scholars (e.g., al-Shāfi'ī) are of the opinion that it is just barely permissible, and should preferably be avoided; and they justify this opinion by the Prophet's personal feelings with regard to this problem. [From *The Message of the Qur'ān* by Muhammad Asad.—Ed.]

not the arrogant, the vainglorious;—**37** (Nor) those who are niggardly or enjoin niggardliness on others, or hide the bounties which Allah has bestowed on them; for We have prepared, for those who resist Faith, a punishment that steepens them in contempt;—**38** Nor those who spend of their substance, to be seen of men, but have no faith in Allah and the Last Day: if any take the Evil One 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 has given them for sustenance? For Allah has full knowledge of them. **40** Allah is never unjust in the least degree: if there is any good (done), He doubles it, and gives from His own presence a great reward. **41** How then if We brought from each people a witness, and We brought you as a witness against these people! **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: Purification of the Soul

43 O you who believe! Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say,—nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when travelling on the road), until after washing your whole body. If you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. For Allah does blot out sins and forgive again and again.

44 Have you not turned your vision to those who were given a portion of the Book? They traffic in error, and wish that you should lose the right path. **45** But Allah has 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"; and "Hear what is not heard"; and "*Rā'inā*";⁶⁷ with a twist of their tongues and a slander to Faith. If only

67. See 2:104. *Rā'inā* if used respectfully in the Arabic way, would have meant
(continued...)

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 has cursed them for their Unbelief; and but few of them will believe.

47 O you People of the Book! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hindwards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah must be carried out. **48** Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.

49 Have you not turned your vision to those who claim sanctity for themselves? Nay—but Allah does sanctify whom He pleases. But never will they fail to receive justice in the least little thing.⁶⁷ **50** Behold how they invent a lie against Allah! But that by itself is a manifest sin!

SECTION 8: Kingdom Granted to Abraham's Descendants

51 Have you not turned your vision to those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Sorcery and Evil,⁶⁹ and say to the Unbelievers that they are better guided in the (right) way than the Believers! **52** They are (men) whom Allah has cursed: And those whom

67. (...continued)

"Please attend to us." With a twist of their tongue, they suggested an insulting meaning, such as "O thou that takes us to pasture!" or in Hebrew, "Our bad one!" [566]

68. Literally, the small skin in the groove of a date stone, a thing of no value: *fatīlā*. [571]

69. The (Arabic) word I have translated *sorcery*, is *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 2:256) is *Taghūt*, 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 Madīnah were intriguing against the Holy Prophet. The Jews had taken much to sorcery, magic, divination, and such superstitions. [573]

Allah has cursed, you will find, have no one to help.⁷⁰ **53** Have they a share in dominion or power? Behold, they give not a farthing to their fellow-men? **54** Or do they envy mankind for what Allah has 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. **55** Some of them believed, and some of them averted their faces from him: and enough is Hell for a burning fire. **56** 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 penalty: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise. **57** 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 companions pure and holy: We shall admit them to shades, cool and ever deepening. **58** Allah does command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; and when you judge between man and man, that you judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which He gives you! For Allah is He Who hears and sees all things. **59** O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you.⁷¹ If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day: that is best, and most suitable for final determination.

SECTION 9: The Prophet Must be Obeyed

60 Have you not turned your vision to those who declare that they believe in the revelations that have come to you and to those before

70. The Jews were then seeking the aid of the Makkian Pagans against Muhammad, 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. [574]

71. Arabic *Uli al-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 governments for otherwise there can be no order or discipline. [580]

you? Their (real) wish is to resort together for judgement (in their disputes) to the Evil One, 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 has revealed, and to the Messenger" you see the Hypocrites avert their faces from you 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 you, swearing by Allah: "We meant no more than good-will and conciliation!" **63** Those men,—Allah knows what is in their hearts; 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 Will of Allah. If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto you 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 the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. **66** If We had ordered them to sacrifice their lives or to leave their homes, very few of them would have done it: 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 Our presence a great reward; **68** And We should have shown them the Straight Way.

69 All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah,—of the prophets (who teach), the sincere (lovers of Truth), the witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! What a beautiful fellowship! **70** Such is the bounty from Allah: and sufficient is it that Allah knows all.

SECTION 10: Believers Must Defend Themselves

71 O you who believe! Take your precautions, and either go forth in parties or go forth all together. **72** There are certainly among you men who would tarry behind: 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!”

74 Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. 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). **75** And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, 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 You one who will protect; and raise for us from You one who will help!” **76** Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith fight in the cause of Evil: So fight you against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.

SECTION 11: Attitude of the Hypocrites

77 Have you not turned your vision to those who were told to hold back their hands (from fight) but establish regular prayers and spend in regular charity? 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 have You ordered us to fight? Would You 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 you be dealt with unjustly in the very least! **78** Wherever you are, death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!”

If some good befalls them, they say, “This is from Allah”; but if evil, they say, “This is from you” (O Prophet). Say: “All things are from Allah.”⁷² But what has come to these people, that they fail to

72. 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

understand a single fact? **79** Whatever good, (O man!) happens to you, is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to you, is from your (own) soul. And We have sent you 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, We have not sent you to watch over their (evil deeds). **81** They have "Obedience" on their lips; but when they leave you, a section of them meditate all night on things very different from what you tell them. But Allah records their nightly (plots): so keep clear of them, and put your trust in Allah, and enough is Allah as a disposer of affairs. **82** Do they not consider the Qur'ān (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.⁷² **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 tested it from them (direct). Were it not for the Grace and Mercy of Allah unto you, all but a few of you would have fallen into the clutches of Satan.

84 Then fight in Allah's cause—you are held responsible only for yourself—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. **85** Whoever recommends and helps a good cause becomes a partner therein: and whoever recommends and helps an evil cause, shares in its burden: and Allah has power over all things.

72. (...continued)

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: 3:26. 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: 4:77. [597]

73. The unity of the Qur'ān is an admitted fact. 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 (3) it is addressed to all grades of mankind. Yet, when properly understood, its various pieces fit together better than a jig-saw puzzle even when arranged without any regard to chronological order. There was just the One Inspirer and the One Inspired. [601]

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 against the Day of Judgement, about which there is no doubt. And whose word can be truer than Allah's?

SECTION 12: How to Deal with the Hypocrites

88 Why should you be divided into two parties about the Hypocrites? Allah has upset them for their (evil) deeds. Would you guide those whom Allah has thrown out of the Way? For those whom Allah has thrown out of the Way, never shall you find the Way. **89** They but wish that you should reject Faith, as they do, and thus be on the same footing (as they): but take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah (from what is forbidden). But if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever you find them; and (in any case) take no friends or helpers from their ranks;—**90** Except those who join a group between whom and you there is a treaty (of peace), or those who approach you with hearts restraining them from fighting you as well as fighting their own people. If Allah had pleased, He could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you: therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then Allah has opened no way for you (to war against them). **91** Others you will find that wish to gain your confidence as well as that of their people: every time they are sent back 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 you get them: in their case We have provided you with a clear argument against them.

SECTION 13: Murderer of a Muslim

92 Never should a believer kill a believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake, (compensation is due): if one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation 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 you have a treaty of mutual alliance, compensation 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 has 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 and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.

94 O you who believe! When you go abroad in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: "You are none of a believer!" coveting the perishable goods of this life: with Allah are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were you yourselves before, till Allah conferred on you His favours: therefore carefully investigate. For Allah is well aware of all that you do.

95 Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) has Allah promised good: but those who strive and fight has He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward,—**96** Ranks specially bestowed by Him, and Forgiveness and Mercy. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 14: Muslims Who Remained with the Enemy

97 When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: "In what (plight) were you?" They reply: "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" Such men will find their abode in Hell,—What an evil refuge!—**98** Except those who are (really) weak and oppressed—men, women, and children—who have no means in their power, nor (a guide-post) to their way. **99** For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive: for Allah does blot out (sins) and forgive again and again. **100** He who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and

spacious: should he die as a refugee from home for Allah and His Messenger, his reward becomes due and sure with Allah: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 15: Prayer when Fighting

101 When you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers, for fear the Unbelievers may attack you: for the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies. **102** When you (O Messenger) are with them, and stand to lead them in prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with you, 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 has not yet prayed—and let them pray with you, taking all precautions, and bearing arms: the Unbelievers wish, if you were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush. But there is no blame on you if you put away your arms because of the inconvenience of rain or because you are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves. For the Unbelievers Allah has prepared a humiliating punishment. **103** When you pass (congregational) prayers, celebrate Allah's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when you 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 you are suffering hardships, they are suffering similar hardships; but you have Hope from Allah, while they have none. And Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

SECTION 16: Hypocrites are Dishonest

105 We have sent down to you the Book in truth, that you might judge between men, as guided by Allah: so be not (used) as an advocate by those who betray their trust; **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; for Allah loves not one given to perfidy and crime: **108** They may hide (their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (them) from Allah, seeing that He is in their midst when they plot by night, in words that He cannot approve: and Allah does compass

round all that they do. **109** Ah! These are the sort of men on whose behalf you may contend in this world; but who will contend with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Judgement, 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. **111** And if any one earns 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 falsehood and a flagrant sin.

SECTION 17: Secret Counsels of the Hypocrites

113 But for the Grace of Allah to you and His Mercy, a party of them would certainly have plotted to lead you astray. But (in fact) they will only lead their own souls astray, and to you they can do no harm in the least. For Allah has sent down to you the Book and wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before): and great is the Grace of Allah unto you. **114** In most of their secret talks there is no good; but if one exhorts to a deed of charity or justice or conciliation between men, (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 of Faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell,—what an evil refuge!

SECTION 18: Idolatry Condemned

116 Allah forgives not (the sin of) joining other gods with Him; but He forgives whom He pleases other sins than this: one who joins other gods with Allah, has 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 Your 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 the (fair) nature created by Allah." Whoever, forsaking Allah, takes Satan for a friend, has of a surety suffered a loss

that is manifest. **120** Satan makes them promises, and creates in them false desires; but Satan's promises are nothing but deception. **121** They (his dupes) will have their dwelling in Hell, and from it they will find no way of escape. **122** But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness,—we shall soon admit them to Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath,—to dwell therein for ever. Allah's promise is the truth, and whose word can be truer than Allah's?

123 Not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book (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. **126** But to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth: and He it is that encompasses all things.

SECTION 19: Equitable Dealings with Orphans and Women

127 They ask your instruction concerning the women. Say: Allah does instruct you about them: and (remember) what has been rehearsed unto you in the Book, concerning the orphans of women to whom you give not the portions prescribed, and yet whom you desire to marry, as also concerning the children who are weak and oppressed: that you stand firm for justice to orphans. There is not a good deed which you 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; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if you do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. **129** You are never able to be fair and just as between women, 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 you come to a friendly understanding, and practise self-restraint, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **130** But if they disagree (and must part), Allah

will provide abundance for all from His all-reaching bounty: for Allah is He that cares for all and is Wise.

131 To Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth. Verily We have directed the People of the Book before you, and you (O Muslims) to fear Allah. But if you deny Him, lo! unto Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth, and Allah is free of all wants, worthy of all praise. **132** Yea, unto Allah belong all things in the heavens and on earth, and enough is Allah to carry through all affairs. **133** If it were His will, He could destroy you, O mankind, and create another race; for He has 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: for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things).

SECTION 20: Hypocrisy Condemned

135 O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. **136** O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the scripture which He has sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denies Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement, has 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. **138** To the Hypocrites give the glad tidings that there is for them (but) a grievous penalty;—**139** Indeed, to those who take for friends unbelievers rather than believers: is it honour they seek among them? Nay,—all honour is with Allah. **140** Already has He sent you Word in the Book, that when you hear the Signs of Allah held in defiance and ridicule, you are not to sit with them unless they turn to a different theme: if you did, you 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 you 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, 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.

SECTION 21: End of the Hypocrites

142 The Hypocrites—they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over-reach 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) distracted in mind even in the midst of it,—being (sincerely) for neither one group nor for another. Whom Allah leaves straying,—never will you find for him the Way. **144** O you who believe! Take not for friends unbelievers rather than believers: do you wish to offer Allah an open proof against yourselves? **145** The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire: no helper will you find for them;—**146** Except for those who repent, mend (their lives), hold fast to Allah, and purify their religion as in Allah's sight: if so they will be (numbered) 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 you are grateful and you believe? Nay, it is Allah that recognises (all good), and knows all things.

PART VI

148 Allah loves not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech, except where injustice has been done;⁷⁴ for Allah is He Who hears and

74. 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)

(continued...)

knows all things. **149** Whether you publish a good deed or conceal it or cover evil with pardon, verily Allah does blot out (sins) and has power (in the judgement of values). **150** Those who deny Allah and His Messengers, and (those who) wish to separate Allah from His Messengers, saying: "We believe in some but reject others": and (those who) wish to take a course midway,—**151** They are in truth (equally) 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.

SECTION 22: Transgressions of the Jews

153 The People of the Book ask you 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," but they were dazed for their presumption, with 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 towering height) of 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, "Our hearts are the wrappings (which preserve Allah's Word; we need no more)";—nay, Allah has 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; **157** That they said

74. (...continued)

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 by 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. [654]

(in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah";—but they killed him not, nor crucified him⁷⁵ but so it was made to appear to them, 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 up⁷⁶ 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; and on the Day of Judgement he will be a witness against them;—**160** For the iniquity of the Jews We made unlawful for them certain (foods) good and wholesome which had been lawful for them;—in that they hindered many from Allah's Way;—**161** That they took usury, though they were forbidden; and that they devoured men's substance wrongfully;—We have prepared for those among them who reject Faith a grievous punishment.

162 But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and

75. 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 is necessary for the theological doctrine of blood sacrifice and vicarious atonement for sins, which is rejected by Islam. But some of the early Christian sects did not believe that Christ was killed on the Cross. The Basilidans believed that someone else was substituted for him. The Docetae held that Christ never had a real physical or natural body, but only an apparent or phantom body, and that his Crucifixion was only apparent, not real. The Marcionite Gospel (about A. C. 138) denied that Jesus was born, and merely said that he appeared in human form. The Gospel of St. Barnabas supported the theory of substitution on the Cross. The Qur'anic teaching is that Christ was not crucified nor killed by the Jews, notwithstanding certain apparent circumstances which produced that illusion in the minds of some of his enemies; that disputations, doubts, and conjectures on such matters are vain and that he was taken up to Allah (see next verse and note). [663]

76. 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 (*rafa'a*) 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. [664]

the believers, believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you: and (especially) those who establish regular prayer and practise regular charity and believe in Allah and in the Last Day: To them shall We soon give a great reward.

SECTION 23: Previous Revelation Bears Out Qur'ānic Statements

163 We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismā'īl, 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 you 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 bears witness that what He has sent unto you He has sent from His (own) knowledge, and the angels bear witness: but enough is Allah for a witness. **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. **170** O Mankind! The Messenger has come to you in truth from Allah: believe in him: it is best for you. But if you 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 in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not "Trinity": desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.

SECTION 24: **Prophethood of Jesus**

172 Christ disdains not to serve and worship Allah, nor do the angels, those nearest (to Allah): those who disdain His worship and are arrogant,—He will gather them all together unto Himself to (answer). 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 penalty; nor will they find, besides Allah, any to protect or help them. 174 O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest.⁷⁷ 175 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 you for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (thus) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man 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 does Allah make clear to you (His law), lest you err. And Allah has knowledge of all things. □

77. The Proof and the Light are the Qur'ān and the Personality, Life and Teaching of Muhammad Mustafā. [679]

Chapter 5

AL-MĀ'IDAH (The Table Spread)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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 mystic 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 third verse contains the memorable declaration: "This day have I perfected your religion for you": which was promulgated in A.H.10, 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 (5:1-5).

Cleanliness of body, and justice and uprightness of dealing are nearest to Piety (5:6-11).

If the Jews and the Christians turned back from the Truth and violated their Covenants, they have had their warning (5:12-26).

The murder of Abel by Cain is the type of treatment which the just man suffers from the envious. There is punishment from Allah. The just man must not grieve (5:27-43).

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 (5:44-86).

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 (5:87-108).

The miracles of Jesus, and how they were misused by those who bore his name (5:109-120).

*** **

SECTION 1: Perfection of Religion in Islam

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O you who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations. Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named: but animals of the chase are forbidden while you are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb: for Allah does command according to His Will and Plan. 2 O you who believe! Violate not the sanctity of the symbols of Allah, nor of the sacred month, nor of the animals brought for sacrifice, nor the garlands that mark out such animals, nor the people resorting to the Sacred House, seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord. But when you are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb, you may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help you one another in righteousness and piety, but help you 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 has been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed 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 you what is lawful to them (as food). Say: Lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure: and what you have taught your trained hunting animals (to catch) in the manner directed to you by Allah: eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of Allah over it: and fear Allah; for Allah is swift in taking account. 5 This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The

food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time,—when you give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues. 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: Duty of Uprightness

6 O you who believe! When you 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 you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature, or you have been in contact with women, and you find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth,⁷⁸ and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allah does not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete His favour to you, that you may be grateful. **7** And call in remembrance the favour of Allah unto you, and His covenant, which He ratified with you, when you said: "We hear and we obey": and fear Allah, for Allah knows well the secrets of your hearts. **8** O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety; and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. **9** To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness has Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward. **10** Those who reject faith and deny Our Signs will be companions of Hell-fire. **11** O you 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: so fear Allah. And on Allah let believers put (all) their trust.

78. This is *Tayammum*, or washing with clean sand or earth where water is not available. I take it that this substitute is permissible both for Wudū and for a full bath, in the circumstances mentioned. [704]

SECTION 3: Christian Violation of the Covenant

12 Allah did aforetime take a covenant from the Children of Israel,⁷⁹ and We appointed twelve captains among them. And Allah said: "I am with you: if you (but) establish regular prayers, practise regular charity, believe in My messengers, honour and assist them, and loan to Allah a beautiful loan, 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, resists faith, he has truly wandered from the path of rectitude." 13 But because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, and made 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 will you cease to find them—barring a few—ever bent on (new) deceits: but forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds): for Allah loves those who are kind.

14 From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a Covenant,⁸⁰ but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them: so We estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other, to the Day of Judgement. And soon will Allah show them what it is they have done. 15 O People of the Book! There has come to you Our Messenger, revealing to you much that you used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary):

79. Cf. 2:63. "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 captains or elders or leaders of the people were selected, one from each of the twelve tribes (see 2:60). 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 of the land of Canaan: their names are mentioned in Num. xiii. 1-16. See below 5:22-29 and notes, [709]

80. The Christian Covenant may be taken to be the charge which Jesus gave to his disciples, and which the disciples accepted, to welcome Ahmad (61:6). 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]

there has come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book,—16 Wherewith Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leads them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light,—guides them to a path that is straight.

17 In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary. Say: "Who then has 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 belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between. He creates what He pleases. For Allah has power over all things."

18 (Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and His beloved." Say: "Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, you are but men,—of the men He has created: He forgives whom He pleases, and He punishes whom He pleases: and to Allah belongs 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 has come unto you, making (things) clear unto you, Our Messenger, after the break in (the series of) Our messengers, lest you should say: "There came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner (from evil)"; but now has come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner (from evil). And Allah has power over all things.

SECTION 4: Israelites' Violation of the Covenant

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! Enter⁸¹ the

81. 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 Commentary, and examine a good map of the Sinai Peninsula, showing its connections with Egypt or the west, Northwest Arabia on the east, and Palestine on the northeast. We may suppose that Israel crossed from Egypt into the Peninsula somewhere near the northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez.

(continued...)

Holy Land which Allah has assigned unto you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then will you be overthrown, to your own ruin." 22 They said: "O Moses! In this land are a people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it: if (once) they leave, then shall we enter." 23 (But) among (their) God-fearing men were two on whom Allah had bestowed His grace:⁸² they said: "Assault them at the (proper) Gate: when once you are in, victory will be yours; but on Allah put your trust if you have faith." 24 They said: "O Moses! While they remain there, never shall we be able to enter, to the end of time. Go you, and your Lord, and fight you two, while we sit here (and watch)." 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 you not over these rebellious people."

SECTION 5: Cain and Abel—Murderous Plots Against the Prophet

27 Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons 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 you." "Surely," said the former, "Allah does accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous. 28 If you do stretch your hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against you to slay you: for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds. 29 For me, I intend to let you draw on yourself my sin as well as yours, for you will be among the companions of the Fire, and that is the reward of those who do

81. (...continued)

Moses organised and numbered the people, and instituted the Priesthood. They went south about 200 miles to Mount Sinai where the Law was received. Then, perhaps a hundred and fifty miles north of their camp, about 20 miles south of the future Jerusalem. They saw a rich country, and brought from it pomegranates and figs and a bunch of grapes so heavy that it had to be carried by two men on a staff. They came back and reported that the land was rich, but the men there were too strong for them. The people of Israel had no courage and no faith, and Moses remonstrated with them. [724]

82. Among those who returned after spying out the land were two men who had faith and courage. They were Joshua and Caleb. [726]

wrong." **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. **31** Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground, to show him how to hide the shame of his brother. "Woe is me!" said he, "was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?" Then he became full of regrets—**32** On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people: 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 land is execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: 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: Punishment of Offenders

35 O you who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive with might and main in His cause: that you may prosper. **36** As to those who reject Faith,—if they had everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgement, it would never be accepted of them; theirs would be a grievous penalty. **37** Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out therefrom: their penalty will be one that endures.

38 As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power. **39** But if the thief repents after his crime, and amends his conduct, Allah turns to him in forgiveness; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **40** Know you not that to Allah (alone)

belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whom He pleases, and He forgives whom He pleases: and Allah has power over all things.

41 O Messenger! Let not those grieve you, who race each other into unbelief: (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 to you. They change the words from their (right) times and places: they say, "If you are given this, take it, but if not, beware!" If any one's trial is intended by Allah, you have no authority in the least for him against Allah. For such—it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a heavy punishment. **42** (They are fond of) listening to falsehood, of devouring anything forbidden. If they do come to you, either judge between them, or decline to interfere. If you decline, they cannot hurt you in the least. If you judge, judge in equity between them. For Allah loves those who judge in equity. **43** But why do they come to you for decision, when they have (their own) law 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.

SECTION 7: The Qur'ān and Previous Scriptures

44 It was We Who revealed the Law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's Will, by the rabbis and the doctors of law: for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto: therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not My Signs for a miserable price. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers. **45** We ordained therein for them: "Life for life, eye for eye, 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 (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are (no better than) wrong-doers.

46 And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law 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 has revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel.

48 To you We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the Truth that has come to you. To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He has given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which you dispute; 49 And this (He commands): Judge you between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, but beware of them lest they beguile you from any of that (teaching) which Allah has sent down to you. And if they turn away, be assured that for some of their crime it is Allah's purpose to punish them. And truly most men are rebellious. 50 Do they then seek after a judgement of (the days of) ignorance? But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgement than Allah?

SECTION 8: Relations of Muslims with Their Enemies

51 O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors:⁸³ they are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guides not a people unjust. 52 Those in whose

83. 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. [764]

hearts is a disease—you see 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 according to His Will. Then will they repent 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?" All that they do will be in vain, and they will fall into (nothing but) ruin.

54 O you 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. That is the grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleases. And Allah encompasses all, and He knows all things. **55** Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,—those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship). **56** As to those who turn (for friendship) to Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,—it is the fellowship of Allah that must certainly triumph.

SECTION 9: *The Mockers*

57 O you 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 you Allah, if you have faith (indeed). **58** When you proclaim your call to prayer, they take it (but) as mockery and sport; that is because they are a people without understanding. **59** Say: "O People of the Book! Do you disapprove of us for no other reason than that we believe in Allah, and the Revelation that has come to us and that which came before (us), and (perhaps) that most of you are rebellious and disobedient?" **60** Say: "Shall I point out to you something much worse than this, (as judged) by the treatment it received from Allah? Those who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath, those of whom some

He transformed into apes and swine,⁸⁴ those who worshipped evil;—these are (many times) worse in rank, and far more astray from the even path!"

61 When they come to you, they say: "We believe": but in fact they enter with a mind against Faith, and they go out with the same, but Allah knows fully all that they hide. **62** Many of them do you see, racing each other in sin and rancour, and their eating of things 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 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 gives and spends (of His bounty) as He pleases. But the Revelation that comes to you from Allah increases in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy. Amongst them We have placed enmity and hatred till the Day of Judgement. Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah does extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And Allah loves not those who do mischief. **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 Law, the Gospel, and all the Revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side. There is from among them a party on the right course: but many of them follow a course that is evil.

SECTION 10: Christian Deviation from the Truth

67 O Messenger! Proclaim the (message) which has been sent to you from your Lord. If you did not, you would not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. And Allah will defend you from men (who mean mischief). For Allah guides not those who reject Faith. **68** Say:

84. For apes see 2:65. For men possessed by devils, and the devils being sent into swine, see Matt. viii. 28-32. [770]

"O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the Revelation that has come to you from your Lord." It is the Revelation that comes to you from your Lord, that increases in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy. But sorrow you not over (these) people without Faith. **69** Those who believe (in the Qur'ān), those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures), 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 (go so far as to) slay. **71** They thought there would be no trial (or punishment); so they became blind and deaf; yet Allah (in mercy) turned to them; yet again many of them became blind and deaf. But Allah sees well all that they do.

72 They do blaspheme who say: "Allah is Christ the son of Mary." But said Christ: "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 do blaspheme who say: "Allah is one of three in a Trinity": for there is no god except One Allah. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers 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 a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth.⁸⁵ They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allah does make His Signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth! **76** Say: "Will you worship, besides Allah, something which has no power either to harm or benefit you? But Allah,—He it is that hears and knows all things." **77** Say: "O People of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what

85. She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious and virtuous woman. [783]

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."

SECTION 11: Christian Nearness to Islam

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 (usually) forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did. **80** You see 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 Messenger, and in what has been revealed to him, never 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 will you find the Jews and Pagans; and nearest among them in love to the believers will you find those who say, "We are Christians": because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.

PART VII

83 And when they listen to the Revelation received by the Messenger, you will 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 to admit us to the company of the righteous?" **85** And for this their prayer has 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: A Warning—Besetting Sins of Previous People

87 O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for Allah loves not those given to excess. **88** Eat of the things which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, in Whom you believe.

89 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, 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 you have sworn. But keep to your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His Signs, that you may be grateful.

90 O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones,⁸⁶ and (divination by) arrows,⁸⁷ are an abomination,—of Satan's handiwork: eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper. **91** Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will you not then abstain? **92** Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and beware (of evil): if you do turn back, know you that it is Our Messenger's duty to proclaim (the message) in the clearest manner. **93** On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness there is no blame for what they ate (in the past), when they guard themselves from evil, and believe, and do deeds of

86. Cf. 5:3. 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 Arabic word *ansāb* (translated here "stones") 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. [794]

87. Cf. 5:3. 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. [795]

righteousness,—(or) again, guard themselves from evil and believe,—(or) again, guard themselves from evil and do good. For Allah loves those who do good.

SECTION 13: *Inviolability of the Ka'bah*

94 O you who believe! Allah does 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 who fears Him unseen: any who transgress thereafter, will have a grievous penalty. **95** O you who believe! Kill not game while in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb. If any of you does so intentionally, the compensation is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah, of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you; or by way 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 exact from him the penalty. For Allah is Exalted, and Lord of Retribution. **96** Lawful to you is the pursuit 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 you are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb. And fear Allah, to Whom you shall be gathered back. **97** Allah made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for men, as also the Sacred Months, the animals for offerings, and the garlands that mark them: that you may know that Allah has knowledge of what is in the heavens and on earth and that Allah is well acquainted with all things. **98** Know you 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 knows all that you reveal and you conceal. **100** Say: "Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle you; so fear Allah, O you that understand; that (so) you may prosper."

SECTION 14: *Some Directions for Muslims*

101 O you who believe! Ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble. But if you ask about things when

the Qur'ān is being revealed, they will be made plain to you,⁸⁸ Allah will forgive those: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing. **102** Some people before you did ask such questions,⁸⁹ and on that account lost their faith. **103** It was not Allah who instituted (superstitions 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, or stallion-camels freed from work: it is blasphemers who invent a lie against Allah; but most of them lack wisdom. **104** When it is said to them: "Come to what Allah has revealed; come to the Messenger": they say: "Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following." What! Even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance? **105** O you who believe! Guard your own souls: if you follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray. The goal of you all is to Allah: it is He that will show you the truth of all that you do.

106 O you who believe! When death approaches any of you, (take) witnesses among yourselves when making bequests,—two just men of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside if you are journeying through the earth, and the chance of death befalls you (thus). If you doubt (their truth), detain them both after prayer, and let them both swear by Allah: "We wish not in this for any worldly gain, even though the (beneficiary) be our near relation: we shall hide not the evidence before Allah: if we do, then behold! the sin be upon us!" **107**

88. 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, insofar 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. [807]

89. For example, the merely fractious questions asked of Moses by the Jews; 2:68-71. 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. [808]

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: 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! the wrong be upon us!" 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 guides not a rebellious people.

SECTION 15: Christian Love of This Life

109 One day will Allah gather the messengers together, and ask: "What was the response you received (from men to your teaching)?" They will say: "We have no knowledge: it is You Who know in full all that is hidden."

110 Then will Allah say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favour to you and to your mother. Behold! I strengthened you with the holy spirit, so that you did speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel. And behold! you make out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and you breathes into it and it becomes a bird by My leave, and you heal those born blind, and the lepers, by My leave. And behold! you bring forth the dead by My leave. And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from (violence to) you when you did show them the clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.'⁹⁰ 111 And behold! I inspired the disciples to have faith in Me and My Messenger; they said, We have faith, and do you⁹¹ bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims."⁹²

90. 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'ān. But Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were all accused of magic and sorcery, by those who could find no other explanation of Allah's power. [822]

91. 'You' refers to Jesus, who is being addressed by his Disciples. Cf. 3:52. [823]

112 Behold! the disciples said: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Can your Lord send down to us a table set (with viands) from heaven?" Said Jesus: "Fear Allah, if you have faith." 113 They said: "We only wish to eat thereof and satisfy our hearts, and to know that you have 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 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 You; and provide for our sustenance, for You are the best Sustainer (of our needs)." 115 Allah said: "I will send it down unto you: but if any of you after that resists faith, I will punish him with a penalty such as I have not inflicted on any one among all the peoples."

SECTION 16: False Doctrines Introduced After Jesus' Death

116 And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Did you say unto men, 'Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah'?" He will say: "Glory to You! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would indeed have known it. You know what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Yours. For You know in full all that is hidden."⁹² 117 Never said I to them aught except what You did command me to say, to wit, 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'; and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them; when You did take me up You were the Watcher over them, and You are a witness to all things. 118 If You do punish them, they are Your servants: if You do forgive them, You are the Exalted in power, the Wise." 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 great salvation, (the fulfilment of all desires)." 120 To Allah does belong the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, and it is He Who has power over all things. □

92. 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. [829]

Chapter 6

AL-AN'ĀM (The Cattle)

Introduction

This is a Sūrah 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 spiritual 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 (6:1-30.)

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 (6:31-60).

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 (6:61-82).

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? (6:83-110).

The obstinate and the rebellious are deceived; they should be avoided. Though they turn for assistance to each other, they will receive due punishment (6:111-129).

Allah's decrees will come to pass, in spite of all the crimes and superstitions of the ungodly (6:130-150).

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 (6:151-165).

*** **

SECTION 1: Ultimate Triumph of Divine Unity

*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 with their Guardian-Lord. 2 He it is Who created you from clay, and then decreed a stated term (for you). And there is in His presence another determined term; yet you doubt within yourselves! 3 And He is Allah in the heavens and on earth. He knows what you hide, and what you reveal, and He knows the (recompense) which you earn (by your deeds).

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 they learn the reality of what they used to mock at. 6 See they not how many of those before them We did destroy?⁹³ —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 (fertile) streams flowing beneath their (feet): yet for their sins We destroyed them, and raised in their wake fresh generations (to succeed them).

7 If We had sent unto you 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

93. 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 the 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".

We should certainly have caused them confusion in a matter which they have already covered with confusion. **10** Mocked were (many) Messengers before you; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked.

SECTION 2: Greatness of Divine Mercy

11 Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth." **12** Say: "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth?" Say: "To Allah. He has inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy. That He will gather you together for the Day of Judgement, there is no doubt whatever. It is they who have lost their own souls, that will not believe. **13** To Him belongs all that dwells (or lurks) in the night and the day. For He is the One Who hears and knows all things."⁹⁴ **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 feeds but is not fed." Say: "Nay! But I am commanded to be the first of those who bow to Allah (in Islam), and be not you of the company of those who join gods with Allah." **15** Say: "I would, if I disobeyed my Lord, indeed have fear of the penalty 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 (salvation), the obvious fulfilment of all desire."⁹⁵ **17** If

94. 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 Allah replies: "Yes, but Mercy is Allah's own attribute, and knowledge and wisdom beyond what man can conceive." [846]

95. We continue the implied dialogue suggested in n. 94. 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

(continued ...)

Allah touch you with affliction, none can remove it but He; if He touch you with happiness, He has power over all things. **18** He is the irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers; 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'ān has been revealed to me by inspiration, that I may warn you and all whom it reaches. Can you possibly bear witness that besides Allah there is another god?" Say: "Nay! I cannot bear witness!" Say: "But in truth He is the one Allah, 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 know⁹⁶ their own sons. Those who have lost their own souls refuse therefore to believe.

SECTION 3: Polytheists' Witness Against Themselves

21 Who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah or rejects His signs? But verily the wrong-doers never shall prosper. **22** One day shall We gather them all together: We shall say to those who ascribed partners (to Us): "Where are the partners whom you (invented and) talked about?" **23** There will then be (left) no subterfuge for them but to say: "By Allah our Lord, we were not those who joined gods with Allah." **24** Behold! How they lie against their own souls! But the (lie) which they invented will leave them⁹⁷ in the lurch. **25** Of them there are some who (pretend to) listen to you; but We have thrown

95. (...continued)

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." [848]

96. Cf. 2:146. In both passages the pronoun translated 'this' may mean 'him' and refer to Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, as some commentators think. [850]

97. The lies which they used to tell have now 'wandered' from the channels which they used 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. [852]

veils on their hearts, so they understand it not,⁹⁸ and deafness in their ears; if they saw every one of the Signs, not they will believe in them; in so much that when they come to you, they (but) dispute with you; the Unbelievers say: "These are nothing but tales of the ancients." **26** Others they keep away from it, and themselves they keep away; but they only destroy their own souls, and they perceive it not. **27** If you could but see when they are confronted with the Fire! They will say: "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** Indeed, 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. **29** And they (sometimes) say: "There is nothing except our life on this earth, and never shall we be raised up again." **30** If you could but see when they are confronted with their Lord! He will say: "Is not this the truth?" They will say: "Indeed, by our Lord!" He will say: "Taste you then the penalty, because you rejected Faith."

SECTION 4: Rejection of the Truth

31 Lost indeed are they who treat it as a falsehood that they must meet Allah,— until on a sudden the hour is on them, and they say: "Ah! Woe unto us that we took no thought of it"; for they bear their burdens on their backs, and evil indeed are the burdens that they bear? **32** What is the life of this world but play and amusement? But best is the home in the Hereafter, for those who are righteous. Will you not then understand?

33 We know indeed the grief which their words do cause you: it is not you they reject: it is the Signs of Allah, which the wicked condemn. **34** Rejected were the messengers before you: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and decrees) of Allah. Already have you received some account of those messengers. **35** If

98. *It* = The Qur'ān. [852-A]

their spurning is hard on your mind, yet if you were 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 you 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 turned unto Him.

37 They say: "Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Allah has certainly power to send down a Sign: but most of them understand not." **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. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end. **39** Those who reject Our Signs are deaf and dumb,—in the midst of darkness profound: whom Allah wills, He leaves to wander: whom He wills, He places on the Way that is straight. **40** Say: "Think you to yourselves, if there come upon you the wrath of Allah, or the Hour (that you dread), would you then call upon other than Allah?—(reply) if you are truthful! **41** Nay,— on Him would you call, and if it be His Will, He would remove (the distress) which occasioned your call upon Him, and you would forget (the false gods) which you join with Him!"

SECTION 5: Consequences of Rejection

42 Before you We sent (messengers) to many nations, and We afflicted the nations with suffering and adversity, that they might learn humility. **43** When the suffering reached them from Us, why then did they not learn humility? On the contrary their hearts became hardened, and Satan made their (sinful) acts seem alluring to them. **44** But when they forgot the warning they had received, We opened to them the gates of all (good) things, until, in the midst of their enjoyment of Our gifts, suddenly, 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.

46 Say: "Think you, if Allah took away your hearing and your sight,

and sealed up 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 you, if the punishment of Allah comes to you, whether suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed except those who do wrong?” **48** We send the messengers only to give good news 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,—them shall punishment touch, for that they ceased not from transgressing.” **50** Say: “I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah,⁹⁹ 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?”¹⁰⁰ Will you then consider not?

SECTION 6: Reward of Believers

51 Give this warning to those in whose (hearts) is the fear that they will be brought (to judgement) 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. In naught are you accountable for them, and in naught are they accountable for you,¹⁰¹ that you should turn them

99. Literally, it might mean that the Prophets are not like vulgar soothsayers, who pretend to reveal hidden treasures, or peer into the 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 teachings arises through Allah’s grace—to them and to those who bear them. [867]

100. 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. [868]

101. Some of the rich and influential Quraysh 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

away, and thus be (one) of the unjust. **53** Thus did We try some of them by comparison¹⁰² with others, that they should say: "Is it these then that Allah has favoured from amongst us?" Does not Allah know best those who are grateful? **54** When those come to you who believe in Our Signs, say: "Peace be on you: your Lord has inscribed for Himself (the rule¹⁰³ 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.

SECTION 7: Divine Judgement

56 Say: "I am forbidden to worship those—others than Allah—whom you 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." **57** Say: "For me, I (work) on a Clear Sign from my Lord, but you reject Him. What you 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." **58** Say: "If what you would see hastened were in my power, the matter would be settled at once between you and me. But Allah knows best those who do wrong." **59** With Him are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that none knows but

101. (...continued)

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 Muḥammad's daily life in this as in other things. If their sincerity was in any way doubtful, it involved no responsibility for the Preacher. [871]

102. 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. [872]

103. 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. [873]

He. He knows whatever there is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf does fall 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 clear (to those who can read) **60** It is He Who does take your souls by night, and has knowledge of all that you have done by day: by day does He raise you up again; that a term appointed be fulfilled; in the end unto Him will be your return; then will He show you the truth of all that you did.

SECTION 8: Divine Judgement

61 He is the Irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers, and He sets guardians over you. At length, when death approaches one of you, Our angels take his soul, and they never fail in their duty. **62** Then are men returned unto Allah, their Protector, the (only) reality: is not His the command? And He is the swiftest in taking account.

63 Say: "Who is it that delivers you from the dark recesses of land and sea, when you call upon Him in humility and silent terror: 'If He only delivers us from these (dangers), (we vow) we shall truly show our gratitude?'" **64** Say "It is Allah that delivers you from these and all (other) distresses: and yet you worship false gods!" **65** Say: "He has power to send calamities¹⁰⁴ 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 by various (symbols); that they may understand. **66** But your people reject this, though it is the truth. Say: "Not mine is the responsibility for arranging your affairs; **67** For every message is a limit of time, and soon shall you know it."

68 When you see men engaged in vain discourse about Our Signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme. If Satan ever makes you forget, then after recollection, sit not you in the company of those who do wrong. **69** On their account no responsibility falls on

¹⁰⁴ *Calamities from above and below*: such as storms and blizzards, torrential rain, etc., or earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc. [888]

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 proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts: 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.

SECTION 9: Abraham's Argument for Divine Unity

71 Say: "Shall we indeed 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 evil ones 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, 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 in true (proportions): the day He said, "Be," behold! it is. His Word is the truth. His will be the dominion the day the trumpet will be blown. He knows 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 Āzar: "Take you idols for gods? For I see you and your people in manifest error." **75** So also did We show Abraham the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth, that he might (with understanding) 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." **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." **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) you to dispute with me, about Allah, when He (Himself) has guided me? I fear not (the beings) you associate with Allah: unless my Lord wills, (nothing can happen). My Lord comprehends in His knowledge all things. Will you not (yourselves) be admonished? **81** How should I fear (the beings) you associate with Allah, when you fear not to give partners to Allah without any warrant having been given to you? Which of (us) two parties has more right to security? (Tell me) if you know. **82** It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong—that are (truly) in security, for they are on (right) guidance.”

SECTION 10: Prophets Among Abraham's Descendants

83 That was the reasoning about Us, which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for your Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. **84** We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) we guided:¹⁰⁵ and before him, We guided Noah,¹⁰⁶ and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: **85** And Zakariyā

105. 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 Muḥammad. 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 87:19, though it is now lost. They were therefore the first to receive Guidance in the sense of a Book. [903]

106. 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 for 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”. [904]

and John,¹⁰⁷ and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: **86** And Ismā'īl and Elisha,¹⁰⁸ and Jonas, and Lot: and to all We gave favour above the nations: **87** (To them) and to their fathers,¹⁰⁹ and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and We guided them to a straight Way. **88** This is the guidance of Allah: He gives that guidance to whom He pleases, of His worshippers. 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 authority, 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: copy the guidance they received; say: "No reward for this do I ask of you: this is no less than a message for the nations."

107. The third group consists not of men of action, but Preachers of Truth, who led solitary lives. Their epithet is: "the Righteous." They were mystic prophets and form a connected group round Jesus. Zakariyā was the father of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus (3:37-41); and Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elias: "this is Elias, which was for 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 (Cf. 37:123). [905]

108. This is the last group, described as those "favoured above the nations." It consists of four men who all had 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. Ismā'īl 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 troublesome 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 Jonah (Yūnus) is wellknown: he was swallowed by a fish or whale, but was saved by Allah's mercy: through his preaching, his city (Nineveh) was saved (10: 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 (7:80-84). [906]

109. I take verse 87 to refer back to all the four groups just mentioned. [907]

SECTION 11: Truth of Divine Revelation

91 No just estimate of Allah do they make when they say: "Nothing does Allah send down to man (by way of revelation)". Say: "Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought?—a light and guidance to man: but you make it into (separate) sheets for show, while you conceal much (of its contents): therein were you taught that which you knew not—neither you 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 you may warn the Mother of Cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this (Book), and they are constant in guarding their prayers.¹¹⁰

93 Who can be more wicked than one who invents a lie against Allah, or says, "I have received inspiration," when he has received none, or (again) who says, "I can reveal the like of what Allah has revealed"? If you could but see how the wicked (do fare) in the flood of confusion at death!—the angels stretch forth their hands, (saying), "Yield up your souls: this day shall you receive your reward,—a penalty of shame, for that you used to tell lies against Allah, and scornfully to reject of His Signs!" 94 "And behold! You come to Us bare and alone as We created you for the first time: you have left behind you all (the favours) which We bestowed on you: We see not with you your intercessors whom you 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 lurch!"

110. Mother of Cities: Makkah, now the *Qiblah* and Centre of Islam. If this verse was (like the greater part of the Chapter) revealed in Makkah before the Hijrah, and before Makkah was made the *Qiblah* of Islam, Makkah was nonetheless the Mother of Cities, being traditionally associated with Abraham and with Adam and Eve (see 2:125 and 2:197).

'All around Makkah' would mean, the whole world if we look upon Makkah as the Centre. [913]

SECTION 12: Ultimate Triumph of the Truth

95 It is Allah Who causes the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causes the living to issue from the dead, and He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah: then how are you deluded away from the truth? 96 He it is that cleaves 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 judgement and ordering of (Him), the Exalted in Power, the Omniscient. 97 It is He Who makes the stars (as beacons) for you, that you may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea: We detail Our Signs for people who know. 98 It is He Who has produced you from a single person: here is a place of sojourn and a place of departure: We detail Our Signs for people who understand. 99 It is He Who sends down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); 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): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are Signs for people who believe.

100 Yet they make the *Jinns* equals¹¹¹ with Allah, though Allah did create the *Jinns*; and they falsely, having no knowledge, attribute to

111. *Jinns*: who are they? In 18:50 we are told that Iblīs 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 Iblīs. That implies that Iblīs had been of the company of angels. In many passages *Jinns* and men are spoken of together. In 55:14-15, man is stated to have been created from clay, while *Jinns* from a flame of fire. The root meaning of *janna*, *yajinnu*, is "to be covered or hidden," and *janna*, *yajunnu*, in the active voice, "to cover or hide," as in 6:76. (Both the Qur'ān and *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 personalised beings who enjoy a certain amount of free will and thus will be called to account. [929])

Him sons and daughters. Praise and glory be to Him! (for He is) above what they attribute to Him!

SECTION 13: Gradual Progress

101 To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: how can He have a son when He has no consort? He created all things, and He has full knowledge of all things. **102** That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things: then worship you Him: and He has power to dispose of all affairs. **103** No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.

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." **105** Thus do We explain the Signs by various (symbols): that they may say, "You have taught (us) diligently," and that We may make the matter clear to those who know. **106** Follow what you are taught by inspiration from your Lord: there is no god but He: and turn aside from those who join gods with Allah. **107** If it had been Allah's plan, they would not have taken false gods: but We made you not one to watch over their doings, nor are you set over them to dispose of their affairs.

108 Revile not you 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 its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord, and We 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 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 and their eyes, even as they refused to believe in this in the first instance: We shall leave them in their trespasses, to wander in distraction.

PART VIII

SECTION 14: Polytheists' Opposition

111 Even if We did send unto them angels, and the dead did speak unto them, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not 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,—evil ones among men and *Jinns*, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If your Lord had so planned, they would not have done it: so leave them and their inventions alone. 113 To such (deceit) let the hearts of those incline, who have no faith in the Hereafter: let them delight in it, and let them earn from it what they may.

114 Say: "Shall I seek for judge other than Allah?—when He it is Who has sent unto you the Book, explained in detail." They know full well, to whom We have given the Book, that it has been sent down from your Lord in truth. Never be then of those who doubt. 115 The Word of your Lord does find its fulfilment in truth and in justice: none can change His Words: for He is the One Who hears and knows all. 116 Were you to follow the common run of those on earth, they will lead you away from the Way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie. 117 Your Lord knows best who strays from His Way: He knows best who they are that receive His guidance.

118 So eat of (meats) on which Allah's name has been pronounced, if you have faith in His Signs. 119 Why should you not eat of (meats) on which Allah's name has been pronounced, when He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you—except under compulsion of necessity? But many do mislead (men) by their appetites unchecked by knowledge. Your Lord knows 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 has not been pronounced: that would be impiety. But the evil ones ever inspire their friends to contend with you; if you were to obey them, you would indeed be Pagans.

SECTION 15: The Chief Opponents

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. 123 Thus have We placed leaders in every town, its wicked men, to plot (and burrow) therein: but they only plot against their own souls, and they perceive it not. 124 When there comes to them a Sign (from Allah), they say: "We shall not believe until we receive one (exactly) like those received by Allah's messengers." Allah knows best where (and how) to carry out His mission. Soon will the wicked be overtaken by humiliation before Allah, and a severe punishment, for all their plots. 125 Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide,—He opens their breast to Islam; those whom He wills to leave straying,—He makes their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus does Allah (heap) the penalty on those who refuse to believe. 126 This is the Way of your Lord, leading straight: We have detailed the Signs for those who receive admonition. 127 For them will be a Home of peace in the presence of their Lord: He will be their friend, because they practised (righteousness). 128 One day will He gather them all together, (and say): "O you assembly of *Jinns*! Much (toll) did you take of men." Their friends amongst men will say: "Our Lord! We made profit from each other: but (alas!) we reached our term—which You did appoint for us." He will say: "The Fire be your dwelling-place: you will dwell therein for ever, except as Allah wills." For your Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. 129 Thus do We make the wrong-doers turn to each other, because of what they earn.

SECTION 16: Evils of Idolatry

130 "O you assembly of *Jinns* and men! Came there not unto you messengers from amongst you, 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 your Lord

would not destroy for their wrong-doing men's habitations whilst their occupants were unwarned. **132** To all are degrees (or ranks) according to their deeds: for your Lord is not unmindful of anything that they do. **133** Your Lord is Self-sufficient, 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 has been promised unto you will come to pass: nor can you frustrate it (in the least bit). **135** Say: "O my people! Do whatever you can: I will do (my part): soon will you know who it is whose end will be (best) in the Hereafter: certain it is that the wrong-doers will not prosper." **136** Out of what Allah has produced in abundance in tilth and in cattle, they assigned Him a share: they say, according to their fancies: "This is for Allah, and this"—for our "partners"! But the share of their "partners" reaches not Allah, whilst the share of Allah reaches their "partners"! Evil (and unjust) is their assignment! **137** Even so, in the eyes of most of the Pagans, their "partners" made alluring the slaughter of their children, in order to lead them to their own destruction, and cause confusion in their religion. If Allah had willed, they would not have done so: but leave alone them and their inventions. **138** And they say that such and such cattle and crops are taboo, and none should eat of them except those whom—so they say—We wish; further, there are cattle forbidden to yoke or burden, and cattle on which, (at slaughter), the name of Allah is not pronounced;—inventions against Allah's name: soon will He requite them for their inventions. **139** They say: "What is in the wombs of such and such cattle is specially reserved (for food) for our men, and forbidden to our women; but if it is still-born, then all have shares therein." 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 has provided for them, inventing (lies) against Allah. They have indeed gone astray and heeded no guidance.

SECTION 17: Idolaters' Self-imposed Prohibitions

141 It is He Who produces 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 loves not the wasters. **142** Of the cattle are some for burden and some for meat: eat what Allah has provided for you, and follow not the footsteps of Satan: for he is to you an avowed enemy. **143** (Take) eight (head of cattle)¹¹² in (four) pairs: of sheep a pair, and of goats a pair; say, has 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 you are truthful: **144** Of camels a pair, and oxen a pair; say, has He forbidden the two males, or the two females, or (the young) which the wombs of the two females enclose?—were you present when Allah ordered you such a thing? But who does more wrong than one who invents a lie against Allah, to lead astray men without knowledge? For Allah guides not people who do wrong.

SECTION 18: Prohibited Foods

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,¹¹³ 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,—your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **146** For those who followed the Jewish Law, We forbade every (animal) with undivided hoof, 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 you of falsehood, say: "Your Lord is full of mercy all-embracing;" but from people in guilt never will His wrath be turned back.

112. The superstitions referred to in 6:139 and 5:103 are further ridiculed in this verse and the next. [968]

113. *Blood poured forth*: as distinguished from blood adhering to flesh, or the liver, or such other internal organs purifying the blood. [969]

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 taboos." So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted of Our wrath. Say: "Have you any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. You follow nothing but conjecture: you 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 you amongst them: nor follow you 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: Guiding Rules of Life

151 Say: "Come, I will rehearse what Allah has (really) prohibited you from": Join not anything as equal with Him; 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 shameful deeds, whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus does He command you, that you 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 you speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfil the covenant of Allah: thus does He command you, that you may remember. **153** Verily, this is My Way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus does He command you, that you may be righteous. **154** Moreover, We gave Moses the Book, completing (Our favour) to those who would do right, and explaining all things in detail,—and a guide and a mercy, that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord.

SECTION 20: The Goal for the Faithful

155 And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing: so follow it and be righteous, that you may receive mercy: **156** Lest you

should say: "The Book was sent down to two Peoples¹¹⁴ before us, and for our part, we remained unacquainted with all that they learned by assiduous study;" 157 Or lest you should say: "If the Book had only been sent down to us, we should have followed its guidance better than they." Now then has come unto you a clear (Sign)¹¹⁵ from your Lord,—and a guide and a mercy: then who could do more wrong than one who rejects Allah's Signs, and turns away therefrom? In good time shall We requite those who turn away from Our Signs, with a dreadful penalty, for their turning away. 158 Are they waiting to see if the angels come to them, or your Lord (Himself), or certain of the Signs of your Lord! The day that certain of the Signs of your Lord do come, no good will it do to a soul to believe in them then, if it believed not before nor earned righteousness through its faith. Say: "Wait you: we too are waiting." 159 As for those who divide¹¹⁶ their religion and break up into sects, you have 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. 160 He that does good shall have ten times as much to his credit: he that does evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them.

161 Say: "Verily, my Lord has 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 has He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His will."

114. That is, to the Jews and the Christians, who were the only two communities known to the Arabs as possessing revealed scriptures. [Muhammad Asad.—Ed.]

115. The Qur'ān and the life and the teaching of Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah. [982]

116. Divide their religion (*farrāqū*) 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. [985]

164 Say: "Shall I seek for (my) Cherisher 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 goal in the end is towards Allah: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein you disputed." **165** It is He Who has made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He has raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He has given you: for your Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. □

Chapter 7

AL-A'RĀF (The Heights)

Introduction

This Sūrah is closely connected, both chronologically and in respect of the argument, with the previous Sūrah. But it expounds the doctrine of revelation and man's spiritual history by illustrations from Adam onwards, through various Prophets, and the details of Moses' 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 Iblīs. Arrogance leads to rebellion; the rebel is jealous and tempts the natural man, who is warned against deceit and all excess (7:1-31).

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 (7:32-58).

The story of Noah and the Flood, and the stories of Hūd, Sālih, Lot, and Shu'ayb, 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 (7:59-99).

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 (7:100-157).

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 (7:158-171).

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 (7:172-206).

*** **

SECTION 1: Opponents' Doom

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm Šād.*¹¹⁷ **2** A Book revealed unto you,—so let your heart be oppressed no more by any difficulty on that account,—that with it you might warn (the erring) and teach 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 you remember of admonition.

4 How many towns have We destroyed (for their sins)? Our punishment took them suddenly 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 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: small are the thanks that you give!

117. This is a combination of four Abbreviated Letters. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see note to 2:1. The combination here includes the three letters *Alif, Lām, Mīm*, which occurred at the beginning of Sūrah 2, and are discussed in note 26 to 2:1.

The additional letter *Šād* occurs in combination here and in Sūrah 19, and by itself at the beginning of Sūrah 38, and nowhere else. The factor common to Sūrah 7, 19, and 38 is that in each case the core of the Sūrah consists in the stories (*qasas*) of the Prophets. In this Sūrah we have the stories of Noah, Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lot, Shu'ayb, and Moses, leading up to Muḥammad, and in Sūrah 38, the stories of David, Solomon, and Job similarly lead up to Muḥammad, occupying three out of the five sections. Sūrah 19 consists almost entirely of such stories. Can we understand *Šād* to stand for *qasas*, of which it is the most characteristic letter? In this Sūrah 7, we have the religious history of mankind traced—the Beginning, the Middle, and the End. [1989]

SECTION 2: The Devil's Opposition to Man

11 It is We Who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblīs; he refused to be of those who bow down. 12 (Allah) said: "What prevented you from bowing down when I commanded you?" He said: "I am better than he: You did create me from fire, and him from clay." 13 (Allah) said: "Get you down from this: it is not for you to be arrogant here: get out, for you are of the meanest (of creatures)." 14 He said: "Give me respite till the day they are raised up." 15 (Allah) said: "Be you among those who have respite." 16 He said: "Because You have thrown me out of the Way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on Your straight Way: 17 Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: nor will You find, in most of them, gratitude (for Your mercies)." 18 (Allah) said: "Get out from this, disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow you,—Hell will I fill with you all.

19 "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden, and enjoy (its good things) as you wish: but approach not this tree, or you run into harm and transgression." 20 Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest you 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, their shame 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 You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be lost." 24 (Allah) said: "Get you 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 you live, and therein shall you die; but from it shall you be taken out (at last)."

SECTION 3: Warning Against the Devil's Insinuations

26 O you Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment 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 you 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 watch you from a position where you cannot see them: We made the Evil Ones friends (only) to those without Faith.

28 When they do aught that is shameful, they say: "We found our fathers doing so"; and "Allah commanded us thus": Say: "Nay, Allah never commands what is shameful: do you say of Allah what you know not?" 29 Say: "My Lord has commanded justice; and that you set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer, and call upon Him, making your devotion sincere as in His sight: such as He created you in the beginning, so shall you return." 30 Some He has guided: others have (by their choice) deserved the loss of their way; in that they took the Evil Ones, in preference to Allah, for their friends and protectors, and think that they receive guidance. 31 O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters.

SECTION 4: Messengers Sent for Uplift of Humanity

32 Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgement. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who understand. 33 Say: The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He has given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.

34 To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation). 35 O you Children of Adam! Whenever there come to you messengers from amongst you, rehearsing My Signs unto you,—those who are righteous and mend (their lives),—on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. 36 But those who reject Our Signs and treat them with arrogance,—they are companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (for ever). 37 Who is more unjust than one who invents a lie against Allah or rejects His Signs? 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 you 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 you 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. Says the last about the first: "Our Lord! It is these that misled us: so give them a double penalty in the Fire." He will say: "Doubled for all": but this you do not understand. 39 Then the first will say to the last: "See then! No advantage have you over us; so taste you of the Penalty for all that you did!"

SECTION 5: Those Who Accept the Message

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 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 lurking sense of injury;—beneath them will be rivers flowing;—and they shall say: "Praise be to Allah, Who has

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! You have been made¹¹⁸ its inheritors, for your deeds (of righteousness)." 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 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 and would seek in it something crooked: they were those who denied the Hereafter." 46 Between them shall be a veil, and on the heights will be men who would know every one by his marks: they will call out to the companions of the Garden, "Peace on you": they will not have entered, but they will have an assurance (thereof). 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."

SECTION 6: Helplessness of Opponents

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 would never bless? Enter you the Garden: no fear shall be on you, nor shall you grieve." 50 The companions of the Fire will call to the companions of the Garden: "Pour down to us water or anything that Allah does provide for your sustenance." They will say: "Both these things has Allah forbidden to those who rejected Him;—51 Such as took their religion to be mere amusement and play, and were deceived by the life of the world." That

118. 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 greater reward, the kingdom of Heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount this is promised to the "poor in spirit": Matt. v. 3. [1022]

day shall We forget them 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. **53** Do they just wait for the final fulfilment of the event? On the day the event is finally fulfilled, those who disregarded 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 invented will leave them in the lurch.

SECTION 7: The Righteous Will Prosper

54 Your Guardian-Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the throne (of authority): He draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to govern? Blessed be Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds! **55** Call on your Lord with humility and in private: for Allah loves not those who trespass beyond bounds. **56** Do no mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): for the Mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good. **57** It is He Who sends the winds like heralds 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 you 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 niggardly: thus do We explain the Signs by various (symbols) to those who are grateful.

SECTION 8: Prophet Noah

59 We sent Noah to his people. He said: "O my people! Worship

Allah! You 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 you evidently wandering (in mind)." **61** He said: "O my people! No wandering is there in my (mind): on the contrary I am a messenger from the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds! **62** I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: sincere is my advice to you, and I know from Allah something that you know not. **63** Do you wonder that there has come to you a message from your Lord, through a man of your own people, to warn you,—so that you may fear Allah and haply receive His Mercy?" **64** But they rejected him, and We delivered him, and those with him, in the Ark: but We overwhelmed in the Flood those who rejected Our Signs. They were indeed a blind people!

SECTION 9: Prophet Hūd

65 To the 'Ād people,¹¹⁹ (We sent) Hūd, one of their (own) brethren: he said: "O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Will you not fear (Allah)?" **66** The leaders of the Unbelievers among his people said: "Ah! We see you are an imbecile!" and "We think you are a liar!" **67** He said: "O my people! I am no imbecile, but (I am) a messenger from the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds! **68** I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser. **69** Do you wonder that there has come

119. The 'Ād people, with their prophet Hūd, are mentioned in many places. See especially 26:123-140, and 46:21-26. Their story belongs to Arabian tradition. Their eponymous ancestor 'Ād was fourth in generation from Noah, having been a son of 'Aūs, the son of Aram, the son of Šām, the son of Noah. They occupied a large tract of country in Southern Arabia, extending from 'Urnān at the mouth of the Persian Gulf to Hadramawt 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 (*ahqāf*) in their dominions (46:21) were irrigated with canals. They forsook the true God, and oppressed their people. A three-year 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.

The tomb of the Prophet Hūd (*qabr Nabī Hūd*) is still traditionally shown in Hadramawt, latitude 15°N and longitude 49½°E, about 90 miles north of Mukalla. There are ruins and inscriptions in the neighbourhood. There is an annual pilgrimage to it in the month of Rajab. See *Hadramawt, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*, by D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, Leiden, 1932. [1040]

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 (you have received) from Allah: that so you may prosper." 70 They said: "Come you to us, that we may worship Allah alone, and give up the cult of our fathers? Bring us what you threaten us with, if so be that you tell the truth!" 71 He said: "Punishment and wrath have already come upon you from your Lord: dispute you with me over names which you have devised—you and your fathers,—without authority from Allah? Then wait: I am amongst you, also waiting." 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.

SECTION 10: Prophets Ṣāliḥ and Lūṭ

73 To the Thamūd people¹²⁰ (We sent) Ṣāliḥ, one of their own brethren:

120. The Thamūd people were the successors to the culture and civilisation of the 'Ād people, for whom see n.119 and 7:65 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 'Ābir (a brother of Aram), the son of Sām, the son of Noah. Their seat was in the northwest corner of Arabia (Arabia Petraea), between Madīnah and Syria. It included both rocky country (15:80), and the spacious fertile valley (*Wādī*) and plains country of Qurā, which begins just north of the City of Madīnah and was traversed by the Hijāz Railway. When the Holy Prophet in the 9th year of the Hijrah led his expedition to Tabūk (about 400 miles north of Madīnah) 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 Nabataeans? They were an old Arab tribe which played a considerable part in history after they came into conflict with Antigonos 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 Hāritha (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.C. 105. The Nabataeans 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*).

With the advance of material civilisation, the Thamūd people became godless and
(continued...)

he said: "O my people! Worship Allah; you have no other god but Him. Now has 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 you shall be seized with a grievous punishment.¹²¹ 74 And remember how He made you inheritors after the 'Ad people and gave you habitations in the land: you build for yourselves palaces and castles in (open) plains, and carve out homes in the mountains; so bring to remembrance the benefits (you 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 powerless—those among them who believed: "Know you indeed that Ṣāliḥ is a messenger from his Lord?" They said: "We do indeed believe in the revelation which has been sent through him." 76 The arrogant party said: "For our part, we reject what you believe in." 77 Then they hamstrung the she-camel, and insolently defied the order of their Lord, saying: "O Ṣāliḥ! Bring about your threats, if you are a messenger (of Allah)!" 78 So the earthquake took them unawares, and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning! 79 So Ṣāliḥ left them, saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the message for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel, but you love not good counsellors!"

120. (...continued)

arrogant, and were destroyed by an earthquake. Their prophet and warner was Ṣāliḥ, and the crisis in their history is connected with the story of a wonderful she-camel: see next note. [1043]

121. 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 Qur'ān is: that (1) she was a Sign or Symbol, which the Prophet Ṣāliḥ, 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 Ṣāliḥ intervened on their behalf (26:155, 54:28); (3) like water, pasture was considered a free gift of nature, in this spacious earth of Allah (7:73), but the arrogant ones tried to monopolise the pasture also; (4) this particular she-camel was made a test case (54:27) to see if the arrogant ones would come to reason; (5) the arrogant ones, instead of yielding to the reasonable rights of the people, hamstrung the poor she-camel and slew her, probably secretly (91:14, 54:29); 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. [1044]

80 We also (sent) Lūt:¹²² he said to his people: "Do you commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? **81** For you practise your lusts on men in preference to women: you are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds." **82** And his people gave no answer but this: they said, "Drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!" **83** But We saved him and his family, except his wife: she was of those who lagged behind. **84** And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!

SECTION 11: Prophet Shu'ayb

85 To the Madyan people¹²³ We sent Shu'ayb,¹²⁴ one of their own

122. Lūt 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 Lūt's people are the people to whom he is sent on a mission. He was not one of their own brethren, as was Šālīh or Shu'ayb. But he looked upon his people as his brethren (50:13), as a man of God always does. [1049]

123. '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

(continued...)

brethren: he said: "O my people! Worship Allah; you have no other god but Him. Now has 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 you have Faith. 86 And squat not on every road, breathing threats, hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him, and seeking in it something crooked; but remember how you were little, and He gave you increase. And hold in

123. (...continued)

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 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: (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. [1053]

124. Shu'ayb 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. If, as the commentators tell us, Shu'ayb 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 Jethro was a Midianite and that another name, Hobab, 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'ayb's mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (7:91). 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 Ayka was a separate settlement, see 15:78) to which Shu'ayb was sent to preach was complete, and no traces of it now remain. [1054]

your mind's eye what was the end of those who did mischief.¹²⁵ 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, hold yourselves in patience until Allah does decide between us: for He is the best to decide."

PART IX

88 The leaders, the arrogant party among his people, said: "O Shu'ayb! We shall certainly drive you out of our city—(you) and those who believe with you; or else you (you and they) shall have to return to our ways and religion." He said: "What! Even though we do detest (them)? 89 We should indeed invent a lie against Allah, if we returned to your ways after Allah has rescued us therefrom; nor could we by any manner of means return thereto unless it be as in the Will and plan of Allah, Our Lord. Our Lord can reach out to the utmost recesses of things by His knowledge. In Allah is our trust. Our Lord! Decide You between us and our people in truth, for You are the best to decide." 90 The leaders, the Unbelievers among his people, said: "If you follow

125. 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'ayb 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'ayb 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. [1055]

Shu'ayb, be sure then you are ruined!" 91 But the earthquake took them unawares, and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning! 92 The men who rejected Shu'ayb became as if they had never been in the homes where they had flourished: the men who rejected Shu'ayb—it was they who were ruined! 93 So Shu'ayb 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!"¹²⁶

SECTION 12: Makkans Warned of Punishment

94 Whenever We sent a prophet to a town, We took up its people in suffering and adversity, in order that they might learn humility. 95 Then We changed their suffering into prosperity, until they grew and multiplied, and began to say: "Our fathers (too) were touched by suffering and affluence" ... Behold! We called 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; but they rejected (the truth), and We brought them to book for their misdeeds. 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

126. Can we get any idea of the chronological place of the destruction of the Midianites? In 7:85 we have discussed the geographical aspects. The following considerations will help us in getting some idea of their period: (1) The stories of Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lūt, and Shu'ayb seem to be in chronological order. Therefore Shu'ayb came after Abraham, whose nephew Lūt was; (2) If Shu'ayb was in the fourth generation from Abraham, (see 11:89), it would be impossible for him to have been a contemporary of Moses, who came many centuries later—this difficulty is recognised by Ibn Kathīr and other classical commentators; (3) The identification of Shu'ayb with Jethro the father-in-law of Moses is without warrant; see 7:85; (4) Shu'ayb must have been before Moses; see 7:103; (5) The Midianites who were destroyed by Moses and by Gideon after him were local remnants, as we may speak of the Jews at the present day but their existence as a nation in their original homelands seems to have ended before Moses: "they became as if they had never been in the homes where they had flourished" (7:92); (6) Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy mention a town of Madyan, but it was not of any importance; (7) After the first centuries of the Christian era, Madyan as a town appears as an unimportant place resting on its past. [1064]

they feel secure against its coming in broad daylight while they played about (care-free)? **99** Did they then feel secure against the plan of Allah?—but no one can feel secure from the Plan of Allah, except those (doomed) to ruin!

SECTION 13: Moses Sent to Pharaoh with Signs

100 To those who inherit the earth in succession to its (previous) possessors, is it not a guiding, (lesson) that, if We so willed, We could punish them (too) for their sins, and seal up their hearts so that they could not hear? **101** Such were the towns whose story We (thus) relate unto you: there came indeed to them their messengers with clear (Signs): but they would not believe what they had rejected before. Thus does 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. **104** Moses said: "O Pharaoh! I am a messenger from the Lord of the Worlds,—**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 you have come with a Sign, show it forth,—if you tell the truth." **107** Then (Moses) threw his rod, and behold! it was a serpent, plain (for all to see)! **108** And he drew out his hand, and behold! it was white to all beholders!

SECTION 14: Pharaoh Summons Enchanters

109 Said the chiefs of the people of Pharaoh: "This is indeed a sorcerer well-versed. **110** His plan is to get you out of your land: then what is it you counsel?" **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 you all (our) sorcerers well-versed."

113 So there came the sorcerers to Pharaoh: they said, "Of course we shall have a (suitable) reward if we win!" **114** He said: "Indeed, (and more),—for you shall in that case be (raised to posts) nearest (to my person)." **115** They said: "O Moses! Will you throw (first), or shall we have the (first) throw?" **116** Said Moses: "Throw you (first)." So when they threw, they bewitched the eyes of the people, and struck terror into them: for they showed a great (feat of) magic. **117** We put it into Moses' mind by inspiration: "Throw (now) your rod": and behold! it swallows up straightaway all the falsehoods which they fake! **118** Thus truth was confirmed, and all that they did was made of no effect. **119** So the (great ones) were vanquished there and then, and were made to look small.

120 But the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoration. **121** Saying: "We believe in the Lord of the Worlds,—**122** The Lord of Moses and Aaron." **123** Said Pharaoh: "Believe you in Him before I give you permission? Surely this is a trick which you have planned in the city to drive out its people: but soon shall you know (the consequences). **124** Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross." **125** They said: "For us, we are but sent back unto our Lord: **126** But you do wreak your 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 You as Muslims (who bow to Your Will)!"

SECTION 15: Israelites' Persecution Continues

127 Said the chiefs of Pharaoh's people: "Will you leave Moses and his people, to spread mischief in the land, and to abandon you and your gods?" He said: "Their male children will we slay; (only) their females will we save alive; and we have over them (power) irresistible." **128** Said Moses to his people: "Pray for help from Allah, and (wait) in patience and constancy: for the earth is Allah's, to give as a heritage to such of His servants as He pleases; and the end is (best) for the righteous." **129** They said: "We have had (nothing but) trouble, both before and after you came to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth; that so He may try you by your deeds."

SECTION 16: Moses Shows More Signs

130 We punished the people of Pharaoh with years (of droughts) 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 to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him! Behold! In truth the omens of evil are theirs in Allah's sight, but most of them do not understand! **132** They said (to Moses): "Whatever be the Signs you bring, to work therewith your sorcery on us, we shall never believe in you." **133** So We sent (plagues) on them: Wholesale Death, Locusts, Lice, Frogs, and Blood: Signs openly self-explained: but they were steeped in arrogance,—a people given to sin. **134** Every time the Penalty fell on them, they said: "O Moses! On our behalf call on your Lord in virtue of His promise to you: if you will remove the Penalty from us, we shall truly believe in you, and we shall send away the Children of Israel with you." **135** But every time We removed the Penalty 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. **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 your 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 a god like unto the gods they have." He said: "Surely you are a people without knowledge. **139** As to these folk,—the cult they are in is (but) a fragment of a ruin, and vain is the (worship) which they practise." **140** He said: "Shall I seek for you a god other than the (true) Allah, when it is Allah Who has endowed you with gifts above the nations?" **141** And remember We rescued you from Pharaoh's people, who afflicted you with the worst of penalties, who slew your male children and saved alive your females: in that was

a momentous trial from your Lord.

SECTION 17: *Moses Receives the Law*

142 We appointed for Moses thirty nights, and completed (the period) with ten (more): thus was completed the term (of communion) with his Lord, 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." **143** When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: "O my Lord! Show (Yourself) to me, that I may look upon you." Allah said: "By no means can you see Me (direct); but look upon the mount; if it abide in its place, then shall you see Me." When his Lord manifested His glory on the Mount, He made it as dust. And Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to You! To You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe." **144** (Allah) said: "O Moses! I have chosen you above (other) men, by the mission I (have given you) and the words I (have spoken to you): take then the (revelation) which I give you, and be of those who give thanks." **145** And We ordained laws for him in the Tablets in all matters, both commanding and explaining all things, (and said): "Take and hold these with firmness, and enjoin your people to hold fast by the best in the precepts: soon shall I show you the homes of the wicked,—(how they lie desolate)." **146** Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right—they 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 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: *Israelites Worship a Calf*

148 The people of Moses made, in his absence, out of their ornaments, the image of a calf, (for worship): it seemed to low: did they 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 of those who perish." **150** When Moses came back to his people, angry and grieved, he said: "Evil it is that you have done in my place in my absence: did you make haste to bring on the judgement of your Lord?" He put down the Tablets, seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, and dragged him to him. Aaron said: "Son of my mother! The people did indeed reckon me as naught, and went near to slaying me! Make not the enemies rejoice over my misfortune, nor count you me amongst the people of sin." **151** Moses prayed: "O my Lord! Forgive me and my brother! Admit us to Your Mercy! For You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!"

SECTION 19: The Torah and the Prophet's Advent

152 Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with wrath from their Lord, and with shame in this life: thus do We recompense those who invent (falsehoods). **153** But those who do wrong but repent thereafter and (truly) believe,—verily your 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 of his people for Our place of meeting: when they were seized with violent quaking, he prayed: "O my Lord! If it had been Your Will You could have destroyed, long before, both them and me: would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? This is no more than Your trial: by it You cause whom You will to stray, and You lead whom You will into the right path. You are our Protector: so forgive us and give us Your Mercy; for You are 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 You." He said: "With My punishment I visit whom I will; but My Mercy extends to all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our Signs;—**157** Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they

find mentioned in their own (Scriptures)¹²⁷,—in the Law 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 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,—it is they who will prosper.”

SECTION 20: Divine Favours on the Israelites

158 Say: “O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He that gives both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His Words: follow him that (so) you 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 tribes or nations. We directed Moses by inspiration, when his (thirsty) people asked him for water: “Strike the rock with your staff”: out of it there gushed forth twelve springs: 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. **161** And remember it was said to them: “Dwell in this town and eat therein as you wish, but say the word of humility 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

127. In this verse is a prefiguring, to Moses, of the Arabian Messenger, the last and greatest of the Messengers of Allah. Prophecies about him will be found in the *Torah* and the *Injil*. In the reflex of the *Torah* as now accepted by the Jews, Moses says, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee, of thy brethren, like unto me” (Deut. xviii. 15): the only Prophet who brought a *Shari’ah* like that of Moses was Muhammad Muṣṭafā and he came of the house of Ismā’īl, the brother of Isaac, the father of Israel. In this reflex of the Gospel as now accepted by the Christians, Christ promised another Comforter (John xiv. 16): the Greek word *Paraclete* which the Christians interpret as referring to the Holy Spirit is by our Doctors taken to be *Perichyte*, which would be the Greek form of Aḥmad. See 61:6. [1127]

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.

SECTION 21: The Israelites' Transgressions

163 Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold! They transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. 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 you 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, We said to them: "Be you apes, despised and rejected."

167 Behold! Your Lord did declare that He would send against them, to the Day of Judgement, those who would afflict them with grievous penalty. Your Lord is quick in retribution, but He is also Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **168** We broke them up into sections on this earth. 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) the vanities of this world, 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 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 you 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 shook 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 to what We have given you, and bring (ever) to remembrance what is therein; perchance you may fear Allah."

SECTION 22: Evidence of Divine Impress on Man's Nature

172 When your Lord drew forth¹²⁸ from the Children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (Who cherishes and sustains you)?"—They said: "Indeed! We do testify!"¹²⁹ (This), lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: "Of this we were never mindful": 173 Or lest you should say: "Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are (their) descendants after them: will You then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?" 174 Thus do We explain the Signs in detail; and perchance they may turn (unto Us).

175 Relate to them the story¹³⁰ of the man to whom We sent Our Signs,

128. This passage has led to differences of opinion in interpretation. Does it mean that each individual in the posterity of Adam had a separate existence from the time of Adam, and that a Covenant was taken from all of them, which is binding accordingly on each individual? That question really does not arise. 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 as such has a corporate aspect. 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 5:1. These obligations may from a legal point of view be considered as arising from implied Covenants. In the preceding verse (7:171) 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 worldwide. [1146]

129. 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. [1147]

130. Commentators differ as to 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 a general sense. These are men, of talents and position, to whom great opportunities of spiritual insight come, but they
(continued...)

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. 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. That is the similitude of those who reject Our Signs; so relate the story; perchance they may reflect. **177** Evil as an example are people who reject Our Signs and wrong their own souls. **178** Whom Allah does guide,—he is on the right path: whom He rejects from His Guidance,—such are the persons who perish. **179** Many are the *Jinns* and men We have made for Hell: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith 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 names¹³¹ belong to Allah: so call on Him by them; but shun such men as use profanity in His names: for what they do, they will soon be requited.

181 Of those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth. And dispense justice therewith.

SECTION 23: The Coming of Doom

182 Those who reject Our Signs, We shall gradually visit with punishment, in ways they perceive not; **183** Respite will I grant unto

130. (...continued)

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. [1149]

131. As we contemplate Allah's nature, we can use the most beautiful names we can think of, to express His attributes. There are ninety-nine such attributes. In the opening chapter, we have these indicated in a few comprehensive words, such as *al-Rahmān* (most Gracious), *al-Rahīm* (most Merciful), *Rabb al-'ālamīn* (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. 17:110. [1154]

them: for My scheme is strong (and unfailing). **184** Do they not reflect? Their companion is not seized with madness: he is but a perspicuous warner. **185** Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah has created? (Do they not see) that it may well be that their term is nigh drawing to an end? 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.

187 They ask you 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, suddenly will it come to you." They ask you as if you were eager in search thereof: 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 wills. 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: The Final Word

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 You give us a goodly child, we vow we shall (ever) be grateful." **190** But when He gives them a goodly child, they ascribe to others a share in the gift they have received: but Allah is exalted high above the partners they ascribe to Him. **191** Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing, but are themselves created? **192** No aid can they give them, nor can they aid themselves! **193** If you call them to guidance, they will not obey: for you it is the same whether you call them or you hold your peace!

194 Verily those whom you call upon besides Allah are servants like unto you: call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if you are

(indeed) truthful! **195** Have they feet to walk with? Or hands to lay hold with? Or eyes to see with? Or ears 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 choose and befriend the righteous. **197** But those you call upon besides Him, are unable to help you, and indeed to help themselves." **198** If you call them to guidance, they hear not. You will see them looking at you, but they see not.

199 Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant. **200** If a suggestion from Satan assail your (mind), seek refuge with Allah; for He hears and knows (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)!

202 But their brethren (the Evil Ones) plunge them deeper into error, and never relax (their efforts). **203** If you bring them not a revelation, they say: "Why have you not got it together?" Say: "I but follow what is revealed to me from my Lord: this is (nothing but) lights from your Lord, and Guidance, and Mercy, for any who have Faith."

204 When the Qur'ān is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive Mercy. **205** And do you (O reader!) bring your Lord to remembrance in your (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not you of those who are unheedful. **206** Those who are near to your Lord, disdain not to do Him worship: they celebrate His praises, and bow down before Him. □

AL-ANFĀL
(The Spoils of War)

Introduction

In the previous Introductions to the Sūrahs we have shown how each Sūrah is a step or gradation in the teaching of the Qur'ān. The first seven Sūrahs, comprising a little less than one-third of the Qur'ān, form a gradation, sketching the early spiritual history of man and leading up to the formation of the new *Ummah* or Community of the Holy Messenger. Now we begin another gradation, consolidating that *Ummah* 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 aim in war. It is only an adventitious circumstance, a sort of windfall. Secondly, no soldier or troop has any inherent right to it. A righteous war is a community affair, and any accessions resulting from it belong to Allah, or the community or Cause. Thirdly, certain equitable principles of division should be laid down to check human greed and selfishness. A fifth share goes to the Commander, 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 (8:41). 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.

These principles are followed in the best modern practice of civilised nations. All acquisitions of war belong absolutely to the Sovereign as representing the commonwealth. In the distribution of booty not only the actual captors but also the "joint captors" and the "constructive captors" share. See Sir R. Phillimore's *International Law* (1885), vol. 3, pp. 209-10, 221-24. 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 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 Sūrah is shortly after the battle of Badr, which was fought on Friday, the 17th of Ramadān in the second year of the Hijrah. A short account of the battle is given in note to 3:13.

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 (8:1-19).

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 (8:20-37).

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 (8:38-64).

Even ten-fold 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 (8:65-75).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Battle of Badr

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 They ask you¹³² concerning (things taken as) spoils of war. Say: "(Such) spoils are at the disposal of Allah and the Messenger: so fear Allah, and keep straight the relations between yourselves: obey Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe." **2** For, Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His Signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put (all) their trust in their Lord; **3** Who establish regular prayers and

132. The occasion was the question of the division of the booty after the battle of Badr. See Introduction to this Sūrah. [1178].

spend (freely) out of the gifts We have given them for sustenance: **4** Such in truth are the Believers: they have grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness, and generous sustenance: **5** Just as your Lord ordered you out of your house in truth, even though a party among the Believers disliked it, **6** Disputing with you concerning the truth after it was made manifest, as if they were being driven to death and they (actually) saw it. **7** Behold! Allah promised you one of the two (enemy) parties,¹³³ that it should be yours: you wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but Allah willed to justify the Truth according to His words and to cut off the roots of the Unbelievers;—**8** That He might justify Truth and prove Falschhood false, distasteful though it be to those in guilt. **9** Remember you implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you: "I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, ranks on ranks." **10** Allah made it but a message of hope, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah: and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

SECTION 2: *The Battle of Badr*

11 Remember He covered you with a sort of drowsiness, to give you calm as from Himself, and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven, to clean you therewith, to remove from you the stain of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to plant your feet firmly therewith. **12** Remember your Lord inspired the angels (with the message): "I am

133. Just before Badr there were two alternatives before the Muslims in Madīnah, to save themselves from being overwhelmed by the Makkan Quraysh 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 Quraysh caravan returning from Syria to Makkah richly laden, and led by Abū Sufyān with only 40 unarmed men. From a worldly point of view this was the safest and most lucrative course. The other alternative, which was actually adopted on the recommendation of the Prophet by the guidance of Allah, was to leave the booty alone and march out boldly against the well-armed and well-equipped Quraysh army of 1,000 men coming from Makkah. The Muslims had no more than 300 men, ill-armed, to oppose the 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. [1183]

with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite you above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them." 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 you then of the (punishment): for those who resist Allah, is the penalty of the Fire."

15 O you who believe! When you meet the Unbelievers in hostile array, 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 you who slew them; it was Allah: when you threw (a handful of dust), it was not your act, but Allah's: in order that He might test the Believers by a gracious trial from Himself: for Allah is He Who hears and knows (all things). 18 That, and also because Allah is He Who makes feeble the plans and stratagem of the Unbelievers. 19 (O Unbelievers!) If you prayed for victory and judgement, now has the judgement come to you: if you desist (from wrong), it will be best for you: if you return (to the attack), so shall We. Not the least good will your forces be to you even if they were multiplied: for verily Allah is with those who believe!

SECTION 3: The Way to Success

20 O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and turn not away from him when you hear (him speak). 21 Nor be like those who say, "We hear," but listen not: 22 For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb,—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 you who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calls you to that which will give you life; and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that it is He to Whom you shall (all) be gathered. 25 And fear tumult or oppression, which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong: and know that Allah is strict in

punishment. **26** Call to mind when you were a small (band), despised through the land, and afraid that men might despoil and kidnap you; but He provided a safe asylum for you, strengthened you with His aid, and gave you good things for sustenance: that you might be grateful.

27 O you that believe! Betray not the trust of Allah and the Messenger, nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you. **28** And know you that your possessions and your progeny are but a trial; and that it is Allah with Whom lies your highest reward.

SECTION 4: Muslims to be Guardians to the Sacred Mosque

29 O you who believe! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong), remove from you (all) evil (that may afflict) you, and forgive you: for Allah is the Lord of grace unbounded.

30 Remember how the Unbelievers plotted against you, to keep you in bonds, or slay you, or get you out (of your home). 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 You, rain down on us a shower of stones from the sky, or send us a grievous penalty." **33** But Allah was not going to send them a Penalty whilst you were amongst them; nor was He going to send it whilst they could ask for pardon. **34** But what plea have they that Allah should not punish them, when they keep out (men) from the Sacred Mosque--and they are not its guardians? No men can be its guardians except the righteous; but most of them do not understand. **35** Their prayer at the House (of Allah) is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands: (its only answer can be), "Taste you the Penalty because you blasphemed."

36 The Unbelievers spend their wealth to hinder (men) from the path of Allah, and so will they continue to spend; but in the end they will

have (only) regrets and sighs; at length they will be overcome: and the Unbelievers will be gathered together to Hell;—**37** In order that Allah may separate the impure from the pure, put the impure, one on another, heap them together, and cast them into Hell. They will be the ones to have lost.

SECTION 5: Badr a Sign of the Prophet's Truth

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 tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere; but if they cease, verily Allah does 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.

PART X

41 And know that out of all the booty that you may acquire (in war), a fifth share is assigned to Allah,—and to the Messenger, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer,—if you do believe in Allah and in the revelation We sent down to Our servant on the Day of Testing,—the Day of the meeting of the two forces. For Allah has power over all things. **42** Remember you were on the hither side of the valley, and they on the farther side, and the caravan on lower ground than you. Even if you had made a mutual appointment to meet, you would certainly have failed in the appointment: but (thus you met), that Allah might accomplish a matter already enacted; that those who died might die after a clear Sign (had been given), and those who lived might live after a clear Sign (had been given). And verily Allah is He Who hears and knows (all things). **43** Remember in your dream Allah showed them to you as few: if He had shown them to you as many, you would surely have been discouraged, and you would surely have disputed in (your) decision; but Allah saved (you): for He knows well the (secrets) of (all) hearts. **44** And remember when you 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 enacted. For to Allah do all questions go back (for decision).

SECTION 6: Success Does Not Depend on Numbers

45 O you who believe! When you meet a force, be firm, and call Allah in remembrance much (and often); that you may prosper: **46** And obey Allah and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes, lest you lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere: **47** And be not like those who started from their homes insolently and to be seen of men, and to hinder (men) from the path of Allah: for Allah compasses round about 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 you see not; lo! I fear Allah: for Allah is strict in punishment."

SECTION 7: The Enemy's Strength Weakened

49 Lo! the Hypocrites say, and those in whose hearts is a disease: "These people,—their religion has misled them." But if any trust in Allah, behold! Allah is Exalted in might, Wise. **50** If you could see, when the angels take the souls of the Unbelievers (at death), (how) they smite their faces and their backs, (saying): "Taste the Penalty of the blazing Fire—**51** Because of (the deeds) which your (own) hands sent forth; for Allah is never unjust to 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 has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their (own) souls: and verily Allah is He Who hears and knows (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. **56** They are those with whom you did make a covenant, but they break their covenant every time, and they have not the fear (of Allah). **57** If you gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them, that they may remember. **58** If you fear treachery from any group, throw back (their covenant) to them, (so as to be) on equal terms: for Allah loves not the treacherous.

SECTION 8: Peace to be Secured by Strength

59 Let not the Unbelievers think that they can get the better (of the godly): they will never frustrate (them). **60** Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom you may not know, but whom Allah does know. Whatever you shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly.

61 But if the enemy incline towards peace, do you (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that hears and knows (all things). **62** Should they intend to deceive you,—verily Allah suffices you: He it is that has strengthened you with His aid and with (the company of) the Believers; **63** And (moreover) He has put affection between their hearts: not if you had spent all that is in the earth, could you have produced that affection, but Allah has done it: for He is Exalted in might, Wise. **64** O Prophet! Sufficient unto you is Allah,—(unto you) and unto those who follow you among the Believers.

SECTION 9: Muslims to Meet Overwhelming Numbers

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. **66** For the present, Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is a weak spot in you:

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 has thoroughly subdued the land. You look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looks to the Hereafter: and Allah is Exalted in might, Wise. **68** Had it not been for a previous ordainment from Allah, a severe penalty would have reached you for the (ransom) that you took. **69** But (now) enjoy what you took in war, lawful and good: but fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 10: Relations of a Muslim State with Others

70 O Prophet! Say to those who are captives in your hands: "If Allah finds any good 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." **71** But if they have treacherous designs against you, (O Messenger!), they have already been in treason against Allah, and so has He given (you) power over them. And Allah is He Who has (full) knowledge and wisdom.

72 Those who believed, and adopted exile, and fought for the Faith, with their property and their persons, in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave (them) asylum¹³⁴ and aid,—these are (all) friends and protectors, one of another. As to those who believed but came not into exile, you owe no duty of protection to them until they come into exile; but if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual

134. The reference is to the *Muhājirīn* and *Ansār*, the Emigrants and the Helpers, the people who forsook their homes and adopted voluntary exile from Makkah company with their beloved Leader, and their good friends in Madīnah, 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. [1239]

alliance. And (remember) Allah sees all that you do. **73** The Unbelievers are protectors, one of another: unless you do this, (protect each other), there would be tumult and oppression on earth, and great mischief. **74** Those who believe, and adopt exile, and fight for the Faith, in the cause of Allah, 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. **75** And those who accept Faith subsequently, and adopt exile, 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. Verily Allah is well-acquainted with all things. □

AL-TAWBAH or BARĀ'AH
(The Repentance or Immunity)

Introduction

Logically this Sūrah follows up the argument of the last Sūrah (8), and indeed may be considered a part of it, although chronologically the two are separated by an interval of seven years.

We saw that Sūrah 8 dealt with the large questions arising at the outset of the life of a new *Ummah* 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 Sūrah 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 denunciation 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 these fail, and war must be undertaken, it must be pushed with the utmost vigour.

These are the general principles deducible from the Sūrah. The immediate occasion for their promulgation may be considered in connection with the chronological place of the Sūrah.

Chronologically, verses 1-29 were a notable declaration of state policy promulgated about the month of Shawwāl, A.H. 9, and read out by 'Alī at the Pilgrimage two months later in order to give the policy the widest publicity possible. The remainder of the Sūrah, verses 30-129, was revealed a little earlier, say about the month of Ramadān, 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 Hijaz Railway, about 350 miles northwest of Madīnah, 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 take place. 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 'Aqabah. On his return to Madīnah 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 Sūrah to which the usual formula of *Bismillāh* is not prefixed. It was among the last of the Sūrahs revealed, and though the Prophet had directed that it should follow Sūrah 8, it was not clear whether it was to form a separate Sūrah or only a part of Sūrah 8. It is now treated as a separate Sūrah, 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 Sūrah is known under many names: the most commonly used are (1) *Al-Tawbah* (Repentance), with reference to 9:104 and (2) *Barā'ah* (The Disavowal), the opening word of the Sūrah.

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 (9:1-29).

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 (9:30-42).

The Hypocrites and their double dealing: their evil ways pointed out. Their punishment will be as sure as the blessings of the righteous (9:43-72).

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 (9:73-99).

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 (9:100-118).

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 Sūrah 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 (9:119-129).

*** **

SECTION 1: Declaration of Immunity

1 A (declaration) of immunity from Allah and His Messenger, to those of the Pagans with whom you have contracted mutual alliances:—2 Go you, then, for four months, backwards and forwards, (as you will), throughout the land, but know you that you 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. If then, you repent, it were best for you; but if you turn away, know you that you cannot frustrate Allah. And proclaim a grievous penalty to those who reject Faith. 4 (But the treaties are) not dissolved with those Pagans with whom you 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 loves the righteous.

5 But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. 6 If one amongst the Pagans ask you 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. That is because they are men without knowledge.

SECTION 2: Reasons for the Immunity

7 How can there be a league, before Allah and His Messenger, with the Pagans, except those with whom you made a treaty near the Sacred

Mosque? As long as these stand true to you, stand you true to them: for Allah does love the righteous. **8** How (can there be such a league), seeing that if they get an advantage over you, they respect not in you the ties either of kinship or of covenant? With (fair words from) their mouths they entice you, but their hearts are averse from you; and most of them are rebellious and wicked. **9** The Signs of Allah have they sold for a miserable price, and (many) have they hindered from His Way: evil indeed are the deeds they have done. **10** In a Believer they respect not the ties either of kinship or of covenant! It is they who have transgressed all bounds.

11 But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity,—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, and taunt you for your Faith,—fight you the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained.

13 Will you not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do you fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom you should more justly fear, if you believe! **14** Fight them, and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of Believers, **15** And still the indignation of their hearts. For Allah will turn (in mercy) to whom He will; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. **16** Or think you that you shall be abandoned, as though Allah did not know 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? But Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do.

SECTION 3: Idolaters' Service of the Sacred House

17 It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain 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 practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance. **19** Do you make the giving 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 comparable in the sight of Allah: and Allah guides not those who do wrong. **20** Those who believe, and suffer exile 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 does 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 in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest (of all).

23 O you 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 you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline: or the dwellings in which you delight—are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His Cause;—then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.

SECTION 4: *Islam Made Triumphant in Arabia*

25 Assuredly Allah did help you in many battlefields and on the day of Hunayn:¹³⁵ Behold! Your great numbers elated you, but they availed

135. Hunayn is on the road to Tā'if from Makkah, about fourteen miles to the east of Makkah. It is a valley in the mountainous country between Makkah and Tā'if. 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 Tā'if 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

(continued...)

you naught: the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you, and you turned back in retreat.¹³⁶ **26** But Allah did pour His calm¹³⁷ on the Messenger and on the Believers, and sent down forces which you saw not: He punished the Unbelievers; thus does He reward those without Faith. **27** Again will Allah, after this,¹³⁸ turn (in mercy) to whom He will: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

28 O you who believe! Truly the Pagans are unclean; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque. And if you fear poverty, 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 has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay

135. (...continued)

Muslim force reached a total of ten or twelve thousand, as everyone wished to join. The battle was joined at Hunayn, as described in the next note. [1274]

136. For the first time the Muslims had at Hunayn 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 Hunayn 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. [1275]

137. *Sakm* calm, peace, security, tranquillity. Cf. 2:248. 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. [1276]

138. 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. [1277]

the *Jizyah*¹³⁹ with willing submission,¹⁴⁰ and feel themselves subdued.

SECTION 5: Islam Will Triumph in the World

30 The Jews call 'Uzayr a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! **31** They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One Allah: there is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him).

32 Fain would they extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow but that His Light should be perfected, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it). **33** It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it). **34** O you who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the Way of Allah. And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend

139. *Jizyah* 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, and in any case it was merely symbolic—an acknowledgement that those whose religion was tolerated would in their turn not interfere with the preaching and progress of Islam. Imām Shāfi'i suggests one dinār per year, which would be the Arabian gold dinār of the Muslim States, equivalent in value to about half a sovereign, or about 5 or 7 rupees. See 3:75. The tax varied in amount, and there were exemptions for the poor, for females and children (according to Abū Hanīfah), 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. [1281]

140. *'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 *Jizyah* 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. [1282]

it not in the Way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty—**35** On the Day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs.—“This is the (treasure) which you buried for yourselves: taste you, then, the (treasures) you buried!”

36 The number of months 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 straight usage. So wrong not yourselves therein, 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 (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 adjust the number of months forbidden by Allah and make such forbidden ones lawful. The evil of their course seems pleasing to them. But Allah guides not those who reject Faith.

SECTION 6: The Tabūk Expedition

38 O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that, when you are asked to go forth in the Cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Do you prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the Hereafter. **39** Unless you go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty, and put others in your place; but Him you would not harm in the least. For Allah has power over all things. **40** If you help not (your leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion; 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 you 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 you 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 you (but) knew. **42** If there had been immediate gain (in sight), and the journey easy, they

would (all) without doubt have followed you, but the distance was long, (and weighed) on them. They would indeed swear by Allah, "If we only could, we should certainly have come out with you": they would destroy their own souls; for Allah does know that they are certainly lying.

SECTION 7: The Hypocrites

43 Allah give you grace! why did you grant them exemption until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had proved the liars? **44** Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day ask you for no exemption from fighting with their goods and persons. And Allah knows well those who do their duty. **45** Only those ask you for exemption who believe not in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed 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 you 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 and sowing sedition among you, and there would have been some among you who would have listened to them. But Allah knows well those who do wrong. **48** Indeed they had plotted sedition before, and upset matters for you,—until the Truth arrived, and the Decree of Allah became manifest, 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 you, it grieves them; but if a misfortune befalls you, 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)? But we can expect for you either that Allah will send His punishment from Himself, 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 you 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 to prayer without earnestness; and that they offer contributions unwillingly. **55** Let not their wealth nor their (following in) sons dazzle you: in reality Allah’s plan is to punish them with these things in this life, 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 (to appear in their true colours). **57** If they could find a place to flee to, or caves, or a place of concealment, they would turn straightaway thereto, with an obstinate rush. **58** And among them are men who slander you in the matter of (the distribution of) the alms: 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: to Allah do we turn our hopes!” (that would have been the right course).

SECTION 8: The Hypocrites

60 Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt: in the Cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. **61** Among them are men who molest the Prophet and say, “He is (all) ear.” 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 Messenger will have a grievous penalty. **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 lest a Sūrah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts. Say: “Mock you! But verily Allah will bring to light all that you fear (should

be revealed).” **65** If you do question them, they declare (with emphasis): “We were only talking idly and in play.” Say: “Was it at Allah, and His Signs, and His Messenger, that you were mocking?” **66** Make you no excuses: you have rejected Faith after you had accepted it. If We pardon some of you, We will punish others amongst you, for that they are in sin.

SECTION 9: **The Hypocrites**

67 The Hypocrites, men and women, (have an understanding) with each other: they enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are close with their hands. They have forgotten Allah; so He has forgotten them. Verily the Hypocrites are rebellious and perverse. **68** Allah has promised the Hypocrites men and women, and the rejecters, of Faith, the fire of Hell: therein shall they dwell: sufficient is it for them: for them is the curse of Allah, 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 you have of yours, as did those before you; and you indulge in idle talk as they did. They!—their works are fruitless in this world and in the Hereafter, and they will lose (all spiritual good). **70** Has not the story reached them of those before them?—the people of Noah, and ‘Ād, and Thamūd; the people of Abraham, the men of Midian, and the Cities overthrown. To them came their messengers 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, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. **72** Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme felicity.

SECTION 10: *The Hypocrites*

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 did it after accepting Islam; and they meditated a plot which they were unable to carry out: this revenge of theirs was (their) only return for the bounty with which Allah and His Messenger had enriched them! If they repent, it will be best for them; but if they turn back (to their evil ways), Allah will punish them with a grievous penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: they shall have none on earth to protect or help them. 75 Amongst them are men who made a covenant with Allah, that if He bestowed on them of His bounty, they would give (largely) in charity, and be truly amongst those who are righteous. 76 But when He did bestow of His bounty, they became covetous, and turned back (from their covenant), averse (from its fulfilment). 77 So He has put as a consequence hypocrisy into their hearts, (to last) till the Day whereon they shall meet Him: because they broke their covenant with Allah, and because they lied (again and again). 78 Know they not that Allah does know their secret (thoughts) and their secret counsels, and that Allah knows well all things unseen?

79 Those who slander such of the believers as give themselves freely to (deeds of) charity, as well as such as can find nothing to give except the fruits of their labour,—and throw ridicule on them,—Allah will throw back their ridicule on them: and they shall have a grievous penalty. 80 Whether you ask for their forgiveness, or not, (their sin is unforgivable): if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them: because they have rejected Allah and His Messenger: and Allah guides not those who are perversely rebellious.

SECTION 11: *The Hypocrites*

81 Those who were left behind (in the Tabūk expedition) rejoiced in their inaction behind the back of 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 you back to any of them, and they ask your permission to come out (with you); say: "Never shall you come out with me, nor fight an enemy with me: for you preferred to sit inactive on the first occasion: then sit you (now) with those who lag behind." **84** Nor do you ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave; for they rejected Allah and His Messenger, and died in a state of perverse rebellion. **85** Nor let their wealth nor their (following in) sons dazzle you: Allah's plan is to punish them with these things in this world, and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of Allah.

86 When a Sūrah 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 you 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): their hearts are sealed and so they understand not. **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: and it is they who will prosper. **89** Allah has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein: that is the supreme felicity.

SECTION 12: The Hypocrites

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 inactive.¹⁴¹ Soon will a grievous penalty seize the Unbelievers among them. **91** There is no blame on

[41. Not only had the Hypocrites a nest in Madīnah, 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 Tabūk 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 9:46-47 and 9:53-54. Some came to make excuses; others did not even come but sat at home, ignoring the summons. [1342]

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 you to be provided with mounts, and when you said, "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. **93** The ground (of complaint) is against such as claim exemption while they are rich. They prefer to stay with the (women) who remain behind: Allah has sealed their hearts; so they know not (What they miss).

PART XI

94 They will present their excuses to you when you return to them. Say you: "Present no excuses: we shall not believe you: Allah has 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 you be brought back to Him Who knows what is hidden and what is open: then will He show you the truth of all that you did." **95** They will swear to you by Allah, when you return to them, that you 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 you may be pleased with them. But if you are pleased with them, Allah is not pleased with those who disobey.

97 The Arabs of the desert are the worst in Unbelief and hypocrisy, and most fitted to be in ignorance of the command which Allah has sent down to His Messenger: but Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. **98** Some of the desert Arabs look upon their payments as a fine, and watch for disasters for you: on them be the disaster of evil: for Allah is He Who hears and knows (all things). **99** But some of the desert 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: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 13: The Hypocrites

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 has He prepared Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever: that is the supreme felicity.

101 Certain of the desert Arabs round about you are Hypocrites, as well as (desert Arabs) among the Madīnah folk: they are obstinate in hypocrisy: you know them not: We know them: twice shall We punish them: and in addition shall they be sent to a grievous Penalty. **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 goods, take alms, that so you might purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf. Verily your prayers are a source of security for them: and Allah is One Who hears and knows.

104 Know they not that Allah does 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: soon will you be brought back to the Knower of what is hidden and what is open: then will He show you the truth of all that you did." **106** There are (yet) others, held in suspense for the command of Allah, whether He will punish them, or turn in mercy to them: and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

107 And there are those who put up a mosque by way of mischief and infidelity—to disunite the Believers—and in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good; but Allah does declare that they are certainly liars. **108** Never stand you forth therein. There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of the standing forth (for prayer) therein. In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loves those who make themselves

pure. **109** Which then is best—he that lays his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure—or he that lays his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces? And it does crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell. And Allah guides not people that do wrong.¹⁴² **110** The foundation of those who so build is never free from suspicion and shakiness in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

SECTION 14: The Faithful

111 Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in His Cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'ān: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded: that is the achievement supreme. **112** Those that turn (to Allah) in repentance; that serve Him, and praise Him; that wander in devotion to the 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. **114** And Abraham prayed for his father's forgiveness only because of a promise

142. Three categories of Hypocrites having already been mentioned (9:101-106), a fourth class of insidious evil doers is now mentioned, whose type is illustrated in the story of the Qubā "Mosque of mischief (*dirār*)". Qubā is a suburb of Madīnah, about three miles to the southeast. When the Holy Prophet arrived at Madīnah for Hijrah, he rested four days in Quba before entering the town of Madīnah. Here was built the first mosque, the "Mosque of Piety" (*Taqwā*), or the mosque of the power of Islam (*Qūwah al-Islām*), to which he frequently came during his subsequent stay in Madīnah. Taking advantage of these sacred associations, some Hypocrites of the tribe of Banī Ghanam built an opposition mosque in Qubā, pretending to advance Islam. In reality they were in league with a notorious enemy of Islam, one Abū 'Āmir, who had fought against Islam at Uhud and who was now, after the battle of Hunayn (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. [1355]

he had made to him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he dissociated himself from him: for Abraham was most tender-hearted, forbearing. **115** And Allah will not mislead a people after He has guided them, in order that He may make clear to them what to fear (and avoid)—for Allah has knowledge of all things. **116** Unto Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and He takes it. Except for Him you have no protector nor helper. **117** Allah turned with favour to the Prophet, the *Muhājirs*,¹⁴³ and the *Ansār*,—who followed him in a time of distress, after that the hearts of a part 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) to such a degree that the earth seemed constrained to them, for all its spaciousness, 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.

SECTION 15: What the Faithful Should Do

119 O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed). **120** It was not fitting for the people of Madīnah and the Bedouin Arabs of the neighbourhood, to refuse to follow 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 received any injury whatever from an enemy: for Allah suffers not the reward to be lost of those who do good;—**121** Nor could they spend

143. Cf. 9:100. The *Muhājirs* were the people who originally forsook their homes in Makkah and followed Mustafā in exile to Madīnah. The *Ansār* were the Madīnah 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 Tabūk 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. [1368]

anything (for the Cause)—small or great—nor cut across a valley, but the deed is inscribed to their credit: that Allah may requite their deed with the best (possible reward).

122 Nor should the Believers all go forth together: if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion, and admonish the people when they return to them,—that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).¹⁴⁴

SECTION 16: The Prophet's Great Anxiety

123 O you who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him. **124** Whenever there comes down a Sūrah, 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 comes down a Sūrah, they look at each other, (saying), "Does anyone see you?" Then they turn aside: Allah has turned their hearts (from the light); for they are a people that understand not.

128 Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that you should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful. **129** But if they turn away, Say: "Allah suffices me: there is no god but He: on Him is my trust,—He the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme!"□

144. Fighting may be inevitable, and where a call is made by the righteous Imām, 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—one in each township or circle—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. [1373]

YŪNUS
(Jonah)

Introduction

Chronologically this Sūrah and the five that follow (Sūrahs 11-15) are closely connected, and were revealed in the late Makkan period, as the great event of the Hijrah 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 Qur'ānic teaching fits in with the subject matter. Sūrahs 8 and 9 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 Sūrahs. 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 standpoint 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 around the revelation of the Qur'ān and each Sūrah of this group except the 13th has the Abbreviated Letters *Alif, Lām, Rā'* attached to it. Sūrah 13 has the letters *Alif, Lām, Mīm, Rā'* and we shall discuss this variation when we come to Sūrah 13.

The Abbreviated Letters are mystic symbols, about whose meaning there is no authoritative explanation. If the theory advanced in the note to 2:1 has any validity, and the present group, *Alif, Lām, Rā'*, is cognate to the group *Alif, Lām, Mīm*, we have to consider and form some idea in our minds as to the probable meaning of the variation. We took *Alif, Lām, Mīm* to be a symbol of those Sūrahs that deal with the beginning, the middle, and the end of man's spiritual history—the origin, the present position, and the things to come in the Last Days (eschatology, to use a theological term). We took *Alif, Lām*, to stand as symbols of the first two, and *Mīm*, of the last. In the present group of Sūrahs we find hardly any eschatological matter, and therefore we can understand the absence of *Mīm*, the symbol standing for such matter. In its place comes *Rā'*, which is phonetically allied to *Lām*. *Lām* is produced by the impact of the tongue to the front of the palate, and *Rā'* to the middle of the palate. In many languages the letters *Lām* and *Rā'* are interchangeable; e.g.,

in Arabic, *Al-Rahmān* becomes ar-Rahmān, and *Rā'* in imperfect enunciation *Lām*, in Chinese lallations. If *Lām* is a symbol of present-day things looking to the future, we may take *Rā'* as a symbol of present-day things looking within, *i.e.*, into the interior of the organisation of the *Ummah*. And this symbolism fits in with the subject matter of the Sūrahs in question. But no one should be dogmatic in speculation about mystic Symbols.

Let us now consider Sūrah 10 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 Spirit 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 men should take a lesson of constancy and Faith (10:1-20).

All the goodness or beauty that man meets in the life around him proceeds from Allah. Yet man is blind and will not understand (10:21-40).

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? (10:41-70).

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 (10:71-92).

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 (10:93-109).

*** **

SECTION 1: Truth of Revelation

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Rā'*.¹⁴⁵ These are the *Āyat*¹⁴⁶ 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?—that he should warn mankind (of their danger), and give the good news to the Believers that they have before their Lord the lofty rank of Truth. (But) say the Unbelievers: "This is indeed an evident sorcerer!" 3 Verily your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority), regulating and governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave (has been obtained). This is Allah your Lord: Him therefore serve you: will you not receive admonition? 4 To Him will be your return—of all of you. The promise of Allah is true and sure. It is He Who begins the process of creation, and repeats it, that He may reward with justice those who believe and work righteousness; but those who reject Him will have draughts of boiling fluids, and a Penalty grievous, because they did reject Him. 5 It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her; that you might know the number of years and the count (of time). Nowise did Allah create this but in truth and righteousness. (Thus) does He explain His Signs in detail, for those who understand. 6 Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day, and in all that Allah has created, in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who fear Him.

145. For the Abbreviated Letters generally, see note to 2:1. For this particular combination see the Introduction to this Sūrah. [1381]

146. *Āyat* = 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., 10:3-6, 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? [1382]

7 Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present, and those who heed not Our Signs,—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 cry therein: “Glory to You, O Allah!” And “Peace” will be their greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: “Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!”

SECTION 2: Punishment of Rejection

11 If Allah were to hasten for men the ill (they have earned) as they would fain hasten on the good,—then would their respite be settled at once. But We leave those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, in their trespasses, wandering in distraction to and fro. 12 When trouble touches a man, he cries unto Us (in all postures)—lying down on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We have solved his trouble, he passes on his way as if he had never cried to Us for a trouble that touched him! Thus do the deeds of transgressors seem fair in their eyes!

13 Generations before you We destroyed when they did wrong: their messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they would not believe! Thus do We requite those who sin! 14 Then We made you heirs in the land after them, to see how you would behave!¹⁴⁷ 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 Reading¹⁴⁸ other than this, or

147. This is addressed to the Quraysh in the first instance, for they have succeeded to the 'Ād and the Thamūd heritage. But the application is universal, and was true to the 'Abbāsī Empire in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, or the Muslim Empire in Spain or the Turkish Empire in its palmiest days, and indeed, apart from political power, to the Muslims and non-Muslims of our own days. [1401]

148. *Reading*: in the Arabic, the word is *Qur'ān*: which may mean Reading or in the special sense, the Qur'ān. 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

(continued...)

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 Penalty of a Great Day (to come)." **16** Say: "If Allah had so willed, I should not have rehearsed it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. A whole lifetime before this have I tarried amongst you: will you not then understand?"

17 Who does 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, things that hurt them not nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allah." Say: "Do you 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 that went forth before from your 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 you: I too will wait with you."

SECTION 3: Merciful Dealing

21 When We make mankind taste of some mercy after adversity has touched them, behold! they take to plotting against Our Signs! Say: "Swifter to plan is Allah!" Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make! **22** He it is Who enables you to traverse through land and sea; so that you even board ships;—they sail with them with a favourable wind, and they rejoice thereat; then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think they are being overwhelmed: they cry unto Allah, sincerely offering (their) duty unto Him, saying, "If You do deliver us from this, we shall truly show our gratitude!" **23** But when He delivers them, behold! they transgress insolently through the earth in defiance of right! O mankind! Your

148. (...continued)

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. [1402]

insolence 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 you did.

24 The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth—which provides food 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 does call to the Home of Peace: He does guide whom He pleases to a way that is straight. **26** To those who do right is a goodly (reward)—Indeed, more (than in measure)! No darkness nor shame shall cover their faces! They are companions of the Garden; they will abide therein (for ever)! **27** But those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil: ignominy will cover their (faces): no defender will they have from (the wrath of) Allah: their faces will be covered, as it were, with pieces from the depth of the darkness of night: they are companions of the Fire: they will abide therein (for aye)! **28** One day shall We gather them all together. Then shall We say to those who joined gods (with Us): “To your place! you and those you joined as ‘partners’. We shall separate them, and their ‘partners’ shall say: ‘It was not us that you worshipped! **29** Enough is Allah for a witness between us and you: we certainly knew nothing of your worship of us!’” **30** There will every soul prove (the fruits of) the deeds it sent before: they will be brought back to Allah their rightful Lord, and their invented falsehoods will leave them in the lurch.

SECTION 4: Uniqueness of Divine Gifts

31 Say: “Who is it that sustains you (in life) from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs?” They will soon say, “Allah”. Say, “Will you not then show piety (to Him)?” **32** Such is

Allah, your real Cherisher and Sustainer: apart from Truth, what (remains) but error? How then are you turned away? **33** Thus is the Word of your Lord proved true against those who rebel: verily they will not believe.

34 Say: "Of your 'partners', can any originate creation and repeat it?" Say: "It is Allah Who originates creation and repeats it: then how are you deluded away (from the truth)?" **35** Say: "Of your 'partners' is there any that 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 you?" **36** But most of them follow nothing but fancy: truly fancy can be of no avail against Truth. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do.

37 This Qur'ān 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 Book¹⁴⁹—wherein there is no doubt—from the Lord of the Worlds. **38** Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Sūrah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides Allah, if it be you speak the truth!" **39** Nay, they charge with falsehood that whose knowledge they cannot compass, even before the elucidation thereof has reached them: thus did those before them make charges of falsehood: but see what was the end of those who did wrong! **40** Of them there are some who believe therein, and some who do not: and your Lord knows best those who are out for mischief.

SECTION 5: The Reprobates and Their Punishment

41 If they charge you with falsehood, say: "My work to me, and yours to you! You are free from responsibility for what I do, and I for what you do!" **42** Among them are some who (pretend to) listen to you: but

149. *The Book*: Cf.3:23. God's revelation throughout the ages is one. The Qur'ān confirms, fulfils, completes, and further explains the one true revelation, which has been sent by the One True God in all ages. [1429]

can you make the deaf to hear,—even though they are without understanding? **43** And among them are some who look at you: but can you 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. **45** One day He will gather them together: (it will be) as if they had tarried but an hour of a day: they will recognise each other: assuredly those will be lost who denied the meeting with Allah and refused to receive true guidance. **46** Whether We show you (realised in your lifetime) some part of what We promise them,—or We take your soul (to Our Mercy) (before that),—in any case, to Us is their return: ultimately Allah is witness to all that they do.

47 To every people (was sent) a messenger:¹⁵⁰ when their messenger 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 you speak the truth?" **49** Say: "I have no power over any harm or profit to myself except as Allah wills. To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation)." **50** Say: "Do you see,—if His punishment should come to you by night or by day,—what portion of it would the sinners wish to hasten? **51** Would you then believe in it at last, when it actually comes to pass? (It will then be said): 'Ah! Now? and you wanted (aforetime) to hasten it on!' **52** At length will be said to the wrong-doers: 'Taste you the enduring punishment! You get but the recompense of what you earned!'" **53** They seek to be informed by you: "Is that true?" Say: "Aye! By my Lord! It is the very truth! and you cannot frustrate it!"

150. 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." [1439]

SECTION 6: *Mercy Precedence of Punishment*

54 Every soul that has sinned, if it possessed all that is on earth, would fain give it in ransom: they would declare (their) repentance when they see the Penalty: but the judgement between them will be with justice, and no wrong will be done unto them. **55** Is it not (the case) that to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and on earth? Is it not (the case) that Allah's promise is assuredly true? Yet most of them understand not. **56** It is He Who gives life and Who takes it, and to Him shall you all be brought back.

57 O mankind! There has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) 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 you what things Allah has sent down to you for sustenance? Yet you hold forbidden some things thereof and (some things) lawful." Say: "Has Allah indeed permitted you, or do you invent (things) to attribute to Allah?" **60** And what think those who invent lies against Allah, of the Day of Judgement? Verily Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most of them are ungrateful.

SECTION 7: *Good News for the Faithful*

61 In whatever business you may be, and whatever portion you may be reciting from the Qur'ān,—and whatever deed you (mankind) may be doing,—We are witnesses thereof when you are deeply engrossed therein. Nor is hidden from your Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven. And not the least and not 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; **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 felicity. **65** Let not their speech grieve you: for all power and honour belong to Allah: it is He Who hears and knows (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 fancy, and they do nothing but lie. **67** He it is Who has made you the night that you may rest therein, and the day to make things visible (to you). Verily in this are Signs for those who listen (to His Message).

68 They say: “Allah has begotten a son!”—Glory be to Him! He is self-sufficient! His are all things in the heavens and on earth! No warrant have you for this! Say you about Allah what you know not? **69** Say: “Those who invent 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 Penalty for their blasphemies.

SECTION 8: Noah and Moses

71 Relate to them the story of Noah. Behold! he said to his people: “O my people, if it be hard on your (mind) that I should stay (with you) and commemorate the Signs of Allah,—yet I put my trust in Allah. Get you then an agreement about your plan and among your partners, so your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me, and give me no respite. **72** But if you turn back, (consider): no reward have I asked of you: my reward is only due from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to Allah’s will (in Islam).” **73** They rejected him, but We delivered him, and those with him, in the Ark, and We made them inherit (the earth), while We overwhelmed in the flood those who rejected Our Signs. Then see what was the end of those who were warned (but heeded not)!

74 Then after him We sent (many) messengers to their peoples: 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.

75 Then after them sent We Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his Chiefs with Our Signs. But they were arrogant: they were a people in sin. **76** When the Truth did come to them from Us, they said: “This is

indeed evident sorcery!" 77 Said Moses: "Say you (this) about the Truth when it has (actually) reached you? Is sorcery (like) this? But sorcerers will not prosper." 78 They said: "Have you come to us to turn us away from the ways we found our fathers following,—in order that you and your brother 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 you what you (wish) to throw!" 81 When they had had their throw, Moses said: "What you have brought is sorcery: Allah will surely make it of no effect: for Allah prospers not the work of those who make mischief. 82 And Allah by His Words does prove and establish His Truth, however much the sinners may hate it!"

SECTION 9: End of Opposition to Moses

83 But none believed in Moses except some children of his people, 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 you do (really) believe in Allah, then in Him put your trust if you 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 Your Mercy from those who reject (You)."

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! You have indeed bestowed on Pharaoh and his Chiefs splendour and wealth in the life of the present, and so, our Lord, they mislead (men) from Your 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 Penalty." 89 Allah said: "Accepted is your prayer (O Moses and Aaron)! So stand you 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: "I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in: I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam)." 91 (It was said to him): "Ah now!—But a little while before, were you in rebellion!—and you did mischief (and violence)! 92 This day shall We save you in your body, that you may be a Sign to those who come after you! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs!"

SECTION 10: Those Who Heed Warning Will Benefit

93 We settled the Children of Israel in a beautiful dwelling-place, and provided for them sustenance of the best: it was after knowledge had been granted to them, that they fell into schisms. Verily Allah will judge between them as to the schisms amongst them, on the Day of Judgement. 94 If you were in doubt as to what We have revealed unto you, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before you: the Truth has indeed come to you from your Lord: so be in no way of those in doubt. 95 Nor be of those who reject the Signs of Allah, or you shall be of those who perish.

96 Those against whom the Word of your Lord has been verified would not believe—97 Even if every Sign was brought unto them,—until they see (for themselves) the grievous Penalty. 98 Why was there not a single township (among those We warned), which believed,—so its Faith should have profited it,—except the people of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the present, and permitted them to enjoy (their life) for a while.

99 If it had been your Lord's Will, they would all have believed,—all who are on earth! Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe! 100 No soul can believe, except by the Will of Allah, and He will place doubt (or obscurity) on those who will not understand. 101 Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth"; but neither Signs nor Warners profit those who believe not. 102 Do they then expect (anything) but (what happened in) the days of the men who passed away before them? Say: "Wait you then: for I, too, will wait with you." 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: Divine Judgement

104 Say: "O you men! If you are in doubt as to my religion, (behold!) I worship not what you worship, other than Allah! But I worship Allah—Who will take your souls (at death): I am commanded to be (in the ranks) of the **Believers**, **105** And further (thus): 'set your face towards religion with true piety, and never in anyway be of the Unbelievers; **106** Nor call on any, other than Allah;—such will neither profit you nor hurt you: if you do, behold! you shall certainly be of those who do wrong.'" **107** If Allah does touch you with hurt, there is none can remove it but He: if He does design some benefit for you, there is none can keep back His favour: He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleases. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **108** Say: "O you men! Now Truth has 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." **109** Follow you the inspiration sent unto you, and be patient and constant, till Allah does decide: for He is the best to decide. □

HŪD
(The Prophet Hūd)

Introduction

For the chronological place of this Sūrah and the general argument of Sūrahs 10 to 15, see Introduction to Sūrah 10.

In subject matter this Sūrah supplements the preceding one. In the last Sūrah 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 long-suffering patience are contrasted with man's ingratitude, his love of falsehood and vanity, and his crookedness (11:1-24).

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 (11:25-49).

The Prophet Hūd preached to his people, the 'Ād, against false gods, and the Prophet Šālīḥ to his people, the Thamūd, against dishonouring the symbol of Allah's bounty. In both cases Allah's Signs were rejected, and the rejecters were blotted out (11:50-68).

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'ayb's people, the Midianites, were warned against fraud and mischief, but they reproached him with helplessness and were themselves destroyed (11:69-95).

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 wrongdoing, and serve Allah wholeheartedly (11:96-123).

*** **

SECTION 1: A Warning

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

1 *Alif Lām Rā'*.¹⁵¹ (This is) a Book, with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning), further explained in detail,—from One Who is Wise and Well-acquainted (with all things): **2** (It teaches) that you 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 you 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 you turn away, then I fear for you the Penalty of a Great Day: **4** 'To Allah is your return, and He has power over all things.'" **5** Behold! They fold up their hearts, that they may lie hid from Him! Ah! Even when they cover themselves with their garments, He knows what they conceal, and what they reveal: for He knows well the (inmost secrets) of the hearts.

PART XII

6 There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah: He knows the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: all is in a clear record.¹⁵² **7** He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days—and His Throne was over the Waters¹⁵³—that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. But if you were to say to them, "You shall indeed be raised up after death", the Unbelievers would be sure to say, "This is nothing but

151. For the meaning of these Letters, see Introduction to Sūrah 10. [1492]

152. Cf. 6:59 and 10:61. [1500]

153. It is scientifically correct to say that all life was evolved out of the waters, and this statement also occurs in the Qur'ān, 21:30. The throne of Allah's authority is metaphorically expressed as over the waters, i.e., as regulating all life. Some such mystic 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. [1502]

obvious sorcery!" **8** If We delay the Penalty for them for a definite term, they are sure to say, "What keeps it back?" Ah! On the day it (actually) reaches them, nothing will turn it away from them, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at!

SECTION 2: Truth of Revelation

9 If We give man a taste of mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! he is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy. **10** But if We give him a taste of (Our) favours after adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, "All evil has departed from me:" behold! he falls into exultation and pride. **11** Not so do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward.

12 Perchance you may (feel the inclination) to give up a part of what is revealed¹⁵⁴ unto you, and your heart feels straitened lest they say, "Why is not a treasure sent down unto him, or why does not an angel come down with him?" But you are there only to warn! It is Allah that arranges all affairs! **13** Or they may say, "He forged it." Say, "Bring you then ten Sūrahs forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah!—if you speak the truth!"¹⁵⁵ **14** If then they (your false gods) answer not your (call), know you that this Revelation is sent down (replete) with the knowledge of Allah, and that there is no god but He! Will you even then submit (to Islam)?"

154. 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. [1509]

155. Cf. 2:23 and 10:38.

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. 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 and the deeds that they do! 17 Can they be (like) those who accept a clear (Sign) from their Lord, and whom a witness from Himself does teach, as did the Book of Moses before it,—a guide 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 your Lord: yet many among men do not believe!

18 Who does more wrong than those who invent a lie against Allah? They will be turned back to the presence of 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 would hinder (men) from the path of Allah and would seek in it something crooked: these were they who denied the Hereafter!” 20 They will in no way frustrate (His design) on earth, nor have they protectors besides Allah! Their penalty will be doubled! They lost the power to hear, and they did not see! 21 They are the ones who have lost their own souls: and the (fancies) they invented 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,—they will be companions of the Gardens, to dwell therein for ever! 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 you not then take heed?

SECTION 3: History of Noah

25 We sent Noah to his people (with a mission): “I have come to you with a clear Warning: 26 That you serve none but Allah: verily I do fear for you the Penalty of a grievous Day.”

27 But the Chiefs of the Unbelievers among his people said: “We see (in) you nothing but a man like ourselves: nor do we see that any

follow you but the meanest among us, in judgement immature: nor do we see in you (all) any merit above us: in fact we think you are liars!" **28** He said: "O my people! See you if (it be that) I have a clear Sign from my Lord, and that He has sent Mercy unto me from His own presence, but that the Mercy has been obscured from your sight? Shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it? **29** And O my people! I ask you for no wealth in return: my reward is from none but Allah: but I will not drive away (in contempt) those who believe: for verily they are to meet their Lord, and you I see are the ignorant ones! **30** And O my people! Who would help me against Allah if I drove them away? Will you not then take heed? **31** I tell you not that with me are the treasures 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 knows best what is in their souls: I should, if I did, indeed be a wrong-doer." **32** They said: "O Noah! You have disputed with us, and (much) have you prolonged the dispute with us: now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you speak the truth!?" **33** He said: "Truly, Allah will bring it on you if He wills,—and then, you will not be able to frustrate it! **34** Of no profit will be my counsel to you, much as I desire to give you (good) counsel, if it be that Allah wills to leave you astray: He is your Lord! and to Him will you return!"

35 Or do they say, "He has forged it"? Say: "If I had forged it, or me were my sin! and I am free of the sins of which you are guilty!"

SECTION 4: History of Noah

36 It was revealed to Noah: "None of your people will believe except those who have believed already! So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds. **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 you ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise! **39** But

soon will you know who it is on whom will descend a Penalty that will cover them with shame,—on whom will be unloosed a Penalty lasting:”

40 At length, behold! there came Our command, and the fountains of the earth gushed forth! We said: “Embark therein, of each kind two, male and female, and your family—except those against whom the Word has already gone forth,—and the Believers.” But only a few believed with him. **41** So he said: “Embark you 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 floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest): “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 has mercy!” And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood.

44 Then the word went forth: “O earth! swallow up your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain!)” and the water abated, and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Jūdī,¹⁵⁶ and the word went forth:

156. Let us get a little idea of the geography of the place. The letters *Jīm*, *Bā* and *Kāf* are philologically interchangeable, and *Jūdī*, *Gūdī*, *Kūdī* are sounds that can pass into each other. There is no doubt that the name is connected with the name “Kurd”, in which the letter *r* is a later interpolation, for the oldest Sumerian records name a people called *Kūū* or *Gūū* 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 Jūdī is situated (near the frontiers of modern Turkey, modern Iraq, and modern Syria), and the town of Jazirah ibn ‘Umar, (on the present Turco-Syrian frontier), and it extends into Iraq and Iran. 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 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
(continued...)

“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 Your promise is true, and You are the justest of Judges!” **46** He said: “O Noah! He is not of your family: for his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I give you counsel, lest you act like the ignorant!” **47** Noah said: “O my Lord! I do seek refuge with You, lest I ask You for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless you forgive me and have Mercy on me, I should indeed be lost!” **48** The word came: “O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us, and blessing on you and on some of the peoples (who will spring) from those with you: but (there will be other) peoples to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end will a grievous Penalty reach them from Us.”

49 Such are some of the stories of the Unseen, which We have revealed unto you: before this, neither you nor your people knew them. So persevere patiently: for the End is for those who are righteous.

SECTION 5: History of Hūd

50 To the ‘Ād people (We sent) Hūd, one of their own brethren. He said: “O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. (Your other gods) you do nothing but invent! **51** O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (Message). My reward is from none but Him who created me: will you not then understand? **52** And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you the skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your

156. (...continued)

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 Jūdī (or Gūdī), 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. [1539]

strength: so turn you not back in sin!" 53 They said: "O Hūd! No clear (Sign) have you brought us, and we are not the ones to desert our gods on your word! Nor shall we believe in you! 54 We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have seized you with imbecility." He said: "I call Allah to witness, and do you 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 has grasp of its forelock. Verily, it is my Lord that is on a straight Path. 57 If you 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 has care and watch over all things."

58 So when Our decree issued, We saved Hūd and those who believed with him, by (special) Grace from Ourselves: We saved them from a severe Penalty. 59 Such were the 'Ād People: they rejected the Signs of their Lord and Cherisher; disobeyed His messengers; and followed the command of every powerful, obstinate transgressor. 60 And they were pursued by a Curse in this life,—and on the Day of Judgement. Ah! Behold! for the 'Ād rejected their Lord and Cherisher! Ah! Behold! removed (from sight) were 'Ād the people of Hūd!

SECTION 6: History of Sāliḥ

61 To the Thamūd people (We sent) Sāliḥ, one of their own brethren. He said: "O my people! Worship Allah: you have no other god but Him. It is He Who has produced you from the earth and settled you therein: then ask forgiveness of Him, and turn to Him (in repentance): for my Lord is (always) near, ready to answer." 62 They said: "O Sāliḥ! You have been of us! a centre of our hopes hitherto! Do you (now) forbid us the worship of what our fathers worshipped? But we are really in suspicious (disquieting) doubt as to that to which you invite us." 63 He said: "O my people! Do you see? if I have a clear (Sign) from my Lord and He has sent Mercy unto me from Himself,—who then can help me against Allah if I were to disobey Him? What then would you add to my (portion) but perdition? 64 And

O my people! This she-camel of Allah is a symbol to you: leave her to feed on Allah's (free) earth, and inflict no harm on her, or a swift Penalty will seize you!" **65** But they did hamstring 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 Sālih and those who believed with him, by (special) Grace from Ourselves—and from the Ignominy of that Day. For your Lord—He is the Strong One, and able to enforce His Will. **67** The (mighty) Blast overtook the wrong-doers, and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning,—**68** As if they had never dwelt and flourished there. Ah! Behold! for the Thamūd rejected their Lord and Cherisher! Ah! Behold! removed (from sight) were the Thamūd!

SECTION 7: Abraham and Lūt

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. **70** But when he saw their hands went not towards the (meal), he felt some mistrust of them, and conceived a fear of them. They said: "Fear not: we have been sent against the people of Lūt." **71** And his wife was standing (there), and she laughed: but we gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after him, of Jacob. **72** She said: "Alas for me! 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: "Do you wonder at Allah's decree? The grace of Allah and His blessings on you, O you people of the house! For He is indeed worthy of all praise, full of all glory!"

74 When fear had passed from (the mind of) Abraham and the glad tidings 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 look to Allah. **76** O Abraham! Seek not this. The decree of your Lord has gone forth: for them there comes a Penalty that cannot be turned back!

77 When Our messengers came to Lūt, he was grieved on their account and felt himself powerless (to protect) them. He said: "This is a

distressful day."¹⁵⁷ **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 you marry)!¹⁵⁸ Now fear Allah, and cover me not with shame about my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?" **79** They said: "Well do you know we have no need of your daughters: indeed you know 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."¹⁵⁹ **81** (The Messengers) said: "O Lūt! We are Messengers from your Lord! By no means shall they reach you! Now travel with your family while yet a part of the night remains, and let not any of you look back: but your wife¹⁶⁰ (will remain behind): to her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed:

157. The story of Lot, as referred to in 7:80-84, laid emphasis on the rejection of Lot's mission by men who practised unnatural abominations. 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. [1574]

158. 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'ān nowhere suggests such abominations. Some Commentators suggest that "my daughters" in the mouth of a venerable man like Lūt, the father of his people, may mean any young girls of those Towns. "My son" (*waladī*) is still a common mode of address in Arabic-speaking countries when an elderly man addresses a young man. [1575]

159. Lūt 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 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. [1576]

160. 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 66:10. The Biblical narrative suggests that she was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. xix. 26). [1577]

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 as from your Lord: nor are they¹⁶¹ ever far from those who do wrong!

SECTION 8: History of Shu'ayb

84 To the Madyan people (We sent) Shu'ayb, one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! Worship Allah: you have no other god but Him. And give not short measure or weight: I see you in prosperity, but I fear for you the Penalty 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:¹⁶² commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief. **86** That which is left you by Allah is best for you, if you (but) believed! But I am not set over you to keep watch!" **87** They said: "O Shu'ayb! Does your (religion of) prayer command you that we leave off the worship which our fathers practised, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property? Truly, you are the one that forbears with faults and is right-minded!" **88** He said: "O my people! See you whether I have a clear (Sign) from my Lord, and He has given me sustenance (pure and) good as from Himself? I wish not, 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 look. **89** And O my people! Let not my dissent (from you) cause you to sin, lest you suffer a fate similar to that of the people of Noah or of Hūd or of Šālih, nor are the people of Lūṭ far off from

161. *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.' [1581]

162. Both Plato and Aristotle define justice as the virtue which gives everyone 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. [1584]

you! **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‘ayb! Much of what you say we do not understand! In fact among us we see that you have no strength! Were it not for your family, we should certainly have stoned you! For you have among us no great position!” **92** He said: “O my people! Is then my family of more consideration with you than Allah? For you cast Him away behind your backs (with contempt). But verily my Lord encompasses on all sides all that you do! **93** And O my people! Do whatever you can: I will do (my part): soon will you know who it is on whom descends the Penalty of Ignominy; and who is a liar! And watch you! For I too am watching with you!” **94** When Our decree issued, We saved Shu‘ayb and those who believed with him, by (special) mercy from Ourselves: 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! Ah! Behold! how the Madyan were removed (from sight) as were removed the Thamūd!

SECTION 9: The Iniquitous and the Righteous

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 no right (guide). **98** He will go before his people on the Day of Judgement, and lead them into the Fire (as cattle are led to water): 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 Judgement: and woeful is the gift which shall be given (unto them)!

100 These are some of the stories of communities which We relate unto you: of them some are standing, and some have been mown down (by the sickle of time). **101** It was not We that wronged them: they wronged their own souls: the deities, other than Allah, whom they invoked, profited them not at all when there issued the decree of your Lord: nor did they add aught (to their lot) but perdition! **102** Such is the chastisement of your 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 Penalty 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 therein (nothing but) the heaving of sighs and sobs: **107** They will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills: for your Lord is the (sure) accomplisher of what He plans. **108** And those who are blessed shall be in the Garden: they will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills: a gift without break. **109** Be not then in doubt as to what these men worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before (them): but verily We shall pay them back (in full) their portion without (the least) abatement.

SECTION 10: Believers Comforted

110 We certainly gave the Book to Moses, but differences arose therein: had it not been that a Word had gone forth before from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them, but they are in suspicious doubt concerning it. **111** And, of a surety, to all will your Lord pay back (in full the recompense) of their deeds: for He knows well all that they do. **112** Therefore stand firm (in the straight Path) as you are commanded,—you and those who with you turn (unto Allah); and transgress not (from the Path): for He sees well all that you do. **113** And incline not to those who do wrong, or the Fire will seize you; and you have no protectors other than Allah, nor shall you be helped. **114** And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day¹⁶³ and at

163. *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. [1616]

the approaches of the night:¹⁶⁴ for those things that are good remove those that are evil: be that the word of remembrance to those who remember (their Lord): **115** And be steadfast in patience; for verily Allah will not suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.

116 Why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed of balanced good sense, prohibiting (men) from mischief in the earth—except a few among them whom We saved (from harm)? But the wrong-doers pursued the enjoyment of the good things of life which were given them, and persisted in sin. **117** Nor would your Lord be the One to destroy communities for a single wrong-doing, if its members were likely to mend. **118** If your Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people; but they will not cease to dispute, **119** Except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy: and for this did He create them: and the Word of your Lord shall be fulfilled: "I will fill Hell with *jīnnas* and men all together."

120 All that We relate to you of the stories of the messengers,—with it We make firm your heart: in them there comes to you the Truth, as well as an exhortation and a message of remembrance to those who believe. **121** Say to those who do not believe: "Do whatever you can: we shall do our part; **122** And wait you! we too shall wait." **123** To Allah belong the unseen (secrets) of the heavens and the earth, and to Him goes back every affair (for decision): then worship Him, and put your trust in Him: and your Lord is not unmindful of aught that you do. □

164. *Approaches of the night*: Arabic *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 later afternoon prayer, *Asr*, can be one of these three, and the evening prayer, *Maghrib*, just after sunset, can be the second. The early night prayer, *Ishā'*, 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. [1617]

YŪSUF
(Joseph)

Introduction

For the chronological place of this Sūrah and the general argument of Sūrahs 10 to 15, see Introduction to Sūrah 10.

In subject matter this Sūrah 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 (12:3) 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 folktale 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 Qur'ānic 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 poets and Sufi 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 (12:1-20).

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 cupbearer (12:21-42).

The King had a vision, which Joseph (through the cupbearer) got an opportunity to explain. Joseph insisted that all the scandal that had been raised about him should be publicly cleared. He was received into favour, and was appointed *wazīr* 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. (12:43-68).

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 (12:69-93).

Israel (Jacob) comes, is comforted, and settles in Egypt. The name of Allah is glorified. The truth of Allah endures forever, and Allah's purpose is fully revealed in the Hereafter (12:94-111).

*** **

SECTION 1: Joseph's Vision

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lam Rā'*.¹⁶⁵ These are the Symbols (or Verses) of the perspicuous Book. 2 We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'ān, in order that you may learn wisdom. 3 We do relate unto you the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to you this (portion of the) Qur'ān: before this, you too were among those who knew it not.

165. For the meaning of these mystic letters, see Introduction to Sūrah 10. [1627]

4 Behold! Joseph said to his father: "O my father! I did see eleven stars and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrate themselves to me!" 5 Said (the father): "My (dear) little son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they concoct a plot against you: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy! 6 Thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of stories (and events) and perfect His favour to you and to the posterity of Jacob—even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforetime! For Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom."

SECTION 2: Plot Against Joseph by His Brothers

7 Verily in Joseph and his brethren are Signs (or Symbols) 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 wandering (in his mind)! 9 Slay you Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, that so the favour of your father may be given to you alone: (there will be time enough) for you to be righteous after that!" 10 Said one of them: "Slay not Joseph, but if you 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 do you not trust us with Joseph,—seeing we are indeed his sincere well-wishers? 12 Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy himself and play, and we shall take every care of him." 13 (Jacob) said: "Really it saddens me that you should take him away: I fear lest the wolf should devour him while you attend not to him." 14 They said: "If the wolf were to devour him while we are (so large) a party, then should we indeed (first) have perished ourselves!"

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 (this Message): "Of a surety you shall (one day) tell them the truth of this their affair while they know (you) not."

16 Then they came to their father in the early part of the night, weeping. 17 They said: "O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Joseph with our things; and the wolf devoured him, but you will never believe us even though we tell the truth." 18 They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: "Nay, but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you. (For me) patience is most fitting: against that which you assert, it is Allah (alone) Whose help can be sought."

19 Then there came a caravan of travellers: they sent their water-carrier (for water), and he let down his bucket (into the well)... He said: "Ah there! Good news! Here is a (fine) young man!" So they concealed him as a treasure! But Allah knows well all that they do! 20 The (brethren) sold him for a miserable price, for a few dirhams counted out: in such low estimation did they hold him!

SECTION 3: Joseph's Firmness Under Temptation

21 The man in Egypt who bought him, said to his wife: "Make his stay (among us) honourable: maybe he will bring us much good, or we shall adopt him as a son." Thus did We establish Joseph in the land, that We might teach him the interpretation of stories (and events). And Allah has full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not. 22 When Joseph attained his full manhood, We gave him power and knowledge: thus do We reward those who do right.

23 But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his (true) self: she fastened the doors, and said: "Now come, you (dear one)!" He said: "Allah forbid! Truly (your husband) is my lord! He made my sojourn agreeable! Truly to no good come those who do wrong!" 24 And (with passion) did she desire him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his Lord: thus (did We order) that We might turn away from him (all) evil and shameful deeds: for he was one of Our servants, sincere and purified.

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 your 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 is her tale true, 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 your sin, for truly you have been at fault!"

SECTION 4: Joseph is Imprisoned

30 Ladies said in the City: "The wife of the (great) 'Azīz¹⁶⁶ is seeking to seduce her slave from his (true) self: truly has 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 you did blame me! I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self but he did firmly save himself guiltless!... and now, if he does 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 more to my liking than that to which they invite me: unless You turn away their snare from me, I should (in my youthful folly) feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant."

166. 'Azīz: 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 "Azīz" 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. [1677]

34 So his Lord hearkened to him (in his prayer), and turned away from him their snare: verily He hears and knows (all things).

35 Then it occurred to the men, after they had seen the Signs, (that it was best) to imprison him for a time.

SECTION 5: Joseph's Preaching in the Prison

36 Now with him there came into the prison two young men. 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, and birds are eating thereof." "Tell us" (they said) "the truth and meaning thereof: for we see you are one that does 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 before it befall you: that is part of the (duty) which my Lord has taught me. I have (I assure you) abandoned the ways of a people that believe not in Allah and that (even) deny the Hereafter. **38** And I follow the ways 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 of the prison! (I ask you): Are many lords differing among themselves better, or the One Allah, Supreme and Irresistible? **40** If not Him, you worship nothing but names which you have named,—you and your fathers,—for which Allah has sent down no authority: the command is for none but Allah: He has commanded that you 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) has been decreed that matter whereof you both do enquire"...

42 And of the two, to that one whom he considered about to be saved, he said: "Mention me to your lord." But Satan made him forget to mention him to his lord: and (Joseph) lingered in prison a few (more) years.

SECTION 6: *The King's Vision Interpreted by Joseph*

43 The king (of Egypt) said: "I do see (in a vision) seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones devour, and seven green ears of corn, and seven (others) withered. O you chiefs! Expound to me my vision if it be that you can interpret visions." **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 you me (therefore)." **46** "O Joseph!" (he said) "O man of truth! Expound to us (the dream) of seven fat cows 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 understand." **47** (Joseph) said: "For seven years shall you diligently sow as is your wont: and the harvests that you reap, you shall leave them in the ear,—except a little, of which you shall eat. **48** Then will come after that (period) seven dreadful (years), which will devour what you shall have laid by in advance for them,—(all) except a little which you shall have (specially) guarded. **49** Then will come after that (period) a year in which the people will have abundant water, and in which they will press (wine and oil)."

SECTION 7: *Joseph Cleared of the Charges*

50 So the king said: "Bring you him unto me." But when the messenger came to him, (Joseph) said: "Go you back to your lord, and ask him, 'What is the state of mind of 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 you did seek to seduce Joseph from his (true) self?" 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 from his (true) self: he is indeed of those who are (ever) true (and virtuous). **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.

PART XIII

53 "Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to 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." Therefore when he had spoken to him, he said: "Be assured this day, you are, before our own presence, with rank firmly established, and fidelity fully proved!" 55 (Joseph) said: "Set me over the store-houses of the land: I will indeed guard them, as one that knows (their importance)."

56 Thus did We give established power to Joseph in the land, to take possession therein as, when, or where he pleased. We bestow of Our Mercy on whom 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.

SECTION 8: Joseph helps his Brothers

58 Then came Joseph's brethren: 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 you have, of the same father as yourselves, (but a different mother): see you not that I pay out full measure, and that I do provide the best hospitality? 60 Now if you bring him not to me, you shall have no measure (of corn) from me, nor shall you (even) come near me." 61 They said: "We shall certainly seek to get our wish about him from his father: indeed we shall do it."

62 And (Joseph) told his servants to put their stock in trade (with which they had bartered) into their saddlebags, so they should know it only when they returned to their people, in order that they might come back.

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." **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!"

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 stock in trade has been returned 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." **66** (Jacob) said: "Never will I send him with you until you swear a solemn oath to me, in Allah's name, that you will be sure to bring him back to me unless you are yourselves hemmed in (and made powerless)." And when they had sworn their solemn oath, he said: "Over all that we say, be Allah the witness and guardian!" **67** Further he said: "O my sons! Enter not all by one gate: enter you 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." **68** 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 was but a necessity of Jacob's soul, which he discharged. For he was, by Our instruction, full of knowledge (and experience): but most men know not.

SECTION 9: The Youngest Brother

69 Now when they came into Joseph's presence, he received his (full) brother to stay with him. He said (to him): "Behold! I am your (own) brother; so grieve not at aught of their doings." **70** At length when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddlebag. Then shouted out a crier: "O you (in) the caravan! Behold, you are thieves, without doubt!" **71** They said, turning towards them: "What is it that you 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 you 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 you are (proved) to have lied?” **75** They said: “The penalty should be that he in whose saddlebag 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 brother's baggage. Thus did We plan for Joseph. He could not take his brother by the law of the king except that Allah willed it (so). We raise to degrees (of wisdom) whom 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).” But these things did Joseph keep locked in his heart, revealing not the secrets to them. He (simply) said (to himself): “You are the worse situated; and Allah knows best the truth of what you assert!”

78 They said: “O exalted one! 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 you are (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.”

SECTION 10: Joseph Discloses His Identity

80 Now when they saw no hope of his (yielding), they held a conference in private. The leader among them said: “Know you not that your father did take an oath from you in Allah's name, and how, before this, you did fail in your duty with Joseph? Therefore will I not leave this land until my father permits me, or Allah commands me; and He is the best to command. **81** Turn you back to your father, and say, ‘O our father! Behold! your 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 you have yourselves contrived a story (good enough) for you. So patience is most fitting (for me). Maybe Allah will bring them (back) all to me (in the end). For He is indeed full of knowledge and wisdom." **84** And he turned away from them, and said: "How great is my grief for Joseph!" And his eyes became white with sorrow, and he fell into silent melancholy. **85** They said: "By Allah! (Never) will you cease to remember Joseph until you reach the last extremity of illness, or until you die!" **86** He said: "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you know not... **87** O my sons! Go you and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy; truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith."

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 you), and treat it as charity to us: for Allah does reward the charitable." **89** He said: "Know you how you dealt with Joseph and his brother, not knowing (what you were doing)?" **90** They said: "Are you indeed Joseph?" He said, "I am Joseph, and this is my brother: Allah has indeed been gracious 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 you 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 you (here) to me together with all your family."

SECTION 11: Israel Goes to Egypt

94 When the caravan left (Egypt), their father said: "I do indeed scent the presence of Joseph: nay, think me not a dotard." **95** They said: "By Allah! Truly you are in your old wandering mind." **96** Then when the bearer of the good news came, he cast (the shirt) over his face, and he forthwith regained clear sight. He said: "Did I not say to you, 'I know

from Allah that which you know not?" **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 you Egypt (all) in safety if it please Allah." **100** And he raised his parents high on the throne (of dignity), and they fell down in prostration, (all) before him. He said: "O my father! This is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah has made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understands best the mysteries of all that He plans to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom. **101** O my Lord! You have indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events,—O You Creator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Take You my soul (at death) as one submitting to Your will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous."

102 Such is one of the stories of what happened unseen, which We reveal by inspiration unto you; nor were you (present) with them then 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 you do desire it. **104** And no reward do you ask of them for this: it is no less than a Message for all creatures.

SECTION 12: A Lesson for the Prophet's Opponents

105 And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them! **106** And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (others as partners) with Him! **107** Do they then feel secure from the coming against them of the covering veil of the wrath of Allah,—or of the coming against them of the (final) Hour suddenly while they perceive not?

108 Say you: "This is my way: I do invite unto Allah,—on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes,—I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! And never will I join gods with Allah!" **109** Nor did We send before you (as messengers) any but men, whom We did inspire,—(men) living in human habitations. 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 you 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, 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, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it,—a detailed exposition of all things, and a Guide and a Mercy to any such as believe. □

Chapter 13

AL-RA'D (The Thunder)

Introduction

The chronological place of this Sūrah and the general argument of Sūrahs 10 to 15 has been described in the Introduction to Sūrah 10.

The special argument of this Sūrah 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. What is Punishment in this world, compared to that in the life to come? 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 Sūrah.

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-encompassing: so are His power and goodness (13:1-18).

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 (13:19-31).

So was it with Prophets before: they were mocked, but the mockers were destroyed, while the righteous rejoiced and were established (13:32-43).

*** **

SECTION 1: Truth of Revelation

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm Rā'*.¹⁶⁷ These are the Signs (or Verses) of the Book: that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord is the Truth; but most men believe not. 2 Allah is He Who raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see; is firmly established on the Throne (of Authority); He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law)! Each one runs (its course) for a term appointed. He does regulate all affairs, explaining the Signs in detail, that you may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord. 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: He draws the night as a veil over 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 out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold, verily in these things there are Signs for those who understand!

5 If you do marvel (at their want of faith), strange is their saying: "When we are (actually) dust, 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): they will be companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (for ever)! 6 They ask you to hasten on the evil in preference to the good: yet have come to pass, before them,

167. For *Alif, Lām, Mīm*, see 2:1 and note. For *Alif, Lām, Rā'*, see Introduction to Sūrah 10. Here there seems to be a combination of the groups *Alif, Lām, Mīm* and *Alif, Lām, Rā'*. We consider here not only the beginning (*Alif*), the middle (*Lām*), and the end (*Mīm*), of man's spiritual history, but also the immediate future of the interior of our organisation, such as it appeared to our *Ummah* towards the close of the Makkan period. But in trying to understand mystic symbolism, we must not be dogmatic. The fitting attitude is to say: Allah knows best. [1798]

(many) exemplary punishments! But verily your Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind for their wrong-doing, and verily your Lord is (also) strict in punishment.

7 And the Unbelievers say: "Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?" But you are truly a warner, and to every people a guide.

SECTION 2: Fall and Rise of Nations

8 Allah does know what every female (womb) does bear, by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion. 9 He knows the Unseen and that which is open: 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 it themselves (with their own souls). But when (once) Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning it back, nor will they find, besides Him, any to protect. 12 It is He Who does show you the lightning, by way both of fear and of hope: it is He Who does raise up the clouds, heavy with (fertilising) rain! 13 Nay, thunder repeats His praises, and so do the angels, with awe: He flings the loud-voiced thunderbolts, and therewith He strikes whomsoever He will. Yet these (are the men) who (dare to) dispute about Allah, with the strength of His power (supreme)!

14 For Him (alone) is prayer in Truth: any 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: for the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile) wandering (in the mind). 15 Whatever beings there are in the heavens and the earth do prostrate themselves to Allah (acknowledging subjection),—with goodwill 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 you then take (for worship) protectors other than Him, such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?" Say: "Are the blind equal with those who see? Or the depths of darkness equal with light?" Or do they assign to Allah 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 from the skies, and the channels flow, each according to its measure: 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 does Allah (by parables) show forth Truth and Vanity. For the scum disappears like froth cast out; while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth. Thus does 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: Good and Evil Bring Their Own Reward

19 Is then one who does know that that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord is the Truth, 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 has 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: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation):

24 "Peace unto you for that you 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 does enlarge, or grant by (strict) measure, the sustenance (which He gives) to whom so He pleases. (The worldly) rejoice in the life of this world: but the life of this world is but little comfort in the Hereafter.

SECTION 4: Revolution to be Brought About by the Qur'ān

27 The Unbelievers say: "Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "Truly Allah leaves to stray, whom He will; but He guides 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. 29 For those who believe and work righteousness, is (every) blessedness, and a beautiful place of (final) return."

30 Thus have We sent you amongst a people before whom (long since) have (other) peoples (gone and) passed away; in order that you might rehearse unto them what We send down unto you 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'ān 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.

SECTION 5: **Opposition Will Fail**

32 Mocked were (many) messengers before you: but I granted respite to the Unbelievers, and finally I punished them: then how (terrible) was My requital! **33** Is then He Who stands over every soul (and knows) all that it does, (like any others)? And yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say: "But name them! Is it that you will inform Him of something He knows not on earth, or is it (just) a show of words?" Nay! To those who believe not, their pretence seems pleasing, but they are kept back (thereby) from the Path. And those whom Allah leaves to stray, no one can guide. **34** For them is a Penalty in the life of this world, but harder, truly, is the Penalty of the Hereafter: and defender have they none against Allah. **35** The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised!—beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein: such is the end of the Righteous; and the end of Unbelievers is the Fire.

36 Those to whom We have given the Book rejoice at what has been revealed unto you: 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 judgement of authority in Arabic. Were you to follow their (vain) desires after the knowledge which has reached you, then would you find neither protector nor defender against Allah.

SECTION 6: **Steady Progress of Truth**

38 We did send messengers before you, and appointed for them wives and children: and it was never the part of a messenger to bring a Sign except as Allah permitted (or commanded).¹⁶⁸ For each period is a

168. No Prophet performed any miracle or showed forth any "Signs", except as Allah willed. Allah's will (*Arabic Mashīyah*) is an All-Wise, universal Plan, which is not formed for the benefit of one tribe or *millah* or of one age or country (see also next verse). The greatest Miracle in history was and is the Qur'ān. We can apprehend its
(continued...)

Book (revealed).¹⁶⁹ **39** Allah does blot out or confirm what He pleases: with Him is the Mother of the Book.¹⁷⁰

40 Whether We shall show you (within your lifetime) part of what We promised them or take to ourselves your soul (before it is all accomplished),—your 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 (in their control) from its outlying borders? (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) devise plots; but in all things the master-planning is Allah's. He knows the doings of every soul: and soon will the Unbelievers know who gets home in the end. **43** The Unbelievers say: "No messenger are you." Say: "Enough for a witness between me and you is Allah, and such as have knowledge of the Book." □

168. (...continued)

beauty and grandeur today 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. [1862]

169. For Arabic *Kitāb*, I have translated "a Book (revealed)"; it can also mean "a Law decreed" or "a Decree established." Ultimately the meaning is the same; for each age, according to Allah's wisdom, His Message is renewed. [1863]

170. Mother of the Book: (*Umm al-Kitāb*) the original foundation of all revelation; the essence of Allah's Will and Law. Cf. 3:7. [1864]

Chapter 14

IBRĀHĪM (Abraham)

Introduction

For the chronology and the general argument of this Sūrah in the series Sūrahs 10 to 15, see Introduction to Sūrah 10.

The special subject matter of this Sūrah is a continuation of the concluding portion of the last Sūrah, 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 Sūrah.

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 (14:1-27).

Why will men not receive Allah'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 (14:28-52).

*** **

SECTION 1: Revelation Dispels Darkness

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Rā'*.¹⁷¹ A Book which We have revealed unto you, in order that you might 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!—2 Of Allah, to Whom do belong all

171. For those mystic Letters see Introduction to Sūrah 10. [1869]

things in the heavens and on earth! But alas for the Unbelievers for a terrible Penalty (their Unfaith will bring them)!—3 Those who love the life of this world more than the Hereafter, who hinder (men) from the Path of Allah and seek therein something crooked: they are astray by a long distance.

4 We sent not a messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now Allah leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.

5 We sent Moses with Our Signs (and the command): “Bring out your people from the depths of darkness into light, and teach them to remember the Days of Allah.” Verily in this there are Signs 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: Truth is Rejected First

7 And remember your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): “If you are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; but if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed.” 8 And Moses said: “If you show ingratitude, you 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 (went) before you?—of the people of Noah, and ‘Ād, and Thamūd?—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 you have been sent, and we are really in suspicious (disquieting) doubt as to that to which you 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! You are no more than human, like ourselves! You wish to turn us away from the (gods) 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 does 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. **12** No reason have we 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 may cause us. For those who put their trust should put their trust on Allah."

SECTION 3: *Opposition is at Last Destroyed*

13 And the Unbelievers said to their messengers: "Be sure we shall drive you out of our land, or you shall return to our religion." 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 fear the Time when they shall stand before My tribunal,—such as fear the punishment denounced." **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, 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** See you not that Allah created the heavens and the earth in Truth? If He so wills, He can remove you and put (in your place) a new creation? **20** Nor is that for Allah any great matter. **21** They will all be marshalled before Allah together: then will the weak say to those who were arrogant, "For us, we but followed you; can you then avail us at all against the wrath of Allah?" They will reply, "If we had received the Guidance of Allah, we should have 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: Truth is Confirmed

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 you listened to me: then reproach not me, but reproach your own souls. I cannot listen to your cries, nor can you listen to mine. I reject your former act in associating me with Allah. For wrong-doers there must be a grievous Penalty."

23 But those who believe and work righteousness will be admitted to Gardens beneath which rivers flow,—to dwell therein for ever with the leave of their Lord. Their greeting therein will be: "Peace!"

24 See you not how Allah sets forth a parable?—a goodly Word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens,—**25** It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition. **26** And the parable of an evil Word is that of an evil tree: it is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability. **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 does what He wills.

SECTION 5: Man's Injustice in Rejecting Truth

28 Have you not turned your vision to those who have changed the favour of Allah into blasphemy and caused their people to descend to the House of Perdition?—**29** Into Hell? They will burn therein,—an evil place to stay in! **30** And they set up (idols) as equal to Allah, to mislead (men) from the Path! Say: "Enjoy (your brief power)! But verily you 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 has created the heavens and the earth and sends down rain from the skies, and with it brings out fruits wherewith to feed you; it is He Who has made the ships subject to you, that they may sail through the sea by His command; and the rivers (also) has He made subject to you. **33** And He has made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day has He (also) made subject to you. **34** And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favours of Allah, never will you be able to number them. Verily, man is given up to injustice and ingratitude.

SECTION 6: *Abraham's Prayer*

35 Remember Abraham said: "O my Lord! Make this city one of peace and security: and preserve me and my sons from worshipping idols. **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 You are indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. **37** O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Your 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. **38** O our Lord! Truly You do know what we conceal and what we reveal: for nothing whatever is hidden from Allah, whether on earth or in heaven. **39** Praise be to Allah, Who has granted unto me in old age Ismā'il and Isaac: for truly my Lord is He, the Hearer of prayer!¹⁷² **40** O my Lord! Make me one who establishes regular prayer, and also (raise such) among my offspring O our Lord! and accept You my prayer. **41** O our Lord! Cover (us) with Your Forgiveness—me, my

172. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen. xxi. 5); and as Ismā'il was 13 years old when Abraham was 99, (Gen. xvii. 24-25), Ismā'il 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. [1917]

parents, and (all) Believers, on the Day that the Reckoning will be established!"

SECTION 7: *The End of Opposition*

42 Think not that Allah does not heed the deeds of those who do wrong. He but gives 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 returning not towards them, and their hearts a (gaping) void!

44 So warn mankind of the Day when the Wrath will reach them: then will the wrong-doers say: "Our Lord! Respite us (if only) for a short term: we will answer Your call, and follow the messengers!" "What! Were you not wont to swear aforesaid that you should suffer no decline? **45** And you dwelt in the dwellings of men who wronged their own souls; you were clearly shown how We dealt with them; and We put forth (many) Parables on your behalf!" **46** Mighty indeed were the plots which they made, but their plots were (well) within the sight of Allah, even though they were such as to shake the hills! **47** Never think that Allah would fail His messengers in His promise: for Allah is Exalted in Power,—the Lord of Retribution.

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 you will 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.

52 Here is a Message for mankind: let them take warning therefrom, and let them know that He is (no other than) One Allah: let men of understanding take heed. □

AL-HIJR
(The Rocky Tract)

Introduction

This is the last of the six Sūrah's of the *Alif, Lam, Mim* series (10 to 15). Its place in chronology is the late Makkan period, probably somewhere near the middle of that period. See Introduction to Sūrah 10, where will be found also an indication of the general subject matter of the whole series in the gradation of Qur'ānic teaching.

The special subject matter of this Sūrah 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 Aykah and the Hijr if they had only attended to Allah's "Signs". The Qur'ān, 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 (15:1-25).

How Evil arose through the pride of Iblīs, to whom a respite was granted for a period: but neither fear nor evil affect those who receive Allah's Message (15:26-50).

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 (*Al-Aykah*) and of the Rocky Tract (*Al-Hijr*) (15:51-84).

The Qur'ān and its Sūrah's teach you to celebrate Allah's praises, learn humility in worship, and serve Allah all your life (15:85-99).

*** **

PART XIV

SECTION 1: The Qur'ān is Guarded

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Rā'*.¹⁷³ These are the *Āyāt* of Revelation,—of a Qur'ān that makes things clear.

2 Again and again will those who disbelieve, wish that they had bowed (to Allah's Will) in Islam. **3** Leave them alone, to enjoy (the good things of this life) and to please themselves: let (false) hope amuse them: soon will knowledge (undeceive them).

4 Never did We destroy a population that had not a term decreed and assigned beforehand. **5** Neither can a people anticipate its term, nor delay it. **6** They say: "O you to whom the Message is being revealed! Truly you are mad (or possessed)! **7** Why bring you not angels to us if it be that you have the Truth?" **8** We send not the angels down except for just cause: if they came (to the ungodly), behold! no respite would they have!

9 We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).

10 We did send messengers before you amongst the religious sects 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—**13** That they should not believe in the (Message); but the ways of the ancients have passed away.

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."

¹⁷³ For these mystic Letters, see Introduction to Sūrah 10.

SECTION 2: Forces of Evil Will be Destroyed

16 It is We Who have set out the zodiacal signs in the heavens, and made them fair-seeming to (all) beholders; 17 And (moreover) We have guarded them from every evil spirit accursed:¹⁷⁴ 18 But any that gains a hearing by stealth, is pursued by a flaming fire, 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 you are not responsible.

21 And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures (inexhaustible) are with Us; but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures. 22 And We send the fecundating winds, then cause the rain to descend from the sky, therewith providing you with water (in abundance), though you are not the guardians of its stores.

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 your Lord Who will gather them together: for He is perfect in Wisdom and Knowledge.

SECTION 3: The Devil's Opposition to the Righteous

26 We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape; 27 And the *Jinn* race, We had created before, from the fire of a scorching wind.

28 Behold! Your Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create 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 you down in obeisance unto him." 30 So the angels prostrated

174. Arabic *Rajtm* literally means: driven away with stones, rejected, accursed. Cf. 3:36

themselves, all of them together: **31** Not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves. **32** (Allah) said: "O Iblīs! What is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?" **33** (Iblīs) said: "I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom You did create from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape." **34** (Allah) said: "Then get you out from here; for you are rejected, accursed. **35** And the Curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgement." **36** (Iblīs) said: "O my Lord! Give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." **37** (Allah) said: "Respite is granted you—**38** Till the Day of the Time appointed." **39** (Iblīs) said: "O my Lord! Because You have put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong,—**40** Except Your servants among them, sincere and purified (by Your Grace)." **41** (Allah) said: "This (Way of My sincere servants) is indeed a Way that leads straight to Me. **42** For over My servants no authority shall you have, except such as put themselves in the wrong and follow you."

43 And verily, Hell is the promised abode for them all! **44** To it are seven gates: for each of those gates is a (special) class (of sinners) assigned.

SECTION 4: Mercy for the Righteous—Abraham

45 The righteous (will be) amid Gardens and fountains (of clear-flowing water). **46** (Their greeting will be): "Enter you 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 thrones (of dignity). **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 Penalty will be indeed the most grievous Penalty.

51 Tell them about the guests of Abraham.¹⁷⁵ 52 When they entered his presence and said, "Peace!" he said, "We feel afraid of you!"¹⁷⁶ 53 They said: "Fear not! We give you glad tidings of a son endowed with wisdom." 54 He said: "Do you give me glad tidings that old age has seized me? Of what, then, is your good news?" 55 They said: "We give you 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?"

57 Abraham said: "What then is the business on which you (have come), O you messengers (of Allah)?" 58 They said: "We have been sent to a people (deep) in sin,¹⁷⁷ 59 Excepting the adherents of Lūt: them we are certainly (charged) to save (from harm),—all—60 Except his wife, who, we have ascertained, will be among those who will lag behind."¹⁷⁸

SECTION 5: Lūt and Shu'ayb

61 At length when the messengers arrived among the adherents of Lūt,
62 He said: "You appear to be uncommon folk." 63 They said: "Indeed, we have come to you to accomplish that of which they doubt.
64 We have brought to you that which is inevitably due, and assuredly we tell the truth. 65 Then travel by night with your household, when a portion of the night (yet remains), and do you bring up the rear: let no one amongst you look back, but pass on whither you are ordered."

175. In illustration of the contrasts between Good and Evil, and the consequences that flow from them, we now have 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 (*Al-Hijr*), after whom this Sūrah is called. As usual, the recital of Allah's abounding Grace comes first. [1980]

176. 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 11:69-73. 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. [1981]

177. The Cities of the Plain round the Dead Sea, which to this day is called Bahr Lūt. They were given to unspeakable abominations. Read in this connection 11:77-83. [1985]

178. See 11:81, and note.

66 And We made known this decree to him, that the last remnants of those (sinners) should be cut off by the morning.

67 The inhabitants of the City came in (mad) joy (at news of the young men). 68 Lūṭ said: "These are my guests: disgrace me not: 69 But fear Allah, and shame me not." 70 They said: "Did we not forbid you (to speak) for all and sundry?" 71 He said: "There are my daughters (to marry), if you must act (so)."¹⁷⁹ 72 Verily, by your life (O Prophet), in their wild intoxication, they wander in distraction, to and fro. 73 But the (mighty) Blast overtook them before morning, 74 And We turned (the Cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay. 75 Behold! In this are Signs for those who by tokens do understand. 76 And the (Cities were) right on the high-road. 77 Behold! In this is a Sign for those who believe!

78 And the Companions of the Wood¹⁸⁰ were also wrong-doers; 79 So We exacted retribution from them. They were both on an open highway, plain to see.

SECTION 6: Dwellers of the Rock and a Warning

80 The Companions of the Rocky Tract¹⁸¹ also rejected the messengers:

179. Cf. 11:78. "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. [1994]

180. "Companions of the Wood": *Ashab al-Aykah*. Perhaps *Aykah* is after all a proper noun, the name of a town or tract. Who were the Companions of the *Aykah*? They are mentioned four times in the Qur'ān, viz., here, and in 26:176-191; 38:13; and 50:14. The only passage in which any details are given is 26:176-191. There we are told that their Prophet was Shu'ayb, and other details given correspond to those of the Madyan, to whom Shu'ayb was sent as Prophet: see 7:85-93. In my notes to that passage I have discussed the question of Shu'ayb 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. [2000]

181. "The Rocky Tract" is undoubtedly a geographical name. On the maps of Arabia will be found a tract called the *Hijr*, north of Madinah. *Jabal Hijr* is about 150 miles
(continued...)

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 your Lord Who is the Master-Creator, knowing all things. **87** And We have bestowed upon you the Seven Oft-repeated (verses)¹⁸² and the Grand Qur'ān. **88** Strain not your eyes, (wistfully) at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them, nor grieve over them: but lower your wing (in gentleness) to the Believers.

89 And say: "I am indeed he that warns openly and without ambiguity,"—**90** (Of just such wrath) as We sent down on those who divided (Scripture into arbitrary parts),—**91** (So also on such) as have made the Qur'ān into shreds (as they please). **92** Therefore, by your Lord, We will, of a surety, call them to account, **93** For all their deeds. **94** Therefore expound openly what you are commanded, and turn away from those who join false gods with Allah. **95** For sufficient are We unto you 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 your heart is distressed at what they say. **98** But celebrate the praises of your Lord, and be of those who prostrate themselves in adoration. **99** And serve your Lord until there come unto you the Hour that is certain. □

181. (...continued)

north of Madīnah. The tract would fall on the highway to Syria. This was the country of the Thamūd. For them and the country see 7:73, n. 120. [2002]

182. The Seven Oft-repeated Verses are usually understood to be the Opening Sūrah, the *Fātihah*. They sum up the whole teaching of the Qur'ān. What can be a more precious gift to a Muslim than the glorious Qur'ān or any Sūrah of it? Worldly wealth, honour, possessions, or anything else, sinks into insignificance in comparison with it (Cf. n.17). [2008]

Chapter 16

AL-NAHL (The Bee)

Introduction

Chronologically this Sūrah, like the six which preceded it, belongs to the late Makkan 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 Allah.

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 (16:1-25).

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 (16:26-50).

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 civilisation (16:51-83).

The Messengers of Truth will bear witness against those who reject the Truth. Allah will judge us according to our faith and deeds (16:84-100).

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 righteousness, and do good (16:101-128).

*** **

SECTION 1: Revelation Testified to by Nature

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 (Inevitably) comes (to pass) the Command of Allah: seek you not

then to hasten it:¹⁸³ Glory to Him, and far is He above having the partners they ascribe unto Him! **2** He does send down His angels with inspiration of His Command, to such of His servants as He pleases, (saying): "Warn (Man) that there is no god but I: so do your duty unto Me." **3** He has created the heavens and the earth for just ends: far is He above having the partners they ascribe to Him!

4 He has created man from a sperm-drop; and behold this same (man) becomes an open disputer!

5 And cattle He has created for you (men): from them you derive warmth, and numerous benefits, and of their (meat) you eat. **6** And you have a sense of pride and beauty in them as you drive them home in the evening, and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning. **7** And they carry your heavy loads to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach except with souls distressed: for your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful. **8** And (He has created) horses, mules, and donkeys, for you to ride and use for show; and He has created (other) things of which you have no knowledge.

9 And unto Allah leads straight the Way, but there are ways that turn aside: if Allah had willed, He could have guided all of you.

SECTION 2: Nature Upholds Unity

10 It is He Who sends down rain from the sky: from it you drink, and out of it (grows) the vegetation on which you feed your cattle. **11** With it He produces for you corn, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit: 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

183. 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?" [2019]

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): verily in this is a Sign for men who celebrate the praises of Allah (in gratitude).

14 It is He Who has made the sea subject, that you may eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender, and that you may extract therefrom ornaments to wear; and you see the ships therein that plough the waves, that you may seek (thus) of the bounty of Allah and that you may be grateful.

15 And He has set up on the earth mountains¹⁸⁴ standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and rivers and roads; that you 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 you not receive admonition? **18** If you would count up the favours of Allah, never would you be able to number them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. **19** And Allah does know what you conceal, and what you reveal. **20** Those whom they invoke besides Allah create nothing and are themselves created. **21** (They are things) dead, lifeless: nor do they know when they will be raised up.

SECTION 3: Denial Due to Ignorance

22 Your Allah is one Allah: as to those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts refuse to know, and they are arrogant. **23** Undoubtedly Allah does know what they conceal, and what they reveal: verily He loves 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** Let them bear, on the Day of Judgement, their own burdens in full,

184. Cf. 13:3 and 15:19. 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 78:7 they are spoken of as pegs or stakes. [2038]

and also (something) of the burdens of those without knowledge, whom they misled.¹⁸⁵ Alas, how grievous the burdens they will bear!

SECTION 4: The Wicked Will Come to Disagree

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; and the Wrath seized them from directions they did not perceive. 27 Then, on the Day of Judgement, He will cover them with shame, and say: "Where are My 'partners' concerning whom you used to dispute (with the godly)?" Those endowed with knowledge 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." Then would they offer submission (with the pretence), "We did no evil (knowingly)." (The angels will reply), "Nay, but verily Allah knows all that you did; 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 does 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 you the Garden, because of (the good) which you did (in the world)."

33 Do the (ungodly) wait until the angels come to them, or there comes the Command of your Lord (for their doom)? So did those who went

185. 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 6:164, 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. [2048]

before them. But Allah wronged them not: nay, they wronged their own souls. **34** But the evil results of their deeds overtook them, and that very (Wrath) at which they had scoffed hemmed them in.

SECTION 5: **Prophets are Raised to Explain**

35 The worshippers of false gods say: "If Allah had so willed, we should not have worshipped aught but Him—neither we¹⁸⁶ nor our fathers,—nor should we have prescribed prohibitions other than His." So did those who went before them. But what is the mission of messengers but to preach the clear Message? **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 you are anxious for their guidance, yet Allah guides not such as He leaves to stray, and there is none to help them.

38 They swear their strongest oaths¹⁸⁷ by Allah, that Allah will not raise up those who die: nay, but it is a promise (binding) on Him in truth: but most among mankind realise 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 had indeed (surrendered to) Falsehood. **40** For to anything which We have willed, We but say the word, "Be", and it is.

186. The age-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. [2057]

187. The usual Pagan creed is (as is the creed of the present materialistic civilisation): "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 (16:39). [2064]

SECTION 6: Doom of Opponents is Coming

41 To those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression,—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 in their Lord.

43 And before you also the messengers We sent were but men, to whom We granted inspiration: if you realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message. 44 (We sent them) with clear Signs and Books of dark prophecies; and We have sent down unto you (also) the Message; that you may 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?—46 Or that He may not call them to account in the midst of their goings 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—for your Lord is indeed full of kindness and mercy.

48 Do they not look at Allah's creation, (even) among (inanimate) things,—how their (very) shadows turn round, from the right and the left, prostrating themselves to Allah, and that in the humblest manner? 49 And to Allah does obeisance all that is in the heavens and on earth, whether moving (living) creatures or the angels: for none are arrogant (before their Lord). 50 They all revere their Lord, high above them, and they do all that they are commanded.

SECTION 7: Human Nature Revolts Against Polytheism

51 Allah has said: "Take not (for worship) two gods:¹⁸⁸ for He is just One Allah: then fear Me (and Me alone)." 52 To Him belongs

188. The ancient Persians believed in two powers in the Universe, one good and the other evil. The pagan Arabs also had pairs of deities: e.g., *Jibt* (Sorcery) and *Tāghūt* (Evil), referred to in 4:51, or the idols on Šāfa and Marwah referred to in note to 2:158: their names were Isāf and Nā'ilah. [2077]

whatever is in the heavens and on earth, and to Him is duty due always: then will you fear other¹⁸⁹ than Allah? **53** And you have no good thing but is from Allah: and moreover, when you are touched by distress, unto Him you cry with groans;¹⁹⁰ **54** Yet, when He removes the distress from you, behold! some of you turn to other gods to join with their Lord—**55** (As if) to show their ingratitude for the favours We have bestowed on them! Then enjoy (your brief day); but soon will you know (your folly)! **56** And they (even) assign, to things they do not know, a portion out of that which We have bestowed for their sustenance! By Allah, you shall certainly be called to account for your false inventions.

57 And they assign daughters¹⁹¹ for Allah!—Glory be to Him!—and for themselves (sons—the issue) they desire! **58** When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! **59** With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on? **60** To those who believe not in the Hereafter, applies the similitude of evil: to Allah applies the highest similitude: for He is the Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.

SECTION 8: Iniquity of Deniers

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

189. 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: 15:42. 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. [2078]

190. Which shows that the natural tendency of man is to seek Allah, the only Power which can truly relieve distress. [2079]

191. 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! [2082]

for a stated Term: 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 all good things are 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 messengers) to peoples before you; but Satan made, (to the wicked), their own acts seem alluring: he is also their patron today, but they shall have a most grievous penalty. **64** And We sent down the Book to you for the express purpose, that you should 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: Parables Showing the Truth of Revelation

66 And verily in cattle (too) will you find an instructive Sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretions and blood, 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, you get out wholesome drink and food: behold, in this also is a Sign for those who are wise. **68** And your Lord taught the Bee to build its cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; **69** Then to eat of all the produce (of the earth), and find with skill the spacious paths of its Lord: 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: The Recipients of Revelation

71 Allah has bestowed His gifts of sustenance more freely on some 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 (and companions) 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 the heavens or earth, and cannot possibly have such power?

74 Invent not similitudes for Allah: for Allah knows, and you 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 understand 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, he brings no good: is such a man equal with one who commands justice, and is on a straight Way?

SECTION 11: Punishment Withheld

77 To Allah belongs the Mystery of the heavens and the earth. And the Decision of the Hour (of Judgement) is as the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker: for Allah has power over all things. **78** It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affection: that you may give thanks (to Allah). **79** Do they not look at the birds, held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky? Nothing holds them up but (the power of) Allah. Verily in this are Signs for those who believe. **80** It is Allah Who made your habitations homes of rest and quiet for you; and made for you, out of the skins of animals, (tents for) dwellings, which you find so light (and handy) when you travel and when you stop (in your travels); and out of their wool, and their soft fibres (between wool and hair), and their hair, rich stuff and articles of convenience (to serve you) for a time. **81** It is Allah Who made out of the things He created, some things to give you shade; 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. Thus does He complete His favours on you, that you may bow to His Will (in Islam). **82** But if they turn away, your duty is only to preach the clear Message. **83** They recognise the favours of Allah; then they deny them; and most of them are (creatures) ungrateful.

SECTION 12: Prophets Testify

84 One day We shall raise from all peoples a Witness: then will no excuse be accepted from Unbelievers, nor will they receive any favours. **85** When the wrong-doers (actually) see the Penalty, 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 besides You." But they will throw back their word at them (and say): "Indeed you are liars!" **87** That day shall they (openly) show (their) submission to Allah; and all their inventions shall leave them in the lurch. **88** Those who reject Allah and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah—for them will We add Penalty to Penalty; for that they used to spread mischief.

89 One day We shall raise from all peoples a witness against them, from amongst themselves: and We shall bring you as a witness against these (your people): and We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims.

SECTION 13: Revelation Enjoins Good

90 Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition. **91** Fulfil the Covenant of Allah when you have entered into it, and break not your oaths after you have confirmed them; indeed you have made Allah your surety; for Allah knows all that you do. **92** And be not like a woman who breaks into untwisted strands the yarn which she has spun, after

it has become strong. Nor take your oaths to practise deception between yourselves, lest one party should be more numerous than another: for Allah will test you by this; and on the Day of Judgement He will certainly make clear to you (the truth of) that wherein you disagree. **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 you shall certainly be called to account for all your actions. **94** And take not your oaths, to practise deception between yourselves, with the result that someone's foot may slip after it was firmly planted, and you 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: for with Allah is (a prize) far better for you, if you 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. **97** Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

98 When you do read the Qur'ān, seek Allah's protection from Satan the rejected one. **99** No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. **100** His authority is over those only, who take him as patron and who join partners with Allah.

SECTION 14: The Qur'ān is Not a Forgery

101 When We substitute one revelation for another,—and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages),—they say, "You are but a forger": but most of them understand not. **102** Say, the Holy Spirit¹⁹² has brought the revelation from your Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims. **103** We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The

192 The title of the Angel Gabriel, through whom the revelation came down. [2141]

tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear. **104** Those who believe not in the Signs of Allah,—Allah will not guide them, and theirs will be a grievous Penalty. **105** It is those who believe not in the Signs of Allah, that forge falsehood: it is they who lie!

106 Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters Unbelief,¹⁹³—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 Penalty. **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 perish. **110** But verily your Lord,—to those who leave their homes after trials and persecutions,—and who thereafter strive and fight for the Faith and patiently persevere,—your Lord, after all this is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

SECTION 15: Fate of the Opponents

111 One Day every soul will come up struggling 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 security¹⁹⁴ and quiet, abundantly supplied with sustenance from every

193. The exception refers to a case like that of 'Ammār, whose father Yāsir and mother Sumayyah, were subjected to unspeakable tortures for their belief in Islam, but never recanted. 'Ammār, himself was of less mature age and faith, and in a weak moment, suffering under tortures himself and his mind acted on by the 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. There is no permission in this for weakness or dissembling under torture or persecution. [2145]

194. 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 (continued...)

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 garment¹⁹⁴ (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 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 you 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 thing¹⁹⁶ 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; but they will have a most grievous Penalty.

118 To the Jews We prohibited such things as We have mentioned to you before: We did them no wrong, but they were used to doing wrong to themselves. **119** But verily your Lord,—to those who do wrong in ignorance, but who thereafter repent and make amends,—your Lord, after all this, is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

194. (...continued)

control. See next note. [2149]

195. 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 scourges, 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. [2150]

196. 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. [2153]

SECTION 16. The Way to Greatness

120 Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah, (and) true in Faith, and he joined not gods with Allah: **121** He showed his gratitude for the favours of Allah, Who chose him, and guided him to a straight Way. **122** And We gave him Good in this world, and he will be, in the Hereafter, in the ranks of the Righteous. **123** So We have taught you the inspired (Message), "Follow the ways of Abraham the True in Faith, and he joined not gods with Allah." **124** The Sabbath was only made (strict) for those who disagreed (as to its observance); but Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement, as to their differences.

125 Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance. **126** And if you do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: but if you show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient. **127** And do you be patient, for your patience is but from Allah; nor grieve over them: and distress not yourself because of their plots. **128** For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good. □

AL-ISRĀ' or BANĪ ISRĀ'ĪL
(The Night Journey or The Children of Israel)

Introduction

In the gradation of spiritual teaching (see Introduction to Sūrah 8), we saw that the first seven Sūrahs sketched the early spiritual history of man, and led up to the formation of the new *Ummah* of Islam. Sūrahs 8 to 16 formed another series dealing with the formation of the new *Ummah* and its consolidation, and Allah's dealing with man taken as an *Ummah* and considered in his social relations in organised communities (see Introduction to Sūrahs 8, 10, and 16). We now come to a fresh series, (Sūrahs 17-29), which may be considered in three parts. Sūrahs 17-21 begin with an allusion to the *Mi'rāj* (of which more later), and proceed to spiritual history as touching individuals rather than nations. The old prophets and stories of the past are now referred to from this point of view. Sūrahs 22-25 refer to *Hajj* (pilgrimage), worship and prayer, chastity, privacy, etc., as related to a man's individual spiritual growth. Sūrahs 26-29 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 Sūrah 17 by itself. It opens with the mystic Vision of the Ascension 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, but allow that there were other occasions on which a spiritual Journey or Vision occurred. Even on the supposition of a miraculous bodily Journey, it is conceded that the body was almost transformed into spiritual fineness. The *Hadīth* 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, and initiated into the spiritual mysteries of the human soul struggling in Space and Time. The Spaniard, Miguél Asín, Arabic Professor in the University of Madrid, has shown that this *Mi'rāj* literature had a great influence on the Medieval literature of Europe, and especially on the great Italian poem, the *Divine Comedy* (or Drama) of Dante, which towers like a landmark in Medieval European literature.

The reference to this great mystic story of the *Mi'rāj* is a fitting prelude to the journey of the human soul in its spiritual 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, and 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 Rabī' al-Awwal, are also given) in the year before the Hijrah. This fixes the date of the opening verse of the Sūrah, though portions of the Sūrah may have been a little earlier.

Summary—The spiritual experiences of the men 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 (17:1-22).

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 (17:23-40).

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 encompasses all men (17:41-60).

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 Qur'ān is offered as healing and mercy (17:61-84).

Inspiration (the Qur'ān) is a Sign of Allah's grace, and men should accept it without making carping excuses. Be humble in prayer and praise (17:85-111).

*** **

PART XV

SECTION 1: Israelites Punished Twice

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night¹⁹⁷ from the Sacred Mosque¹⁹⁸ to the Farthest Mosque,¹⁹⁹ whose precincts We did bless,—in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who hears and sees (all things). 2 We gave Moses the Book, and made it a Guide to the Children of Israel, (commanding): "Take not other than Me as Disposer of (your) affairs." 3 O you that are sprung from those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah! Verily he was a devotee most grateful. 4 And We gave (clear) Warning to the Children of Israel²⁰⁰ in the Book, that twice²⁰¹ would

197. The reference is to the *Mi'raj* for which see the Introduction to this Sūrah. [2166]

198. *Masjid* is a place of prayer: here it refers to the Ka'bah 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. [2167]

199. *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. This and the Mosque known as the Farthest Mosque (*Masjid al-Aqṣā*) were completed by the Amīr 'Abd al-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 1004 B.C.; 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, 17 B.C. to A.C. 29; and completely razed to the ground by the Emperor Titus in A.C. 70. These ups and downs are among the greater Signs in religious history. [2168]

200. 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. [2173]

201. What are the two occasions referred to? It may be that "twice" is a figure of (continued...)

they do mischief on the earth and be elated 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: they entered the very inmost parts of your homes; and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled. **6** Then did We grant you the Return as against them:²⁰² We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you the more numerous in manpower. **7** If you did well, you did well for yourselves; if you did evil, (you did it) against yourselves. So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces,²⁰³ and to enter your Temple²⁰⁴ as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power. **8** It may be that your Lord may (yet) show Mercy unto you; but if you

201. (...continued)

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.C. 70, after which the Temple was never rebuilt. See n. 199 above. On both occasions it was a judgement of Allah for the sins of the Jews, their backslidings, and their arrogance. [2174]

202. The return of the Jews from the Captivity was about 520 B.C. They started life afresh. They rebuilt the Temple. They carried out various reforms and built up a new Judaism in connection with Ezra. 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 Asmonaeon Dynasty (167-63 B.C.), they had a national revival, and the names of the Maccabees are remembered as those of heroes. Another dynasty, that of the Idumaeans, (63 B.C. to 4 B.C.), to which Herod belonged, also enjoyed some semi-independent power. The sceptre of Syria (including Palestine) passed to the Romans in 65 B.C., 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 A.C. 70. [2176]

203. 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. [2178]

204. Titus's destruction of Jerusalem in A.C. 70 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 the throne. He ruled as Roman Emperor from A.C. 79 to 81. [2179]

revert (to your sins), We shall revert (to Our punishments): and We have made Hell a prison for those who reject (all Faith). **9** Verily this Qur'ān does guide to that which is most right (or stable), and gives 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 announces) that We have prepared for them a Penalty grievous (indeed).

SECTION 2: Every Deed has a Consequence

11 The prayer that man should make for good, he makes for evil; for man is given to hasty (deeds). **12** We have made the Night and the Day as two (of Our) Signs: the Sign of the Night have We obscured, while the Sign of the Day We have made to enlighten you; that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the number and count of the years: all things have We explained in detail. **13** Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: on the Day of Judgement We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. **14** (It will be said to him:) "Read your (own) record: sufficient is your soul this day to make out an account against you."

15 Who receives guidance, receives it for his own benefit: who goes astray does so to his own loss: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would We visit with Our Wrath until We had sent a messenger (to give warning). **16** When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them: then (it is) We destroy them utterly. **17** How many generations have We destroyed after Noah? And enough is your Lord to note and see the sins of His servants.

18 If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them—such things as We will, to such person as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. **19** Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive for them with all due striving, and have Faith,—they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah). **20** Of the bounties of your

Lord We bestow freely on all—these as well as those: the bounties of your Lord are not closed (to anyone). **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. **22** Take not with Allah another object of worship; or you (O man!) will sit in disgrace and destitution.

SECTION 3: Moral Precepts

23 Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, 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 Your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." **25** Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts: if you do deeds of righteousness, verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence).

26 And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. **27** Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord (Himself) ungrateful. **28** And even if you have to turn away from them in pursuit of the Mercy from your Lord which you do expect, yet speak to them a word of easy kindness. **29** Make not your hand tied (like a niggard's) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you become blameworthy and destitute. **30** Verily your Lord does provide sustenance in abundance for whom He pleases, and He provides in a just measure. For He does know and regard all His servants.

SECTION 4: Moral Precepts

31 Kill not your children²⁰⁵ for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a

205. 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. [22:14]

great sin. **32** Nor come near to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils). **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*²⁰⁶ 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 near to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength; and fulfil (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). **35** Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination. **36** And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge;²⁰⁷ for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). **37** Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for you cannot rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. **38** Of all such things the evil is hateful in the sight of your Lord. **39** These are among the (precepts of) wisdom, which your Lord has revealed to you. Take not, with Allah, another object of worship, lest you should be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected.

206. On the subject of *Qisās* see 2:178 and the notes thereto. 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. [2216]

207. 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, 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. [2222]

40 Has then your Lord (O Pagans!) preferred for you sons, and taken for Himself daughters among the angels? Truly you utter a most dreadful saying!

SECTION 5: Disbelievers Grow Harder

41 We have explained (things) in various (ways) in this Qur'ān, in order that they may receive 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 to the Lord of the Throne! **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 you understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forgiving!

45 When you do recite the Qur'ān, We put, between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter, a veil invisible; **46** And We put coverings over their hearts (and minds) lest they should understand the Qur'ān, and deafness into their ears: when you do commemorate your Lord—and Him alone—in the Qur'ān, they turn on their backs, fleeing (from the Truth). **47** We know best why it is they listen, when they listen to you; and when they meet in private conference, behold, the wicked say, "You follow none other than a man bewitched!" **48** See what similes they strike for you: but they have gone astray, and never can they find a way.

49 They say: "What! When we are reduced to bones and dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?" **50** Say: "(Nay!) Be you stones or iron, **51** Or created matter which, in your minds, is hardest (to be raised up),—(yet shall you be raised up)!" Then will they say: "Who will cause us to return?" Say: "He Who created you first!" Then will they wag their heads towards you, and say, "When will that be?" Say, "Maybe it will be quite soon! **52** It will be on a Day when He will call you, and you will answer (His call) with (words of) His praise, and you will think that you tarried but a little while!"

SECTION 6: Punishment Must Follow

53 Say to My servants that they should (only) say those things that are best: for Satan does sow dissensions among them: for Satan is to man an avowed enemy. **54** It is your Lord that knows you best: if He please, He grants you mercy, or if He please, punishment: We have not sent you to be a disposer of their affairs for them. **55** And it is your Lord that knows best all beings that are in the heavens and on earth: We did bestow on some prophets more (and other) gifts than on others: and We gave to David (the gift of) the Psalms.

56 Say: "Call on those—besides Him—whom you fancy: they have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them." **57** Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord,—even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath: for the Wrath of your Lord is something to take heed of.

58 There is not a population but We shall destroy it before the Day of Judgement or punish it with a dreadful Penalty: that is written in the (eternal) record. **59** And We refrain from sending the Signs, only because the men of former generations treated them as false: We sent the she-camel to the Thamūd to open their eyes, but they treated her wrongfully: We only send the Signs by way of terror (and warning from evil). **60** Behold! We told you that your Lord does encompass mankind round about: We granted the vision which We showed you, but as a trial for men,—as also the Cursed Tree (mentioned) in the Qur'ān: We put terror (and warning) into them, but it only increases their inordinate transgression!

SECTION 7: The Devil's Opposition to the Righteous

61 Behold! We said to the angels: "Bow down unto Adam": they bowed down except Iblīs: he said, "Shall I bow down to one whom You did create from clay?" **62** He said: "See You? This is the one whom You have honoured above me! If You will but respite me to the Day of Judgement, I will surely bring his descendants under my

sway—all but a few!" **63** (Allah) said: "Go your way; if any of them follow you, verily Hell will be the recompense of you (all)—an ample recompense. **64** Lead to destruction those whom you can among them, with your (seductive) voice; make assaults on them with your cavalry and your infantry; mutually share with them wealth and children; and make promises to them. But Satan promises them nothing but deceit. **65** As for My servants, no authority shall you have over them." Enough is your Lord for a Disposer of affairs.

66 Your Lord is He that makes the ship go smoothly for you through the sea, in order that you may seek of His Bounty. For He is unto you Most Merciful. **67** When distress seizes you at sea, those that you call upon—besides Himself—leave you in the lurch! But when He brings you back safe to land, you turn away (from Him). Most ungrateful is man! **68** Do you then feel secure that He will not cause you to be swallowed up beneath the earth when you are on land, or that He will not send against you a violent tornado (with showers of stones) so that you shall find no one to carry out your affairs for you? **69** Or do you feel secure that He will not send you back a second time to sea and send against you a heavy gale to drown you because of your ingratitude, so that you find no helper therein against Us? **70** We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation.

SECTION 8: Opposition to the Prophet

71 One day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imāms: those who are given their record in their right hand will read it (with pleasure), and they will not be dealt with unjustly in the least. **72** But those who were blind in this world, will be blind in the Hereafter, and most astray from the Path.

73 And their purpose was to tempt you away from that which We had revealed unto you, to substitute in Our name something quite different; (in that case), behold! they would certainly have made you (their) friend! **74** And had We not given you strength, you would nearly have

inclined to them a little. **75** In that case We should have made you taste an equal portion (of punishment) in this life, and an equal portion in death: and moreover you would have found none to help you against Us! **76** Their purpose was to scare you off the land, in order to expel you; but in that case they would not have stayed (therein) after you, except for a little while. **77** (This was Our) way with the messengers We sent before you: you will find no change in Our ways.

SECTION 9: Truth Will Prevail

78 Establish regular prayers²⁰⁸—at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and reading: for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony.²⁰⁹ **79** And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an additional prayer (or spiritual profit) for you: soon will your Lord raise you to a Station of Praise and Glory! **80** Say: "O my Lord! Let my entry be²¹⁰ by the Gate

208. 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*, the late afternoon; *Maghrib*, immediately after sunset; and *'Isha'*, 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 this passage. [2275]

209. The morning prayer is specially singled out for separate mention, because the morning is a "Holy hour" and special spiritual 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. [2276]

210. 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 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 Hijrah again, the prayer may mean, "Let it be from pure motives of truth and spiritual honour, and not from (continued...)"

of Truth and Honour, and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honour; and grant me from Your Presence an authority to aid (me).”
81 And say: “Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish.” **82** We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur’ān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss.

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 evil seizes him he gives himself up to despair! **84** Say: “Everyone acts according to his own disposition: but your Lord knows best who it is that is best guided on the Way.”

SECTION 10: The Qur’ān—a Unique Guidance

85 They ask you concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: “The Spirit (comes) by 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 you by inspiration: then would you find none to plead your affair in that matter as against Us,—**87** Except for Mercy from your Lord: for His Bounty is to you (indeed) great.

88 Say: “If the whole of mankind and *Jinns*²¹¹ 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.” **89** And We have explained to man, in this Qur’ān, every kind of similitude: yet the greater part of men refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude! **90** They say: “We shall not believe in you, until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, **91** Or (until) you have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water; **92** Or you cause the sky to fall in

210. (...continued)

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. [2279]

211. For the meaning of “*Jinns*”, see note to 6:100. [2288]

pieces, as you say (will happen), against us; or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face; **93** Or you have a house adorned with gold, or you mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we shall not even believe in your mounting until you 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: Justice of Retribution

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." **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 will you find no protector besides Him. On the Day of Judgement 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. **98** That is their recompense, because they rejected Our Signs, and said, "When we are reduced to bones and broken dust, should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?" **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. **100** Say: "If you had control of the Treasures of the Mercy of my Lord, behold, you would keep them back, for fear of spending them: for man is (ever) niggardly!"

SECTION 12: Comparison with Moses

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 you, indeed, to have been worked upon by sorcery!" **102** Moses said, "You know 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 you indeed, O Pharaoh, to be one doomed to destruction!" **103** So he resolved

to remove them 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 (of promise)": but when the second of the warnings came to pass, We gathered you together in a mingled crowd.

105 We sent down the (Qur'ān) in Truth, and in Truth has it descended: and We sent you but to give Glad Tidings and to warn (sinners). **106** (It is) a Qur'ān which We have divided (into parts from time to time), in order that you might recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages. **107** Say: "Whether you believe in it or not, it is true that those who were given 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!'" **109** They fall down on their faces in tears, and it increases their (earnest) humility.²¹² **110** Say: "Call upon Allah, or call upon *Rahmān*:²¹³ by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."²¹⁴ Neither speak your prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between." **111** Say: "Praise be to Allah, Who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation: indeed, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!" □

212. 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. [2320]

213. Cf. 7:180. *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 note to Sūrah *Fāṭihah*: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 25:60 and 21:36): that is why special stress is laid on it in the Qur'ān. [2321]

214. These Beautiful Names of Allah are many. For *tasbīh* purposes a list of 99 is made out in *Hadīth* literature: that in Tirmidhī is considered authoritative. Qādī Muḥammad Sulaimān has published an Urdu monograph on the subject, published by the Daftar Rahmatun-lil'Ālamīn, Patiala, India, 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-Mālik*. "The King". [2322]

Chapter 18

AL-KAHF (The Cave)

Introduction

It has been explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 17 how the five Sūrahs 17 to 21 develop the theme of the individual soul's spiritual history, and how they fit into the general scheme of exposition.

This particular Makkan Sūrah may be called a lesson in 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 Dhū al-Qarnayn, 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 fullness 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 (18:1-22).

Knowledge is for Allah: be on your guard against idle conjectures and cocksure hopes. Learn from the Qur'ān the Parable of the man who is puffed up with this world's goods and is brought to nought (18:23-44).

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 (18:45-59).

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 (18:60-82).

Dhū al-Qarnayn 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 (18:83-110).

*** **

SECTION 1: A Warning to the Christians

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Praise be to Allah, Who has sent to His Servant the Book, and has allowed therein no crookedness: 2 (He has made it) straight (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 ever: 4 Further, that He may warn those (also) who say, "Allah has begotten a son": 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. What they say is nothing but falsehood!

6 You would only, perchance, fret yourself to death, following after them, in grief, if they believe not in this Message. 7 That which is on earth We have made but as a glittering show for the earth, in order that We may test them—as to which of them are best in conduct. 8 Verily what is on earth We shall make but as dust and dry soil (without growth or herbage).

9 Or do you reflect that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were wonders among Our Signs? 10 Behold, the youths betook themselves²¹⁵ to the Cave: they said, "Our Lord! Bestow on us

215. The bare Christian story (without the spiritual lessons taught in the Qur'an) 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 nearby. They fell 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.

Mercy from Yourself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way!" **11** Then We drew (a veil) over their ears, for a number of years, in the Cave, (so that they heard not): **12** Then We roused them, in order to test which of the two parties was best at calculating the term of years they had tarried!

SECTION 2: The Dwellers in the Cave

13 We relate to you their story in truth: they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance: **14** We gave strength to their hearts: behold, they stood up 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 for worship gods other than Him: why do they not bring forward an authority clear (and convincing) for what they do? Who does more wrong than such as invent a falsehood against Allah? **16** When you turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah, go yourselves to the Cave: your Lord will shower His mercies on you and dispose of your affair towards comfort and ease."

17 You would 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

215. (...continued)

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. 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 Khalīfah Wāliṭīq (A.C. 842-846) sent an expedition to examine and identify the locality, as he did about the Dhū al-Qarnayn 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.C. 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 A.C. 249 to 251, and who was a violent persecutor of Christians) and that they awoke in the reign of Theodosius II, who reigned from A.C. 408 to 450. In our literature Decius is known as Daqyānūs (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 to three centuries after Decius. [2337]

among the Signs of Allah: he whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves to stray,—for him will you find no protector to lead him to the right Way.

SECTION 3: The Dwellers in the Cave

18 You would have deemed 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 you had come up on to them, you would have certainly turned back from them in flight, and would 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, "How long have you stayed (here)?" They said, "We have stayed (perhaps) a day, or part of a day." (At length) they (all) said, "Allah (alone) knows best how long you have stayed here.... Now send you then one of you with this money of yours to the town: let him find out which is the best food (to be had) and bring some to you, that (you may) satisfy your hunger therewith: and let him behave with care and courtesy, and let him not inform anyone about you. **20** For if they should come upon you, they would stone you or force you to return to their cult, and in that case you 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 Judgement. 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 among them; (others) say they were five, the dog being the sixth,—doubtfully guessing at the unknown; (yet others) say they were seven, the dog being the eighth. Say you: "My Lord knows best their number; it is but few that know their (real case)." Enter not, therefore, into controversies concerning them, except on a matter that is clear, nor consult any of them about (the affair of) the Sleepers.

SECTION 4: The Qur'ān as a Guidance

23 Nor say of anything, "I shall be sure to do so and so tomorrow" —**24** Without adding, "So please Allah!". And call your Lord to mind when you forget, and say, "I hope that my Lord will guide me ever closer (even) than this to the right road."

25 So they stayed in their Cave three hundred years, and (some) add nine (more) **26** Say: "Allah knows best how long they stayed: with Him is (the knowledge of) the secrets of the heavens and the earth: how clearly He sees, how finely He hears (everything)! They have no protector other than Him; nor does He share His Command with any person whatsoever." **27** And recite (and teach) what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord: none can change His Words, and none will you find as a refuge other than Him. **28** And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not your 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, whose case has gone beyond all bounds.

29 Say, "The Truth is from your Lord": let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it): 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. **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 green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade: they will recline therein on raised thrones. How good the recompense! How beautiful a couch to recline on!

SECTION 5: A Parable

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 corn-fields. **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: "More wealth have I than you, and more honour and power in (my following of) men." **35** He went into his garden in a state (of mind) unjust to his soul: he said, "I deem not that this will ever perish. **36** Nor do I deem that the Hour (of Judgement) 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: "Do you deny Him Who created you out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned you into a man? **38** But (I think) for my part that He is Allah, my Lord, and none shall I associate with my Lord. **39** Why did you not, as you went into your garden, say: 'Allah's Will (be done)! There is no power but with Allah!' If you do see me less than you in wealth and sons, **40** It may be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden, and that He will send on your garden thunderbolts (by way of reckoning) from heaven, making it (but) slippery sand!—**41** Or the water of the garden will run off underground so that you will never be able to find it." **42** So his fruits (and enjoyment) were encompassed (with ruin), and he remained twisting 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!" **43** Nor had he numbers to help him against Allah, nor was he able to deliver himself. **44** There, the (only) protection comes from Allah, the True One. He is the best to reward, and the best to give success.

SECTION 6: The Gully are Brought to Judgement

45 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, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah Who prevails over all things. **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 your Lord, as rewards, and best as (the

foundation for) hopes. **47** One Day We shall remove the mountains, and you will 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 your Lord in ranks, (with the announcement), "Now have you come to Us (bare) as We created you first: indeed, you thought We shall not fulfil the appointment made to you to meet (Us)!": **49** And the book (of deeds) will be placed (before you); and you will 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 your Lord treat with injustice.

SECTION 7: Their Helplessness

50 Behold! We said to the angels, "Bow down to Adam": they bowed down except Iblīs. He was one of the *Jinns*, and he broke the Command of his Lord. Will you then take him and his progeny as protectors rather than Me? And they are enemies to you! Evil would be the exchange for the wrong-doers! **51** I called them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor (even) their own creation: nor is it for Me to take as helpers such as lead (men) astray! **52** One Day He will say, "Call on those whom you thought to be My partners," and they will call on them, but they will not listen to them; and We shall make for them a place of common perdition. **53** And the Sinful shall see the Fire and apprehend that they have to fall therein: no means will they find to turn away therefrom.

SECTION 8: Warning is Disregarded

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, 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 ask that) the ways of the ancients be repeated with 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: but the Unbelievers dispute with vain argument, in order therewith to weaken the truth, and they treat My Signs as a jest, as also the fact that they are warned! **57** And who does 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 lest they should understand this, and over their ears, deafness. If you call 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. **59** Such were the populations We destroyed when they committed iniquities; but we fixed an appointed time for their destruction.

SECTION 9: Moses Travels in Search of Knowledge

60 Behold, Moses said to his attendant, "I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas²¹⁶ or (until) I spend years and years in travel." **61** But when they reached the Junction, they forgot (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: "Saw you (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).

216. 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 'Aqabah and the Gulf of Suez. They enclose the Sinai Peninsula, in which Moses and the Israelites spent many years in their wanderings. [2405]

65 So they found one²¹⁷ of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence. 66 Moses said to him: "May I follow you, on the footing that you teach me something of the (higher) Truth which you have been taught?" 67 (The other) said: "Verily you will not be able to have patience with me! 68 And how can you have patience about things about which your understanding is not complete?" 69 Moses said: "You will find me, if Allah so wills, (truly) patient: nor shall I disobey you in aught." 70 The other said: "If then you would follow me, ask me no questions about anything until I myself speak to you concerning it."

SECTION 10: Moses Travels in Search of Knowledge

71 So they both proceeded: until, when they were in the boat, he scuttled it. Said Moses: "Have you scuttled it in order to drown those in it? Truly a strange thing have you done!" 72 He answered: "Did I not tell you that you can 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 man, he slew him. Moses said: "Have you slain an innocent person who had slain none? Truly a foul (unheard of) thing have you done!"

PART XVI

75 He answered: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with

217. *One of Our servants*: his name is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, but Tradition gives it as Khidr. Round him have gathered a number of picturesque folk tales, with which we are not here concerned. Khidr means "Green": his knowledge is fresh and green, and drawn out of the living sources of life for it is drawn from Allah's own Presence. He is a mysterious being, who had to be sought out. He has the secrets 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. [2411]

me?" 76 (Moses) said: "If ever I ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company: then would you have received (full) excuse from my side."

77 Then they proceeded: until, when they came to the inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall on the point of falling down, but he set it up straight. (Moses) said: "If you had wished, surely you could have exacted some recompense for it!" 78 He answered: "This is the parting between me and you: now will I tell you the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience.

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. 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 and man). 81 So we desired that their Lord would give them in exchange (a son) better in purity (of conduct) and closer in affection. 82 As for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the Town; there was, beneath it, a buried treasure, to which they were entitled: their father had been a righteous man: so your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure—a mercy (and favour) from your Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience."

SECTION 11: Dhū al-Qarnayn and Gog and Magog

83 They ask you concerning Dhū al-Qarnayn.²¹⁸ Say, "I will rehearse

218. 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 Dhū al-Qarnayn with Alexander the Great. An alternative suggestion is an ancient Persian King, or a prehistoric Himyarite King.

Dhū al-Qarnayn was a most powerful king, but it was Allah, Who, in His universal
(continued...)

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 Dhū al-Qarnayn! (You have authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with kindness." **87** He said: "Whoever does wrong, him shall we punish; then shall he be sent back 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."

89 Then followed he (another) way, **90** Until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had provided no covering protection against the sun. **91** (He left them) as they were: We completely understood what was before him.

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 Dhū al-Qarnayn! The Gog and Magog (people)²¹⁹ do great mischief on earth: shall we then render you

218. (...continued)

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. [2428]

219. Who were the Gog and Magog people? This question is connected with the question, who was Dhū al-Qarnayn? What we are mainly concerned with is the spiritual 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 blowpipes, and prepare molten lead (18:96). 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
(continued...)

tribute in order that you might erect a barrier between us and them?

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: 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: 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,—**101** (Unbelievers) whose eyes had been under a veil from remembrance of Me, and who had been unable even to hear.

SECTION 12: Christian Nations

102 Do the Unbelievers think that they can take My servants as protectors 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?—**104** Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?" **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 Judgement, give them any weight. **106** That is their reward, Hell, because they rejected Faith, and took My Signs and My messengers 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

dwel (for ever): no change will they wish for from them. **109** Say: "If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord,²²⁰ 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 Allah is one Allah: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner." □

220. 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. [2453]

Chapter 19

MARYAM (Mary)

Introduction

The spiritual growth of man as an individual soul having been explained in Sūrah 17 as beginning with the first principles of moral conduct and in Sūrah 18. 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 Dhū al-Qarnayn, we now pass on to the story of individual Messengers of Allah in their personal relations with their environment—Yaḥyā with his father Zakarīyā, Jesus with his mother Mary, Abraham with his unbelieving father, Moses with his brother Aaron, Ismā'īl 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 Hijrah.

Summary—Zakarīyā was anxious to have an heir to carry on Allah's work in a world of unrighteousness, and Yaḥyā was given to him (19:1-15).

Mary, the mother of Jesus was maligned by her people, but Jesus comforted her and was good to her (19:16-40).

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'īl 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 of life (19:41-65).

Man should not disbelieve in the Hereafter, nor sully his faith by false notions about Allah (19:66-98).

*** **

SECTION 1: Zakariyā and John

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Kāf Hā Yā 'Ayn Sād.*²²¹ 2 (This is) a recital of the Mercy of your Lord to His servant Zakariyā. 3 Behold! he cried to his Lord in secret, 4 Praying: "O my Lord! Infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head does glisten with grey: but never am I unblest, O my Lord, in my prayer to You! 5 Now I fear (what) my relatives (and colleagues) (will do) after me: but my wife is barren: so give me an heir as from Yourself,—6 (One that) will (truly) represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob; and make him, O my Lord! one with whom You are well-pleased!" 7 (His prayer was answered): "O Zakariyā! We give you good news of a son: his name shall be Yahyā: on none by that name have We conferred distinction before."²²² 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?" 9 He said:²²³ "So (it will be): your

221. This is the only Sūrah which begins with these five Abbreviated Letters, *Kāf, Hā, Yā, 'Ayn, Sād*. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see note to 2:1.

As stated in my note above, such Letters are Symbols, of which the true meaning is known to Allah alone. We should not be dogmatic about any conjectures that we make.

I offer this suggestion with some diffidence. The suggestion of the *Tafstr Kabtr* is that the letters stand for attributes of Allah: K for *Kāfi* (the one sufficient in Himself); H for *Hādī* (He Who guides); Y for *Yad* (Hand as a symbol of Power and Authority; Cf. 48:10, "The Hand of Allah is above their hands"); 'A for *'Alīm* (the All-Knowing); and S for *Sādiq* (The True One). [2455]

222. 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 Yahyā suggests "Life". The Hebrew form is *Johanan*, which means "Jehovah has been Gracious". Cf. *Ḥanāna* 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. [2461]

223. 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. 19:21 below. But some Commentators construe it to refer to Zakariyā. In that case the meaning will be: Zakariyā after a little reflection said (in his wonder) "Sul" i.e. "Can it really be

(continued...)

Lord says, 'that is easy for Me: I did indeed create you before, when you had been nothing!'" **10** (Zakariyā) said: "O my Lord! Give me a Sign." "Your Sign," was the answer, "shall be that you shall speak to no man for three nights, although you are not dumb." **11** So Zakariyā came out to his people from his chamber: he told them by signs to celebrate Allah's praises in the morning and in the evening.

12 (To his son came the command): "O Yaḥyā! Take hold of the Book with might": and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth, **13** And piety (for all creatures) as from Us, and purity:²²⁴ 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 will be raised up to life (again)!

SECTION 2: Mary and Jesus

16 Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. **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 you (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if you do fear Allah." **19** He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from your Lord; (to announce) to you the gift of a pure son." **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): your Lord says, 'that is easy

223. (...continued)

so? Can I really have a son in my old age?" The speech following, "Thy Lord said," etc., will then be that of the angel-messenger. [2462]

224. 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 a 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. [2468]

for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': it is a matter (so) decreed."

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): "Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!" **24** But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm tree): "Grieve not! for your Lord has provided a rivulet beneath you; **25** And shake towards yourself the trunk of the palm tree: it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you. **26** So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if you do 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 (baby) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: "O Mary! Truly an amazing thing have you brought!

28 O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man of evil, nor your mother a woman unchaste!" **29** But she pointed to the baby. 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 has given me revelation and made me a prophet; **31** And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live; **32** (He) has made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; **33** So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)"!

34 Such (was) Jesus the son of Mary: (it is) a statement of truth, about which they (vainly) dispute. **35** It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is.²²⁵ **36** Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord: Him therefore serve you: this is a Way that is straight. **37** But the sects differ among themselves: and woe

225. 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. [2487]

to the unbelievers because of the (coming) Judgement of a momentous Day! **38** How plainly will they see and hear, the Day that they will appear before Us! But the unjust today are in error manifest! **39** But warn them of the Day of Distress, when the matter will be determined: for (behold,) they are negligent and they do not believe! **40** It is We Who will inherit the earth, and all beings thereon: to Us will they all be returned.

SECTION 3: Abraham

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: "O my father! Why worship that which hears not and sees not, and can profit you nothing? **43** O my father! To me has come knowledge which has not reached you: so follow me: I will guide you to a Way that is even and straight. **44** O my father! Serve not Satan: for Satan is a rebel against (Allah) Most Gracious. **45** O my father! I fear lest a Penalty afflict you from (Allah) Most Gracious, so that you become to Satan a friend." **46** (The father) replied: "Do you hate my gods, O Abraham? If you forbear not, I will indeed stone you: now get away from me for a good long while!" **47** Abraham said: "Peace be on you: I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness: for He is to me Most Gracious. **48** And I will turn away from you (all) and from those whom you 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.

SECTION 4: Other Prophets are Raised

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 mystic (converse). **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: he was (strictly) true to what he promised, and he was a messenger (and) a prophet. **55** He used to enjoin on his people prayer and charity, and he was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord.

56 Also mention in the Book the case of Idrīs: 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 who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel—of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears. **59** But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts; soon, then, will they face Destruction,—**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. **62** They will not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of Peace: and they will have therein their sustenance, 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:) “We descend not but by command of your Lord: to Him belongs what is before us and what is behind us, and what is between: and your Lord never does forget,—**65** Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is between them; so worship Him, and be constant and patient in His worship: know you of any who is worthy of the same name as He?”

SECTION 5: How the Opponents are Dealt With

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 your Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together, and (also) the Evil Ones (with them); then shall We bring them forth on their knees round about Hell; **69** Then shall We certainly drag out from every sect 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 your 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? Which makes the best show in council?" **74** But how many (countless) generations before them have We destroyed, who were even better in equipment and in glitter to the eye? **75** Say: "If any men go astray, (Allah) Most Gracious extends (the rope) to them, until, when they see the warning of Allah (being fulfilled)—either in punishment or in (the approach of) the Hour,—they will at length realise who is worst in position, and (who) weakest in forces! **76** And Allah does advance in guidance those who seek guidance: and the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of your Lord, as rewards, and best in respect of (their) eventual returns."

77 Have you then seen the (sort of) man who rejects Our Signs, yet says: "I shall certainly be given wealth and children?" **78** Has he penetrated to the Unseen, or has he taken a contract with (Allah) 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.

SECTION 6: False Doctrine of Sonship

83 See you not that We have set the Evil Ones 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: "(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten a son!" **89** Indeed you have put forth a thing most monstrous!²²⁶ **90** At it the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin, **91** That they should invoke a son for (Allah) Most Gracious. **92** For it is not consonant with the majesty of (Allah) Most Gracious that He should beget a son.

93 Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to (Allah) Most Gracious as a servant. **94** He does take an account of them (all), and has numbered them (all) exactly. **95** And everyone of them will come to Him singly on the Day of Judgement. **96** On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow love.

97 So have We made the (Qur'ān) easy in your own tongue, that with it you may give Glad Tidings to the righteous, and warnings to people given to contention. **98** But how many (countless) generations before them have We destroyed? Can you find a single one of them (now) or hear (so much as) a whisper of them?□

226. The belief in Allah begetting a son is not a question 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. [2529]

*TĀ HĀ***Introduction**

The chronology of the Sūrah has some significance: it has some relation to the spiritual lessons which it teaches.

It was used with great effect in that remarkable scene which resulted in 'Umar's conversion, and which took place about the seventh year before the Hijrah.

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 bloodthirsty 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 Fātimah and her husband Sa'īd 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 Sūrah 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 the Sūrah, perhaps the introductory portion. The mystic letters *Tā Hā* are prefixed to this Sūrah. What do they mean? The earliest tradition is that they denote a dialectical interjection meaning "O man!" If so, the title is particularly appropriate in two ways. (1) It was a direct and personal address to a man in a high state of excitement, tempted by his temper to do grievous wrong, but called by Allah's Grace, as by a personal appeal, to face the realities, for Allah knew his inmost secret thoughts (20:7): the revelation was sent by Allah, Most Gracious, out of His Grace and Mercy (20:5). (2) It takes up the story from the last Sūrah, of man as a spiritual 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 (28:9). 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 (20:1-8).

How Moses was first chosen, and led to his mission to Pharaoh with his brother Aaron (20:9-36).

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 (20:37-76).

How Moses was directed to lead his people and quell their rebellious spirit, and how that spirit was stirred up by Sāmirī (20:77-104).

On the Day of Judgement 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 (20:105-135).

*** **

SECTION 1: *Moses is Called*

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Tā Hā.*²²⁷ **2** We have not sent down the Qur'ān to you to be (an occasion) for your 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** (Allah) Most Gracious is firmly established on the throne (of authority). **6** To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil. **7** If you pronounce the word aloud, (it is no matter): for verily He knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden. **8** Allah! there is no god but He! To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.

9 Has the story of Moses reached you? **10** Behold, he saw a fire: so he said to his family, "Tarry you; I perceive a fire; perhaps I can bring

227. For an explanation see the Introduction to this Sūrah. [2534]

you some burning brand therefrom, or find some guidance at the fire.”
11 But when he came to the fire, a voice was heard: “O Moses! **12** Verily I am your Lord! Therefore (in My presence) put off your shoes: you are in the sacred valley Tuwā.²²⁸ **13** I have chosen you: listen, then, to the inspiration (sent to you). **14** Verily, I am Allah: there is no god but I: so serve you Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise. **15** Verily the Hour is coming—My design is to keep it hidden—for every soul 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 you therefrom, lest you perish!”

17 “And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?” **18** He said, “It is 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. **21** (Allah) said, “Seize it, and fear not: We shall return it at once to its former condition.”

22 “Now draw your hand²²⁹ close to your side: it shall come forth white (and shining), without harm (or stain),—as another Sign,—**23** In order that We may show you (two) of Our greater Signs. **24** Go you to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds.”

SECTION 2: Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh

25 (Moses) said: “O my Lord! Expand me my breast; **26** Ease my task for me; **27** And remove the impediment from my speech,²³⁰ **28** So they may understand what I say: **29** And give me a Minister from my

228. This was the valley just below Mount Sinai, where subsequently he was to receive the Torah. [2544]

229. 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. [2550]

230. Literally, (in Arabic) “Loosen a knot from my tongue”. [2553]

family, **30** Aaron, my brother; **31** Add to my strength through him, **32** And make him share my task: **33** That we may celebrate Your praise without stint, **34** And remember You without stint: **35** For You are He that (ever) regards us." **36** (Allah) said: "Granted is your prayer, O Moses!"

37 "And indeed We conferred a favour on you another time (before). **38** Behold! We sent to your mother, by inspiration, the message: **39** 'Throw (the child) into the chest, and throw (the chest) into the river: the river will cast him up on the bank, and he will be taken up by one who is an enemy to Me and an enemy to him': but I cast (the garment of) love over you from Me: and (this) in order that you may be reared under Mine eye." **40** "Behold! your sister goes forth and says, 'Shall I show you one who will nurse and rear the (child)?' So We brought you back to your mother, that her eye might be cooled and she should not grieve. Then you did slay a man, but We saved you from trouble, and We tried you in various ways. Then did you tarry a number of years with the people of Midian. Then did you come hither as ordained, O Moses! **41** And I have prepared you for Myself (for service)"...

42 "Go, you and your brother, with My Signs, and slacken not, either of you, in keeping Me in remembrance. **43** Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds; **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 you both to him, and say, 'Verily we are messengers sent by your Lord: send forth, therefore, the Children of Israel with us, and afflict them not: with a Sign, indeed, have we come from your Lord! And peace to all who follow guidance! **48** 'Verily it has been revealed to us that the Penalty (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 is He Who

gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance." **51** (Pharaoh) said: "What then is the condition of previous generations?" **52** He replied: "The knowledge of that is with my Lord, 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 (and channels); and has sent down water from the sky." With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others. **54** Eat (for yourselves) and pasture your cattle: verily, in this are Signs for men endued with understanding.

SECTION 3: Moses and the Enchanters

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: "Have you come to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moses? **58** But we can surely produce magic to match yours! So make a tryst between us and you, which we shall not fail to keep—neither we nor you—in a place where both shall have even chances." **59** Moses said: "Your tryst is the Day of the Festival, and let the people be assembled when the sun is well up." **60** So Pharaoh withdrew: he concerted his plan, and then came (back). **61** Moses said to him: "Woe to you! Forge not you a lie against Allah, lest He destroy you (at once) utterly by chastisement: the forger must suffer frustration!" **62** So they disputed, one with another, over their affair, but they kept their talk secret. **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 institutions. **64** Therefore concert your plan, and then assemble in (serried) ranks: he wins (all along) today who gains the upper hand."

65 They said: "O Moses! Whether will you that you throw (first) or that we be the first to throw?" **66** He said, "Nay, throw you first!" Then behold their ropes and their rods—so it seemed to him on account of their magic—began to be in lively motion! **67** So Moses conceived in his mind a (sort of) fear. **68** We said: "Fear not! for you have

indeed the upper hand: **69** Throw that which is in your 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 thrives not, (no matter) where he goes."

70 So the magicians were thrown down to prostration: they said, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses". **71** (Pharaoh) said: "Believe you in Him before I give you permission? Surely this must be your leader, who has taught you magic! 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 you know for certain, which of us can give the more severe and the more lasting punishment!" **72** They said: "Never shall we regard you as more than the clear Signs that have come to us, or than Him Who created us! So decree whatever you desire to decree: for you can only decree (touching) the life of this world. **73** For us, we have believed in our Lord: may He forgive us our faults, and the magic to which you did compel us: for Allah is Best and Most Abiding." **74** Verily he who comes to his Lord as a sinner (at Judgement),—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 ever: such is the reward of those who purify themselves (from evil).

SECTION 4: The Israelites Worship the Calf

77 We sent an inspiration to Moses: "Travel by night with My servants, and strike a dry path for them through the sea, without fear of being overtaken (by Pharaoh) and without (any other) fear." **78** Then Pharaoh pursued them with his forces, but the waters completely overwhelmed them and covered them up. **79** Pharaoh led his people astray instead of leading them aright.

80 O you Children of Israel! We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a Covenant with you on the right side of Mount (Sinai), and We sent down to you Manna and quails: **81** (Saying): "Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess

therein, lest My Wrath should justly descend on you: and those on whom descends My Wrath do perish indeed! **82** But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe, and do right, who,—in fine, are ready to receive true guidance."

83 (When Moses was up on the Mount, Allah said:) "What made you hasten in advance of your people, O Moses?" **84** He replied: "Behold, they are close on my footsteps: I hastened to You, O my Lord, to please You." **85** (Allah) said: "We have tested your people in your absence: the Sāmīrī has led them astray." **86** So Moses returned to his people in a state of indignation 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 you desire that Wrath should descend from your Lord on you, and so you broke your promise to me?" **87** They said: "We broke not the promise to you, as far as lay in our power: but we were made to carry the weight of the ornaments of the (whole) people, and we threw them (into the fire), and that was what the Sāmīrī suggested. **88** Then he brought out (of the fire) before the (people) the image of a calf: it seemed to low: so they said: 'This is your god, and the god of Moses, but (Moses) has forgotten!'" **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?"

SECTION 5: The End of Calf-worship

90 Aaron had already, before this said to them: "O my people! You are being tested in this: for verily your Lord is (Allah) Most Gracious; so follow me and obey my command." **91** They had said: "We will not abandon this cult, but we will devote ourselves to it until Moses returns to us." **92** (Moses) said: "O Aaron! What kept you back, when you saw them going wrong, **93** From following me? Did you then disobey my order?" **94** (Aaron) replied: "O son of my mother! Seize (me) not by my beard nor by (the hair of) my head! Truly I feared lest you should say, 'You have caused a division among the Children of Israel, and you did not respect my word!'" **95** (Moses) said: "What then is your case, O Sāmīrī?" **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."²³¹ **97** (Moses) said: "Get you gone! But your (punishment) in this life will be that you will say, 'touch me not';"²³² and moreover (for a future penalty) you have a promise that will not fail: now look at your god, of whom you have become a devoted worshipper: we will certainly (melt) it in a blazing fire and scatter it broadcast in the sea!" **98** But the god of you all is the One Allah: there is no god but He: all things He comprehends in His knowledge.

99 Thus do We relate to you some stories of what happened before: for We have sent you a Message from Our own Presence. **100** If any do turn away therefrom, verily they will bear a burden on the Day of Judgement; **101** They will abide in this (state): and grievous will the burden be to them on that Day,—**102** The Day when the Trumpet will be sounded: that Day, We shall gather the sinful, blear-eyed (with terror). **103** In whispers will they consult each other: "You tarried not longer than ten (Days);" **104** We know best what they will say, when their leader most eminent in conduct will say: "You tarried not longer than a day!"

231. This answer of the Sāmīrī 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 vulgar crowd did not see. He saw something supernatural. "The Messenger" is construed by many Commentators to mean the angel Gabriel. "*Rasāl*" (plural *rusal*) is used in several places for "angels", e.g., in 11:69,77; 19:19; and 35:1. But if we take it to mean the Messenger Moses, it means that the Sāmīrī 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's image 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!" [2621]

232. 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). [2622]

SECTION 6: The Prophet's Opponents

105 They ask you concerning the Mountains: say, "My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust;" **106** "He will leave them as plains smooth and level;" **107** "Nothing crooked or curved will you see in their place."

108 On that Day will they follow the Caller (straight): no crookedness (can they show) him: all sounds shall humble themselves in the Presence of (Allah) Most Gracious: nothing shall you hear but the tramp of their feet (as they march). **109** On that Day shall no intercession avail except for those for whom permission has been granted by (Allah) Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him. **110** He knows what (appears to His creatures as) before or after or behind them: but they shall not compass it with their knowledge. **111** (All) faces shall be humbled before (Him)—the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal: hopeless indeed will be the man that carries iniquity (on his back). **112** But he who works deeds of righteousness, and has faith, will have no fear of harm nor of any curtailment (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 you is completed, but say, "O my Lord! Advance me in knowledge." **115** We had already, beforehand, taken the covenant of Adam, but he forgot: and We found on his part no firm resolve.

SECTION 7: The Devil's Misleading

116 When We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam", they prostrated themselves, but not Iblīs: he refused. **117** Then We said: "O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to you and your wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that you are landed in misery."

118 There is therein (enough provision) for you not to go hungry nor to go naked, 119 Nor to suffer from thirst, nor from the sun's heat."

120 But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! Shall I lead you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?" 121 In the result, they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden: thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced. 122 But his Lord chose him (for His Grace): He turned to him, and gave him guidance. 123 He said: "Get you down, both of you,—all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another: but if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall 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 of Judgement." 125 He will say: "O my Lord! Why have You raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)?" 126 (Allah) will say: "Thus did you, when Our Signs came unto you, disregard them: so will you, this day, be disregarded." 127 And thus do We recompense him who transgresses beyond bounds and believes not in the Signs of his Lord: and the Penalty of the Hereafter is far more grievous and more enduring. 128 Is it not a warning 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.

SECTION 8: Punishment is Certain

129 Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, (their punishment) must necessarily have come; but there is a term appointed (for respite). 130 Therefore be patient with what they say, and celebrate (constantly) the praises of your Lord, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting; indeed, celebrate them for part of the hours of the night, and at the sides²³³ of the day: that you may have

233. The Arabic *Taraf*, (plural *atrāf*) translated here as "sides" as may also mean ends, (continued...)

(spiritual) joy. **131** Nor strain your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendour of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring. **132** Enjoin prayer on your people, and be constant therein. We ask you not to provide sustenance: We provide it for you. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness.

133 They say: "Why does he not 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? **134** And if We had inflicted on them a penalty before this, they would have said: "Our Lord! If only You had sent us a messenger, we should certainly have followed Your Signs before we were humbled and put to shame." **135** Say: "Each one (of us) is waiting: wait you, therefore, and soon shall you know who it is that is on the straight and even Way, and who it is that has received Guidance." □

233. (...continued)

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 *aṭraf* (plural), not *tarāfayn* (dual). Now the prayer before sunrise is clearly *Fajr*; that before sunset is '*ʿAṣr*: "part of the hours of the night" would indicate *Maghrib* (early night, just after sunset), and '*Ishā'*, before going to bed. There is left *Zuhr*, which is 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. [2655]

AL-ANBIYĀ'
(The Prophets)

Introduction

The last Sūrah dealt with the individual story (spiritual) of Moṣes and Aaron, and contrasted it with the growth of evil in individuals like the Pharaoh and the Sāmīrī, and ended with a warning against Evil, and an exhortation to the purification of the soul with prayer and praise. This Sūrah 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 unnatural wickedness, Noah's against unbelief, that of David and Solomon against injustice and failure to proclaim God'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 Dhul Kifl against want of steady perseverance, that of Dhū al-Nūn against hasty anger, that of Zakariyā against spiritual 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 vulgar suppose, just irresistible men. They had to win their ground inch by inch against all kinds of resistance from evil.

The chronology of this Sūrah has no significance. It probably dates from the middle of the Makkan period of inspiration.

Summary—Man treats, as he has always treated, the serious things of life with jest or contempt; but the Judgement must come, and Truth must triumph (21:1-29).

Unity of Design, and certainty of Allah's Promise: Allah's protection and mercy, and His justice (21:30-50).

How Abraham triumphed over idols, as did others among Allah's chosen ones over various forms of evil (21:51-93).

Work righteousness while there is yet time, for the Judgement will come, and only the righteous will inherit (21:94-112).

*** ** *

PART XVII

SECTION 1: Judgement Approaches

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Closer and closer to mankind comes their Reckoning: yet they heed not and they turn away. 2 Never comes (aught) to them of a renewed Message from their Lord, but they listen to it as in jest,—3 Their hearts toying as with trifles. The wrong-doers conceal their private counsels, (saying), "Is this (one) more than a man like yourselves? Will you go to witchcraft with your eyes open?" 4 Say: "My Lord knows (every) word (spoken) in the heavens and on earth: He is the One That hears and knows (all things)." 5 "Nay," they say, "(These are) medleys of dreams!—Nay, he forged it!—Nay, he is (but) a poet! 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 populations which We destroyed believed: will these believe? 7 Before you, also, the messengers We sent were but men, to whom We granted inspiration: if you realise this not, ask of those who possess the Message. 8 Nor did We give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they exempt from death. 9 In the end We fulfilled to them Our promise, and We saved them and those whom We pleased, but We destroyed those who transgressed beyond bounds. 10 We have revealed for you (O men!) a Book in which is a Message for you: will you not then understand?

SECTION 2: Truth has Always Triumphed

11 How many were the populations We utterly destroyed because of their iniquities, setting up in their places other peoples? 12 Yet, when they felt Our Punishment (coming), behold, they (tried to) flee from it. 13 Flee not, but return to the good things of this life which were given you, and to your homes, in order that you may be called to account. 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.

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)! **18** Nay, We hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood does perish! Ah! Woe be to you for the (false) things you ascribe (to Us). **19** To Him belong all (creatures) in the heavens and on earth: even those who are in His (very) Presence are not too proud to serve Him, nor are they (ever) weary (of His service): **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 confusion 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 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 you without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me.

26 And they say: "(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten offspring." 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. **28** He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, 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: Truth of Revelation

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? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? **31** And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them, and We have made therein broad highways (between mountains) for them to pass through: that they may receive Guidance. **32** And We have made the heavens as a canopy well guarded: yet do they turn away from the Signs which these things (point to)! **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 rounded course.

34 We granted not to any man before you permanent life (here): if then you should die, would they live permanently? **35** Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To Us must you return. **36** When the Unbelievers see you, they treat you not except with ridicule. "Is this," (they say), "the one who talks of your gods?" And they blaspheme at the mention of (Allah) Most Gracious! **37** Man is a creature of haste: soon (enough) will I show you My Signs; then you will not ask Me to hasten them! **38** They say: "When will this promise come to pass, if you are telling the truth?" **39** If only the Unbelievers 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 suddenly and confound them: no power will they have then to avert it, nor will they (then) get respite. **41** Mocked were (many) messengers before you; but their scoffers were hemmed in by the thing that they mocked.

SECTION 4: Allah Deals with Men Mercifully

42 Say: "Who can keep you safe by night and by day from (the Wrath of) (Allah) Most Gracious?" Yet they turn away from the mention 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 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! **46** If but a breath of the Wrath of your 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 Judgement, 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, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account.

48 In the past We granted to Moses and Aaron the Criterion (for judgement), 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 Judgement) in awe. **50** And this is a blessed Message which We have sent down: will you then reject it?

SECTION 5: Abraham is Delivered

51 We bestowed aforetime on Abraham his rectitude of conduct, and well were We acquainted with him. **52** Behold! he said to his father and his people, "What are these images, to which you are (so assiduously) devoted?" **53** They said, "We found our fathers worshipping them." **54** He said, "Indeed you have been in manifest error—you and your fathers." **55** They said, "Have you brought us the Truth, or are you one of those who jest?" **56** He said, "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who created them (from nothing): and I am a witness to this (Truth). **57** And by Allah, I have a plan for your idols—after you go away and turn your backs."

58 So he broke them to pieces, (all) but the biggest of them, that they might turn (and address themselves) to it. **59** They said, "Who has done this to our gods? He must indeed be some man of impiety!" **60** They said, "We heard a youth talk of them: he is called Abraham." **61** They said, "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness." **62** They said, "Are you the one that did this with our gods, O Abraham?" **63** He said: "Nay, this was done by—this is their biggest one! Ask them, if they can speak intelligently!" **64** So they turned to themselves and said, "Surely you are the ones in the wrong!"

65 Then were they confounded with shame: (they said), "You know full well that these (idols) do not speak!" 66 (Abraham) said, "Do you then worship, besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? 67 Fie upon you, and upon the things that you worship besides Allah! Have you no sense?"

68 They said, "Burn him and protect your gods, if you do (anything at all)!" 69 We said, "O Fire! Be you cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!" 70 Then they sought a stratagem against him: but We made them the ones that lost most! 71 But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lūt (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for the nations.

72 And We bestowed on him Isaac and, as an additional gift, (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 sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practise regular charity; and they constantly served Us (and Us only).

74 And to Lūt, too, We gave Judgement and Knowledge, and We saved him from the town which practised abominations: truly they were a people given to Evil, a rebellious people. 75 And We admitted him to Our Mercy: for he was one of the Righteous.

SECTION 6: Allah Always Delivers Prophets

76 (Remember) Noah, when he cried (to Us) aforetime: We listened to his (prayer) and delivered him and his family from great distress. 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 judgement in the matter of the field into which the sheep of certain people had strayed by night: We did witness their judgement. 79 To Solomon We inspired the (right) understanding of the matter: to each (of them) We

gave Judgement and Knowledge; it was Our power that made the hills and the birds celebrate Our praises, with David: it was We Who did (all these things). **80** It was We Who taught him the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence: will you then be grateful?

81 (It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Solomon, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We do know all things. **82** And of the evil ones, were some who dived for him, and did other work besides; and it was We Who guarded them.

83 And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord, "Truly distress has seized me, but You are 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 from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who serve Us.

85 And (remember) Ismā'īl, Idrīs, and Dhū al-Kifl, all (men) of constancy and patience; **86** We admitted them to Our Mercy: for they were of the Righteous ones.

87 And remember Dhū al-Nūn,²³⁴ when he departed in wrath: he

234. *Dhū al-Nūn*. "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. His story is told in 37:139-149. 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 out 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

(continued...)

imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but You: glory to You: 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) Zakarīyā, when he cried to his Lord: "O my Lord! Leave me not without offspring, though You are the best of inheritors."

90 So We listened to him: and We granted him Yahyā: We cured his wife's (barrenness) for him. These (three) were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.

91 And (remember) her who guarded her chastity: We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and We made her and her son a Sign for all peoples.

92 Verily, this brotherhood of yours is a single brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore serve Me (and no other). **93** But (later generations) cut off their affair (of unity), one from another: (yet) will they all return to Us.

SECTION 7: *The Righteous will Inherit the Land*

94 Whoever works any act of righteousness and has Faith,—his endeavour will not be rejected: We shall record it in his favour. **95** But there is a ban on any population which We have destroyed: that they shall not return, **96** Until the Gog and Magog (people)²³⁵ are let through (their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every hill. **97** Then will the True Promise draw nigh (of fulfilment): then behold! the eyes of the Unbelievers will fixedly stare in horror: "Ah! Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this; nay, we truly did wrong!" **98** Verily you, (Unbelievers), and the (false) gods that you worship besides Allah, are

234. (...continued)

ashore; he was given the shelter of a plant in his state of physical and mental 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. [2744]

235. For Gog and Magog see note to 18:94. 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 Judgement. [2753]

(but) fuel for Hell! To it will you (surely) come! **99** If these had been gods, they would not have got there! 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 (record) from Us has gone before, will be removed far therefrom. **102** Not the slightest sound will they hear of Hell; what their souls desired, in that will they dwell. **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 you 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 who would (truly) worship Allah. **107** We sent you not, but as a mercy for all creatures. **108** Say: "What has come to me by inspiration is that your Allah is One Allah: will you therefore bow to His Will (in Islam)?" **109** But if they turn back, say: "I have proclaimed the Message to you all alike and in truth; but I know not whether that which you are promised is near or far. **110** It is He Who knows what is open in speech and what you hide (in your hearts). **111** I know not but that it may be a trial for you, and a grant of (worldly) livelihood (to you) for a time." **112** Say: "O my Lord! Judge You in truth!"²³⁶ "Our Lord Most Gracious is the One Whose assistance should be sought against the blasphemies you utter!"²³⁷ □

236. That is, Allah's judgement as between the Teacher and those who refuse the Message, or between the righteous and those who taunt them for their poverty, will be the true one, and both the Teacher and the *Ummah* must leave the judgement to Allah. [2768]

237. 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. [2769]

AL-HAJJ
(The Pilgrimage)

Introduction

We now come to a new series of four Sūrahs, dealing with the environments and methods contributing to our spiritual progress, as the last five Sūrahs dealt with the Messengers who came in various ways to proclaim the Truth and conquer evil. See Introduction to Sūrah 17.

The subject matter of this particular Sūrah is concerned mainly with the spiritual implications of the Sacred House, the Pilgrimage, the Sacrifice, Striving and Fighting in defence of Truth when attacked, and other acts that make for Unselfishness and uproot Falsehood.

On the chronology of this Sūrah, opinion is divided. Some parts were probably revealed in the later Makkan period, and some in Madīnah. 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 (22:1-25).

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 (22:26-48).

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 (22:49-78).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Judgement

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgement) will be a thing terrible! 2 The Day you shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling baby, and every pregnant

female shall drop her load (unformed): you shall see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the Wrath of Allah. **3** And yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah, without knowledge, and follow every evil one obstinate in rebellion! **4** About the (Evil One) it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, him will he lead astray, and he will guide him to the Penalty of the Fire.

5 O mankind! If you 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 babies, then (foster you) that you 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, so that they know nothing after having known (much), and (further), you see 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). **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. **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,—**9** (Disdainfully) bending his side, in order to lead (men) astray from the Path of Allah: for him there is disgrace in this life, and on the Day of Judgement We shall make him taste the Penalty of burning (Fire). **10** (It will be said): "This is because of the deeds which your hands sent forth, for verily Allah is not unjust to His servants."

SECTION 2: Certainty of Divine Help

11 There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the

verge:²³⁸ if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces: they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see! **12** They call on such deities, 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 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 plans. **15** If any think that Allah will not help him (His Messenger) in this world and the Hereafter, let him stretch out a rope to the ceiling and cut (himself) off: then let him see whether his plan will remove that which enrages (him)! **16** Thus have We sent down clear Signs; and verily Allah does guide whom He will! **17** Those who believe (in the Qur'ān), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians, Christians, Magians, and Polytheists,—Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement: for Allah is witness of all things.

18 See you not that to Allah bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and on earth,—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 are fit for Punishment: and such as Allah shall disgrace,—none can raise to honour: for Allah carries out all that He wills. **19** These two antagonists dispute 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. **20** With it will be scalded what is within their bodies, as well as (their) skins. **21** In addition there will be maces of iron (to punish) them. **22**

238. 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 differ 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 onlooker. [2782]

Every time they wish to get away therefrom, from anguish, they will be forced back therein, and (it will be said), "Taste you the Penalty of Burning!"

SECTION 3: Believers are Triumphant

23 Allah will admit those who believe and work righteous deeds, to Gardens beneath which 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. **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 or wrong-doing—they will We cause to taste of a most grievous Penalty.

SECTION 4: Pilgrimage

26 Behold! We gave the site, to Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, (saying): "Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). **27** And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to you on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; **28** That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat you thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. **29** Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House."

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): but 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 symbols of Allah, (in the sacrifice of animals), such (honour) should come truly from piety of heart. **33** In them you have benefits for a term appointed: in the end their place of sacrifice is near the Ancient House.

SECTION 5: Sacrifice

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 Allah is One Allah: submit then your wills to Him (in Islam): and give you the good news to those who humble themselves,—**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 symbols 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 you thereof, and feed such as (beg not but) live in contentment, and such as beg with due humility: thus have We made animals subject to you, that you 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 you may glorify Allah for His Guidance to you: and proclaim the good news to all who do right. **38** Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe: verily, Allah loves not any that is a traitor to faith, or shows ingratitude.

SECTION 6: Believers Permitted to Fight

39 To those against whom war is made, permission 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, 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, (able to enforce His Will). **41** (They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.

42 If they treat your (mission) as false, so did the peoples before them (with their prophets),—the people of Noah, and ‘Ad and Thamūd; **43** Those of Abraham and Lūt; **44** And the Companions 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 rejection (of them)! **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 may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind, but their hearts which are in their breasts. **47** Yet they ask you to hasten on the Punishment! But Allah will not fail in His Promise. Verily a Day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning. **48** And to how many populations did I give respite, which were given to wrong-doing? In the end I punished them. To Me is the destination (of all).

SECTION 7: Opposition to the Prophet

49 Say: “O men! I am (sent) to you only to give a clear warning: **50** Those who believe and work righteousness, for them is forgiveness and a sustenance most generous. **51** But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them,—they will be companions of the Fire.”

52 Never did We send a messenger or a prophet before you, but, when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) 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: **53** That He may make the suggestions thrown in by Satan, but a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and who are hardened of heart: verily the wrong-doers are in a schism far (from the Truth): **54** And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur'ān) is the Truth from your 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 Judgement) comes suddenly upon them, or there comes to them the Penalty of a Day of Disaster. **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.

SECTION 8: **The Faithful Shall be Established**

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: 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. **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).

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** See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green? For Allah is He Who understands the finest mysteries, and is well-acquainted (with

them). **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: *Divine Mercy in Dealing with Men*

65 See you 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 (rain) from falling on the earth except by His leave: for Allah is Most Kind and Most Merciful to man. **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 and ceremonies which they must follow: let them not then dispute with you on the matter, but do you invite (them) to your Lord: for you are assuredly on the right Way. **68** If they do wrangle with you, say, "Allah knows best what it is you are doing." **69** "Allah will judge between you on the Day of Judgement concerning the matters in which you differ." **70** Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Indeed it is all in a record, and that is easy for Allah. **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. **72** When Our clear Signs are rehearsed to them, you will notice a denial 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 these Signs? It is the Fire (of Hell)! Allah has promised it to the Unbelievers! And evil is that destination!"

SECTION 10: *Polytheism will be Uprooted*

73 O men! Here is a parable set forth! Listen to it! Those on whom, besides Allah, you 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 petition and those whom they petition! **74** No just estimate have they made of Allah: for Allah is He Who is strong and able to carry out His Will. **75** Allah chooses messengers from angels

and from men for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things). **76** He knows what is before them and what is behind them: and to Allah go back all questions (for decision).

77 O you who believe! Bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord; and do good; that you may prosper. **78** And strive in His cause as you ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you be witnesses for mankind! So establish regular prayer, give regular charity, and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector—the Best to protect and the Best to help!□

Chapter 23

AL-MU'MINŪN (The Believers)

Introduction

This Sūrah deals with the virtues which are the 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 Makkan 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 (23:1-50).

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 (23:51-92).

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 (23:93-118).

*** **

PART XVIII

SECTION 1: Success of the Faithful

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 The Believers must (eventually) win through,—**2** Those who humble themselves in their prayers;²³⁹ **3** Who avoid vain talk; **4** Who are active

239. Humility in prayer as regards (1) their estimate of their own worth in Allah's
(continued...)

in deeds of charity; **5** Who abstain from sex, **6** Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess,—for (in their case) they are free from blame, **7** But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors;—**8** Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; **9** And who (strictly) guard their prayers;—**10** These will be the heirs, **11** Who will inherit Paradise: they will dwell therein (for ever).

12 Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); **13** Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, 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. So blessed be Allah, the Best to create! **15** After that, at length you will die, **16** Again, on the Day of Judgement, will you be raised up. **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 you abundant fruits: and of them you eat (and have enjoyment),—**20** Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food. **21** And in cattle (too) you have an instructive example: 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) you eat; **22** And on them, as well as in ships, you ride.

SECTION 2: Noah

23 (Further, We sent a long line of prophets for your instruction). We sent Noah to his people: he said, "O my people! Worship Allah! You

239. (...continued)

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. [2866]

have no other god but Him. Will you not fear (Him)?" **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!" **27** So We inspired him (with this message): "Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance: then when comes Our Command, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take you on board pairs of every species, male and female, and your family—except those of them against whom the Word has already gone forth: and address Me not in favour of the wrongdoers; for they shall be drowned (in the Flood). **28** And when you have embarked on the Ark—you and those with you,—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 Your blessing: for You are the Best to enable (us) to disembark.'" **30** Verily in this there are Signs (for men to understand); (thus) do We try (men).

31 Then We raised after them another generation. **32** And We sent to them a messenger from among themselves, (saying), "Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him. Will you not fear (Him)?"

SECTION 3: Prophets after Noah

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 of that of which you eat, and drinks of what you drink. **34** If you obey a man like yourselves, behold, it is certain you will be lost."²⁴⁰ **35** Does he promise that when you die and become dust and bones, you

240. The type of the narrow Sybarite, who enjoys the good things of this life, denies a future life, and is jealous of anyone who presumes to widen his horizon, is here described in a few masterly strokes. He is bored by the 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. [2895]

shall be brought forth (again)? **36** Far, very far is that which you are promised! **37** There is nothing but our life in this world! We shall die and we live! But 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 (floating on the stream of Time)! So away with the people who do wrong!

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): so away with a people that will not believe!

45 Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron, with Our Signs and authority manifest, **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 subject to us!" **48** So they accused them of falsehood, and they became of those who were destroyed. **49** And We gave Moses the Book, in order that they might receive guidance.

50 And We made the son of Mary and his mother as a Sign: We gave them both shelter on high ground, affording rest and security and furnished with springs.

SECTION 4: Higher Values of Life

51 O you messengers! Enjoy (all) things good and pure, and work righteousness: for I am well-acquainted with (all) that you do. **52** And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, 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, 56 We would hasten them on in every good? Nay, they do not understand.

57 Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord; 58 Those who believe in the Signs of their Lord; 59 Those who join not (in worship) partners with their Lord; 60 And those who dispense their charity with their hearts 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: before Us is a record which clearly shows the truth: they will never be wronged. 63 But their hearts are in confused ignorance of this; and there are, besides that, deeds of theirs, which they will (continue) to do,—64 Until, when We seize in Punishment those of them 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 you shall certainly not be helped by Us. 66 My Signs used to be rehearsed to you, but you 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, and all beings therein would have been in confusion and corruption! Nay, We have sent them their admonition, but they turn away from their admonition. 72 Or is it that you ask them for some recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is best: He is the Best of those who give sustenance. 73 But verily you call 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. 76 We inflicted Punishment 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!

SECTION 5: Polytheism is Self-condemned

78 It is He Who has created for you (the faculties of) hearing, sight, feeling and understanding: little thanks it is you give! 79 And He has multiplied you through the earth, and to Him shall you be gathered back. 80 It is He Who gives life and death, and to Him (is due) the alternation of Night and Day: will you not then understand? 81 On the contrary they say things similar to what the ancients said. 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 you know!" 85 They will say, "To Allah!" Say: "Yet will you not receive admonition?" 86 Say: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Throne (of Glory) Supreme?" 87 They will say, "(They belong) to Allah." Say: "Will you not then be filled with awe?" 88 Say: "Who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things,—Who protects (all), but is not protected (of any)? (Say) if you know." 89 They will say, "(It belongs) to Allah." Say: "Then how are you deluded?"

90 We have sent them the Truth: but they indeed practise falsehood! 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 is He for the partners they attribute to Him!

SECTION 6: Regrets of the Wicked

93 Say: "O my Lord! If You will 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 you (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 You from the suggestions of the Evil Ones. 98 And I seek refuge with You O my Lord! Lest they should come near me."

99 (In Falsehood will they be) until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "O my Lord! send me back (to life).—100 In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected."—"By no means! It is but a word he says."—Before them is a Partition²⁴¹ till the Day they are raised up.

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 attain salvation: 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 you did but treat them as falsehoods?" 106 They will say: "Our Lord! Our misfortune overwhelmed us, and we became a people astray! 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 you driven into it (with ignominy)! And speak you not to Me! 109 A part of My servants there was, who used to pray 'Our Lord! We believe; then do You forgive us, and have mercy upon us: for You are the Best of those who show mercy!' 110 But you treated them with ridicule, so much so that (ridicule of) them

241. Partition (Arabic *Barzakh*): a bar or barrier; the place or state in which people will be after death and before Judgement. Cf. 25:53 and 55:20. Behind them is the barrier of death, and in front of them is the *Barzakh*, partition, a quiescent state until the judgement comes. [2940]

made you forget My Message while you 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 you stay on earth?” **113** They will say: “We stayed a day or part of a day: but ask those who keep account.” **114** He will say: “You stayed not but a little,—if you had only known! **115** Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you 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! **117** If anyone invokes, besides Allah, any other god, he has no authority therefor; and his reckoning will be only with his Lord! And verily the Unbelievers will fail to win through! **118** So say: “O my Lord! Grant You forgiveness and mercy for You are the Best of those who show mercy!” □

Chapter 24

AL-NŪR (The Light)

Introduction

The environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck our spiritual ideals have to do with sex and especially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour, or 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, about which a mystic doctrine is suggested. This subject is continued in the next Sūrah.

As the reprobation of false slanders about women (24:11-20) is connected with an incident that happened to 'Ā'ishah in A.H. 5-6, that fixes the chronological place of this Madīnan Sūrah.

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 is reprobated (24:1-26).

Privacy should be respected, and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners (24:27-34).

Parable of Light and Darkness: order and obedience in Nature point to the spiritual duty of man (24:35-57).

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 (24:58-64).

*** **

SECTION 1: Law Relating to Adultery

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

I A Sūrah which We have sent down and which We have ordained: in

it have We sent down clear Signs, in order that you may receive admonition.²⁴²

2 The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication,²⁴³—flog each of them with a hundred stripes: let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment.

3 Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever: nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden.

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 ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors;—5 Unless they repent thereafter and mend (their conduct); for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6 And for those who launch a charge against their spouses, and have (in support) no evidence but their own,—their solitary evidence (can be received) if they bear witness four times (with an oath) by Allah that they are solemnly telling the truth; 7 And the fifth (oath) (should be) that they solemnly invoke the curse of Allah on themselves if they tell a lie. 8 But it would avert the punishment from the wife, if she bears

242. 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 Sūrah. The emphasis is on "We": these things are not mere matters of convenience, but Allah has ordained them for our observance in life. [2953]

243. *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 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. [2954]

witness four times (with an oath) by Allah, that (her husband) is telling a lie; 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,—(you would be ruined indeed).

SECTION 2: 'Ā'ishah's Slanderers

11 Those who brought forward²⁴⁴ 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 that he earned, and to him who took on himself the lead among them, will be a Penalty grievous. 12 Why did not the Believers—men and women—when you heard of the affair,—put the best construction on it in their own minds and say, "This (charge) is an obvious lie"? 13 Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? 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 penalty would have seized you in that you rushed glibly into this affair. 15 Behold, you received it on your tongues, and said out of your mouths things of which you had no knowledge; and you thought it to be a light matter, while it was most serious in the sight of Allah. 16 And why did you not, when you heard it, say?—"It is not right of us to speak of this: Glory to Allah! This is a most serious slander!"

244. The particular incident here referred to occurred on the return from the expedition to the Banū Muṣṭaliq, A.H. 5-6. When the march was ordered, 'Ā'ishah 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 someone would come back to fetch her when her absence was noticed. It was night, and she fell asleep. Next morning she was found by Saḫwān, a *Muhājir*, who had been left behind in 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 for enemies to raise a malicious scandal. The ringleader among them was the chief of the Madīnan Hypocrites, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy who is referred to in the last clause of the verse. He had other sins and enormities to his debit, and was left to the spiritual punishment of an unrepentant sinner, for he died in that state. The minor tools were given the legal punishment of the law, after penitence mended their lives. They made good. [2962]

17 Allah does admonish you, that you may never repeat such (conduct), if you 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 published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and you know not. 20 Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah on you, and that Allah is full of kindness and mercy, (you would be ruined indeed).

SECTION 3: Slanderers of Women

21 O you who believe! Follow not Satan's footsteps: if any will follow the footsteps of Satan, he will (but) command what is shameful 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 does purify whom He pleases: and Allah is One Who hears and knows (all things). 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 women, indiscreet but believing, are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter: for them is a grievous Penalty,—24 On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them 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. 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 not affected by what people say: for them there is forgiveness, and a provision honourable.

SECTION 4: Preventive Measures

27 O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and saluted those in them: that is best for you, in order that you may heed (what is seemly). 28 If you find no one in the house, enter not until permission is given to you: if you are asked to go back, go back: that makes for greater purity for yourselves: and

Allah knows well all that you do. **29** It is no fault on your part to enter houses not used for living in, which serve some (other) use for you: and Allah has knowledge of what you reveal and what you conceal.

30 Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard 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 their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display 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 servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you Believers! Turn you all together towards Allah, that you may attain Bliss.

32 Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasses all, and He knows all things. **33** Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah gives them means out of His grace. And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum), give them such a deed if you know any good in them: indeed, give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you. But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that you 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).

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).

SECTION 5: Manifestation of Divine Light

35 Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: 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, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah does guide whom He will to His light: Allah does set forth Parables for men: and Allah does know all things. **36** (Lit is such a light) in houses, which Allah has permitted to be raised to honour; for the celebration, in them, of His name: in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again),—**37** By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of Allah, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new),—**38** That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His Grace: for Allah does provide for those whom He will, without measure.

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 (ever) with him, 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 above another: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! For any to whom Allah gives not light, there is no light!

SECTION 6: Manifestation of Divine Power

41 See you 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** Indeed, to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and to Allah is the final goal (of

all). **43** See you not that Allah makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap?—then will you see rain issue forth 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 His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight. **44** It is Allah Who alternates the Night and the Day: verily in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision! **45** And Allah has created every animal from water:²⁴⁵ of them there are some that creep on their bellies; some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills 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 They²⁴⁶ 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 on their side, they come to him with all submission. **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.

SECTION 7: Establishment of the Government of Islam

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

245. Cf. 21:30. Protoplasm is the basis of all living matter, and "the vital power of protoplasm seems to depend on the constant presence of water" (Lawson's *Textbook of Botany*, Indian Edition, London, 1922, p. 23). Textbooks of Zoology are also clear on the point. For example, see T. J. Parker and W. A. Haswell, *Textbook of Zoology*, London, 1910, vol.1, p.15: "Living protoplasm always contains a large amount of water." [3021]

246. 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. [3024]

this: they say, "We hear and we obey": it is such as these that will attain felicity. **52** It is such as obey Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah and do right, that will win (in the end), **53** They swear their strongest oaths by Allah that, if only you would command them, they would leave (their homes). Say: "Swear you not; obedience is (more) reasonable; verily, Allah is well acquainted with all that you do." **54** Say: "Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger." But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you 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 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 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 regular charity; and obey the Messenger; that you may receive mercy. **57** Never think you that the Unbelievers are going to frustrate (Allah's Plan) on earth: their abode is the Fire,—and it is indeed an evil refuge!

SECTION 8: Respect for Privacy

58 O you who believe!²⁴⁷ Let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your

247. 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 (24:59). [3033]

permission (before they come to your presence), on three occasions: before morning prayer; the while you take off 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. **59** But when the children among you come of age, let them (also) ask for permission, as do those senior to them (in age): thus does Allah make clear His Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. **60** Such elderly women 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 knows all things.

61 It is no fault in the blind nor in one born lame, nor in one afflicted with illness, nor in yourselves, that you 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 you eat in company or separately. But if you enter houses, salute each other—a greeting of blessing and purity as from Allah. Thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you: that you may understand.

SECTION 9: Matters of State to take Precedence

62 Only those are Believers, who believe in Allah and His Messenger: when they are with him on a matter requiring collective action, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave; those who ask for your leave are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger; so when they ask for your leave, for some business of theirs, give leave to those of them whom you will, and ask Allah for their forgiveness: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **63** Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another: Allah does 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 Penalty be inflicted on them. **64** Be quite sure that to Allah does belong whatever is in the heavens and on earth. Well does He know what you are intent upon: and one day they will be brought back to Him, and He will tell them the truth of what they did: for Allah does know all things. □

Chapter 25

AL-FURQĀN (The Criterion)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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 Makkan Sūrah, but its date has no significance.

Summary—Allah's highest gift to man is that He has furnished a Criterion for judgement between right and wrong—in His revelation, which teaches us the true significance of our eternal Future (25:1-20).

Those who do not use that Criterion will be full of woe when the Judgement comes, for Allah gave full warning at all times (25:21-44).

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 (25:45-77).

*** **

SECTION 1: A Warner for All Nations

*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 taken, besides Him, gods that can 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 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." 6 Say: "The (Qur'ān) was sent down by Him Who knows the Mystery (that is) in the heavens 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? 8 Or (why) has not a treasure been bestowed on him, or why has he (not) a garden for enjoyment?" The wicked say: "You follow none other than a man bewitched." 9 See what kinds of comparisons they make for you! But they have gone astray, and never a way will they be able to find!

SECTION 2: Truth of the Warning

10 Blessed is He Who, if that were His Will, could give you better (things) than those,—Gardens beneath which rivers flow; and He could give you Palaces (secure to dwell in). 11 Nay, they deny the Hour (of the Judgement to come): 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. 13 And when they are cast, bound together, into a constricted place therein, they will plead for destruction there and then! 14 "This day plead not for a single destruction: plead for destruction oft-repeated!" 15 Say: "Is that best, or the eternal Garden, promised to the righteous? For them, that is a reward as well as a goal (of attainment). 16 For them there will be therein all that they wish for: they will dwell (there) for ever: a promise to be prayed for from your Lord."

17 The Day He will gather them together as well as those whom they worship besides Allah, He will ask: "Was it you who led these My servants astray, or did they stray from the Path themselves?" 18 They will say: "Glory to You! Not meet was it for us that we should take for protectors others besides You: but You did bestow, on them and their

fathers, good things (in life), until they forgot the Message: for they were a people (worthless and) lost." **19** (Allah will say): "Now have they proved you liars in what you say: so you cannot avert (your penalty) nor (get) help." And whoever among you does wrong, him shall We cause to taste of a grievous Penalty. **20** And the messengers whom We sent before you were all (men) who ate food and walked through the streets: We have made some of you as a trial for others: will you have patience? For Allah is One Who sees (all things).

PART XIX

SECTION 3: The Day of Discrimination

21 Such as fear not the meeting with Us (for Judgement) say: "Why are not the angels sent down to us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" Indeed they have an arrogant conceit of themselves, and mighty is the insolence of their impiety! **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!" **23** And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did (in this life), and We shall make such deeds as floating dust scattered about. **24** The Companions of the Garden will be well, that Day, in their abode, and have the fairest of places for repose. **25** The Day the heaven shall be rent asunder with clouds, and angels shall be sent down, descending (in ranks),—**26** That Day, the dominion as of right and truth, shall be (wholly) for (Allah) Most Merciful: 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 Evil One is but a traitor to man!" Then the Messenger will say: **30** "O my Lord! Truly my people took this Qur'ān for just foolish nonsense." **31** Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy among the sinners: but enough is your Lord to guide and to help.

32 Those who reject Faith say: "Why is not the Qur'ān revealed to him all at once?" Thus (is it revealed), that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to you in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually. 33 And no question do they bring to you but We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation (thereof). 34 Those who will be gathered to Hell (prone) on their faces,—they will be in an evil plight, and, as to Path, most astray.

SECTION 4: A Lesson in the Fate of Former People

35 (Before this,) We sent Moses the Book, and appointed his brother Aaron with him as minister; 36 And We commanded: "Go you 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; and We have prepared for (all) wrong-doers a grievous Penalty;—38 As also 'Ād and Thamūd, and the Companions of the *Rass*,²⁴⁸ 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 fear not the Resurrection.

41 When they see you, they treat you no otherwise than in mockery: "Is this the one whom Allah has sent as a messenger?" 42 He indeed

248. 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'ayb, as they are here mentioned with the 'Ād, the Thamūd, and Lot's people, and the people of Shu'ayb are mentioned in a similar connection in 26:176-190 and in 11:84-95. Shu'ayb was the prophet of the Madyan people in the northwest 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 southwest of the town of 'Unayzah, reputed to be the central point of the Arabian Peninsula, and situated midway between Makkah and Basrah. See Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, thin paper one-volume edition, London, 1926, II, 435 and Map, Lat.26°N. and Long.43°E. [3094]

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 Penalty, who it is that is most misled in Path! **43** See you such a one as takes for his god his own passion (or impulse)? Could you be a disposer of affairs for him? **44** Or think you that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle;—Nay, they are worse astray in Path.

SECTION 5: A Lesson from Nature

45 Have you not turned your vision to your Lord?—How He does prolong the Shadow! If He willed, He could make it stationary! Then do We make the sun its guide; **46** Then We draw it in towards Ourselves,—a contraction by easy stages.

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.

48 And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky,—**49** That with it We may give life to a dead land, and slake the thirst of things We have created,—cattle and men in great numbers. **50** And We have distributed the (water) amongst them, in order that they may celebrate (Our) praises, but most men are averse (to aught) but (rank) ingratitude.

51 Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every centre of population. **52** Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the (Qur'ān).

53 It is He Who has let free the two bodies of flowing water: one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; yet has He made a barrier between them, a partition that is forbidden to be passed.²⁴⁹

249. 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
(continued...)

54 It is He Who has created man from water: then has He established relationships of lineage and marriage: for your 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 is a helper (of Evil), against his own Lord! **56** But you We only sent to give glad tidings and admonition. **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 your 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;—**59** He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between, in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of Authority): Allah Most Gracious: ask you, then, about Him of any acquainted (with such things). **60** When it is said to them, "Adore you (Allah) Most Gracious!", they say, "And what is (Allah) Most Gracious? Shall we adore that which you command us?" And it increases their flight (from the Truth).

SECTION 6: The Transformation Wrought

61 Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light; **62** And it is He Who made the night and the day to follow each other: for such as have the will to celebrate His praises or to show their gratitude.

63 And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!"; **64** Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing; **65** Those who say, "Our Lord! Avert from us

249. (...continued)

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. [3112]

the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous,—**66** Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in”; **67** Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes); **68** Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit²⁵⁰ fornication;—and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. **69** (But) the Penalty on the Day of Judgement will be doubled to him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy,—**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, **71** And whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah with an (acceptable) conversion;—**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.” **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 is not uneasy because of you if you call not on Him: but you have indeed rejected (Him), and soon will come the inevitable (punishment)!” □

250. 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 5:5. After this comes a long parenthesis, which ends with verse 71, below. [3128]

AL-SHU'ARĀ'
(The Poets)

Introduction

This Sūrah begins a new series of four Sūrahs (26-29), 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 Sūrah 17.

In this particular Sūrah we have the story of Moses in his fight with Pharaoh and of Pharaoh's discomfiture. Other Prophets mentioned are Abraham, Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lūt, and Shu'ayb. The lesson is drawn that the Qur'ān is a continuation and fulfilment of previous Revelations, and is pure Truth, unlike poetry of vain poets.

Chronologically the Sūrah 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 (26:1-69).

Nor did Abraham's people gain anything by their resisting of the Truth he preached, and Noah's people perished by their Unbelief (26:70-122).

Hūd warned his people against reliance on their material strength and Sālih against sacrilege, but in both cases the evil ones were brought low (26:123-159).

Lūt had to deal with unspeakable crimes, and Shu'ayb against dishonest dealings and mischief: their teaching was rejected, but the rejecters were wiped out (26:160-191).

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 (26:192-277).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Prophet is Consoled

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Tā Sin Mīm.*²⁵¹ **2** These are Verses of the Book that makes (things) clear.

3 It may be you fret your soul 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 (Allah) 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! **7** Do they not look at the earth,—how many noble things of all kinds We have produced therein? **8** Verily, in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe. **9** And verily, your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 2: Moses is Called and Sent to Pharaoh

10 Behold, your Lord called 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. And my speech may not go (smoothly): so send unto Aaron. **14** And (further), they have a charge of crime against me; 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 you with us the Children of Israel.'" **18** (Pharaoh) said: "Did we not cherish you as a child among us, and did you not stay in our midst many years of your life? **19** And you did a deed of yours which (you know) you did, and you are an ungrateful (wretch)!" **20** Moses said: "I did it then, when

251. This is a combination of three Abbreviated Letters, as to which, generally, see note to Sūrah 2:1. [3137]

I was in error. **21** So I fled from you (all) when I feared you; but my Lord has (since) invested me with judgement (and wisdom) and appointed me as one of the messengers. **22** And this is the favour with which you do reproach me,—that you have enslaved the Children of Israel!”

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 you want to be quite sure.” **25** (Pharaoh) said to those around: “Did you 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!” **28** (Moses) said: “Lord of the East and the West, and all between! If you only had sense!” **29** (Pharaoh) said: “If you do put forward any god other than me, I will certainly put you in prison!” **30** (Moses) said: “Even if I showed you something clear (and) convincing?” **31** (Pharaoh) said: “Show it then, if you tell 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!

SECTION 3: Moses and the Enchanters

34 (Pharaoh) said to the Chiefs around him: “This is indeed a sorcerer well-versed: **35** His plan is to get you out of your land by his sorcery; then what is it you counsel?” **36** They said: “Keep him and his brother in suspense (for a while), and dispatch to the Cities heralds to collect—**37** And bring up to you all (our) sorcerers well-versed.”

38 So the sorcerers were got together for the appointment of a day well-known, **39** And the people were told: “Are you (now) assembled? —**40** That we may follow the sorcerers (in religion) if they win?” **41** So when the sorcerers arrived, they said to Pharaoh: “Of course—shall we have a (suitable) reward if we win?” **42** He said: “Indeed, (and more),—for you shall in that case be (raised to posts) nearest (to my person).” **43** Moses said to them: “Throw you—that which you are

about to throw!" **44** So they threw their ropes and their rods, and said: "By the might of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly win!" **45** Then Moses threw his rod, when, behold, it straightway swallows up all the falsehoods which they fake!

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 you in Him before I give you permission? Surely he is your leader, who has taught you sorcery! But soon shall you know! **50** Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will cause you all to die on the cross!" **51** They said: "No matter! For us, we shall but return to our Lord! **52** Only, our desire is that our Lord will forgive us our faults, that we may become foremost among the believers!"

SECTION 4: Moses is Delivered and Pharaoh Drowned

53 By inspiration We told Moses: "Travel by night with My servants; for surely you shall be pursued." **54** Then Pharaoh sent heralds to (all) the Cities, **55** (Saying): "These (Israelites) are but a small band, **56** And they are raging furiously against us; **57** But we are a multitude amply forewarned."

58 So We expelled them from gardens, springs, **59** Treasures, and every kind of honourable position; **60** Thus it was, but We made the Children of Israel inheritors of such things.

61 So they pursued them at sunrise. **62** And when the two bodies saw each other, the people of Moses said: "We are sure to be overtaken." **63** (Moses) said: "By no means! My Lord is with me! Soon will He guide me!" **64** Then We told Moses by inspiration: "Strike the sea with your rod." So it divided, and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain. **65** And We made the other party approach thither. **66** We delivered Moses and all who were with him; **67** But We drowned the others. **68** Verily in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe. **69** And verily your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 5: History of Abraham

70 And rehearse to them (something of) Abraham’s story. 71 Behold, he said to his father and his people: “What worship you?” 72 They said: “We worship idols, and we remain constantly in attendance on them.” 73 He said: “Do they listen to you when you call (on them), or do you good or harm?” 74 They said: “Nay, but we found our fathers doing thus (what we do).” 75 He said: “Do you then see whom you have been worshipping,—76 You and your fathers before you?—77 For they are enemies to me; not so the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds; 78 Who created me, and it is He Who guides me; 79 Who gives me food and drink, 80 And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me; 81 Who will cause me to die, and then to live (again); 82 And who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgement...

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; 90 To the righteous, the Garden will be brought near, 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) you 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 in Evil, 95 And the whole hosts of Iblīs together. 96 They will say there in their mutual bickerings: 97 ‘By Allah, we were truly in an error manifest, 98 When we held you as equals with the Lord of the Worlds; 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 friend to feel (for us). 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 your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 6: *History of Noah*

105 The people of Noah rejected the messengers. 106 Behold, their brother Noah said to them: "Will you not fear (Allah)? 107 I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust: 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 you when it is the meanest that follow you?" 112 He said: "And what do I know as to what they do? 113 Their account is only with my Lord, if you could (but) understand. 114 I am not one to drive away those who believe. 115 I am sent only to warn plainly in public." 116 They said: "If you desist not, O Noah! you shall be stoned (to death)." 117 He said: "O my Lord! Truly my people have rejected me. 118 Judge You, 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 your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 7: *History of Hūd*

123 The 'Ād (people) rejected the messengers. 124 Behold, their brother Hūd said to them: "Will you not fear (Allah)? 125 I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust: 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 you build a landmark on every high place to amuse yourselves? 129 And do you get for yourselves fine buildings in the hope of living therein (for ever)? 130 And when you exert your strong hand, do you do it like men of absolute power? 131 Now fear Allah, and obey me. 132 Indeed, fear Him Who has bestowed on you freely all that you know. 133 Freely has He bestowed on you cattle and sons,—134 And Gardens and Springs. 135 Truly I fear for you the Penalty of a great Day."

136 They said: "It is the same to us whether you admonish us or be not among (our) admonishers! 137 This is no other than a customary device of the ancients, 138 And we are not the ones to receive Pains and Penalties!" 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 your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 8: History of Šāliḥ

141 The Thamūd (people) rejected the messengers. 142 Behold, their brother Šāliḥ 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 you be left secure, in (the enjoyment of) all that you have here?—147 Gardens and Springs, 148 And cornfields and date palms with spathes near breaking (with the weight of fruit)? 149 And you 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: "You are only one of those bewitched! 154 You are no more than a mortal like us: then bring us a Sign, if you tell the truth!" 155 He said: "Here is a she-camel: she has a right of watering, and you have a right of watering, (severally) on a day appointed. 156 Touch her not with harm, lest the Penalty of a great Day seize you." 157 But they hamstrung her: then did they become full of regrets. 158 But the Penalty seized them. Verily in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe. 159 And verily your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 9: History of Lūt

160 The people of Lūt rejected the messengers. 161 Behold, their brother Lūt said to them: "Will you not fear (Allah)? 162 I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust. 163 So fear Allah and obey me. 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 you approach males, **166** And leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, you are a people transgressing (all limits)!”

167 They said: “If you desist not, O Lūt! you will 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 woman²⁵² who lingered behind. **172** But the rest We destroyed utterly. **173** We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): 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 your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 10: History of Shu‘ayb

176 The Companions of the Wood²⁵³ rejected the messengers. **177** Behold, Shu‘ayb said to them: “Will you 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, and cause no loss (to others by fraud). **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: “You are only one of those bewitched! **186** You are no more than a mortal like us, and indeed we think you are a liar! **187** Now cause a piece of the sky to fall on us, if you are truthful!” **188** He said: “My Lord knows best what you do.” **189** But they rejected him. Then the punishment of a day of overshadowing gloom seized them, and that was the Penalty of a great Day. **190** Verily in that is a Sign:

252. This was Lūt’s wife, who lingered behind and was among those who perished. See 7:83. [3212]

253. See note to 15:78. [3214]

but most of them do not believe. **191** And verily your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 11: The Prophet's Opponents Warned

192 Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: **193** With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth—**194** To your heart and mind, that you may admonish, **195** In the perspicuous Arabic tongue. **196** Without doubt it is (announced) in the mystic 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 Penalty; **202** But the (Penalty) will come to them suddenly, while they perceive it not; **203** Then they will say: "Shall we be respited?"

204 Do they then ask for Our Penalty to be hastened on? **205** See you? 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 that they enjoyed (this life)! **208** Never did We destroy a population, but had its warners—**209** By way of reminder; and We never are unjust.

210 No evil ones have brought down this (Revelation): **211** It would neither suit them nor would they be able (to produce it). **212** Indeed they have been removed far from even (a chance of) hearing it. **213** So call not on any other god with Allah, or you will be among those under the Penalty. **214** And admonish your nearest kinsmen, **215** And lower your wing to the Believers who follow you. **216** Then if they disobey you, say: "I am free (of responsibility) for what you do!" **217** And put your trust on the Exalted in Might, the Merciful,—**218** Who see you standing forth (in prayer), **219** And your movements among those who prostrate themselves, **220** For it is He Who hears and knows all things.

221 Shall I inform you, (O people!), on whom it is that the evil ones descend? **222** They descend on every lying, wicked person, **223** (Into whose ears) they pour hearsay vanities, and most of them are liars. **224** And the Poets,—it is those straying in Evil, who follow them: **225** See you not that they wander distracted in every valley?—**226** And that they say what they practise not?—**227** Except those who believe, work righteousness, engage much in the remembrance of Allah, and defend themselves only after they are unjustly attacked. And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take!□

Chapter 27

AL-NAML (The Ants)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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.

Here there is much mystic symbolism. Wonders in the physical world are types of greater wonders in the spiritual world. 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 Lūt—lead up to the lessons of true and false worship and the miracles of Allah's grace and revelation.

Summary—Wonderful in 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 (27:1-14).

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 (27:15-44).

Fools ascribe ill-luck to godliness as in Sālih's story, or fall into the lusts with their eyes open, as in Lūt's story; but their plots and their rage will be foiled by Allah (27:45-58).

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 (27:59-93).

*** **

SECTION 1: A Reference to Moses' History

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Tā Sīm.*²⁵⁴ 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 in regular charity, and also have (full) assurance of 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 about in distraction. 5 Such are they for whom a grievous Penalty is (waiting); and in the Hereafter theirs will be the greatest loss. 6 As to you, the Qur'ān is bestowed upon you from the presence of One Who is Wise and All-Knowing.

7 Behold! Moses said 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 you may warm yourselves." 8 But when he came to the (Fire), a voice was heard: "Blessed are those 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 you throw your 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), "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 your hand into your bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm): (these are) among the nine Signs (you will take)²⁵⁵ to Pharaoh and his people: for they are a people rebellious in transgression." 13 But when Our Signs came to them, that should have opened their eyes, they said:

254. See note to 26:1.

255. Cf. 7:133; 17:101. These are (1) the Rod (7:107), (2) the Radiant Hand (7:108), (3) the years of drought or shortage of water (7:130), (4) short crops (7:130), (5) epidemics among men and beasts (7:133), (6) locusts, (7) lice, (8) frogs, and (9) water turning to blood.(7:133) [1091]

"This is sorcery manifest!" **14** And they rejected those Signs in iniquity and arrogance, though their souls were convinced thereof: so see what was the end of those who acted corruptly!

SECTION 2: History of Solomon

15 We gave (in the past) knowledge to David and Solomon: and they both said: "Praise be to Allah, Who has favoured us above many of His servants who believe!" **16** And Solomon was David's heir. He said: "O you people! We have been taught the speech of birds, and on us has been bestowed (a little) of all things: 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 (lowly) valley of ants, one of the ants said: "O you ants, get into your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under foot) without knowing it." **19** So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Your favours, which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please You: and admit me, by Your Grace, to the ranks of Your righteous Servants."

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? **21** I will certainly punish him with a severe penalty, 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 (territory) which you have not compassed, and I have come to you from Sabā'²⁵⁶ with tidings true. **23** I found (there) a woman

256. Sabā' may reasonably be identified as the Biblical Sheba (1 Kings x. 1-10). It is further referred to in the Sūrah called after its name: 34:15-20. 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 Hadhramawt territory. The famous dam of Ma'rīb made the country very prosperous and enabled it to attain a high degree of civilisation ("provided with every requisite" in the next verse). The Queen of Sheba therefore

(continued...)

ruling²⁵⁷ over them and provided with every requisite; and she has a magnificent throne. **24** I found her and her people worshipping the sun besides Allah:²⁵⁸ Satan has made their deeds seem pleasing in their eyes, and has kept them away from the Path,—so they receive no guidance,—**25** (Kept them away from the Path), that they should not worship Allah, Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and knows what you hide and what you reveal. **26** Allah!—there is no god but He!—Lord of the Throne Supreme!”

27 (Solomon) said: “Soon shall we see whether you have told the truth or lied! **28** Go you, 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: “You chiefs! Here is—delivered to me—a letter worthy of respect. **30** It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): ‘In the

256. (...continued)

rightly held her head high until she saw the glories of Solomon. [3263]

257. The Queen of Sheba (by name Bilqīs 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 northeastern 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 992 to 952 B.C. 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 Negast*), 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. [3264]

258. The ancient religion of the people of Sabā' (the Ḥimyar or Sabaean) consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies, the sun, the planets, and the stars. Possibly the cult was connected with that of Chaldea, the homeland of Abraham: see 6:75-79 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 Najrān and the Jewish dynasty of kings (e.g., Dhū Nuwās, d. A.C. 525) who persecuted them in the century before Islam—also for the Christian Abyssinian Governor Abrahah and his discomfiture in the year of the Prophet's birth (Sūrah 105), say A.C. 570. Jewish-Christian influences were powerful in Arabia in the sixth century of the Christian era.

The religion of these Sabaean (written in Arabic with a *Sīn*) should not be confused with that of the Ṣābiān (with a *Sād*), as to whom see 2:62. [3266]

name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful: **31** Be you not arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (to the true Religion).”

SECTION 3: History of Solomon

32 She said: “You chiefs! Advise me in (this) my affair: no affair have I decided except in your presence.” **33** They said: “We are endued with strength, and given to vehement war: but the command is with you; so consider what you will 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 you give me abundance in wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you! Nay it is you who rejoice in your gift! **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): “You Chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?” **39** Said an ‘Ifrit,²⁵⁹ of the *Jinns*: “I will bring it to you before you rise from your 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 you within the twinkling of an eye!” Then when (Solomon) saw it placed firmly before him, he said: “This is 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: “Transform her throne out of all recognition by her: let us see whether she is guided (to the truth) or is one of those who receive no guidance.”

42 So when she arrived, she was asked, “Is this your throne?” She said, “It was just like this; and knowledge was bestowed on us in

259. *Ifrit*: a large, powerful *jinn*, reputed to be wicked and crafty: hence he is anxious to be recognised as one that “could be trusted”. [3274]

advance of this, and we have submitted to Allah (in Islam).” **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.”

SECTION 4: *Ṣāliḥ* and Lot

45 We sent (aforetime), to the Thamūd, their brother *Ṣāliḥ*, saying, “Serve Allah”: but behold, they became two factions quarrelling with each other. **46** He said: “O my people! Why ask you to hasten on the evil in preference to the good? If only you ask Allah for forgiveness, you may hope to receive mercy.” **47** They said: “Ill omen do we augur from you and those that are with you.” He said: “Your ill omen is with Allah; indeed, you are a people under trial.” **48** There were in the city nine men of a family, who made mischief in the land, and would not reform. **49** They said: “Swear a mutual oath by Allah that we shall make a secret night attack on him and his people, 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, 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.

54 (We also sent) *Lūṭ* (as a messenger): behold, he said to his people, “Do you do what is shameful though you see (its iniquity)? **55** Would you really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, you are a people (grossly) ignorant!” **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!” **57** But We saved him and his family, except his wife; her We destined to be of

those who lagged behind. **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: **The Faithful will be Exalted**

59 Say: Praise be to Allah, and Peace on His servants whom He has chosen (for His Message). (Who) is better?—Allah or the false gods they associate (with Him)?

PART XX

60 Or, who has created the heavens and the earth, and Who sends you down rain from the sky? Indeed, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty and delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth 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; and made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Nay, most of them know not. **62** Or, who listens to the (soul) distressed when it calls on Him, and who relieves its suffering, and makes you (mankind) inheritors of the earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Little it is that you heed! **63** Or, who guides you through the depths of darkness on land and sea, and who sends the winds as heralds 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, and who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? (Can there be another) god besides Allah? Say, "Bring forth your argument, if you are telling the truth!" **65** Say: None in the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows what is hidden: nor can they perceive when they shall be raised up (for Judgement). **66** Still less can their knowledge comprehend the Hereafter: nay, they are in doubt and uncertainty thereof; nay, they are blind thereunto!

SECTION 6: **The Spiritual Resurrection**

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 you through the earth and see what has been the end of those guilty (of sin)." **70** But grieve not over them, nor distress yourself because of their plots.

71 They also say: "When will this promise (come to pass)? (Say) if you are truthful." **72** Say: "It may be that some of the events which you wish to hasten on may be (close) in your pursuit!" **73** But verily your Lord is full of grace to mankind: yet most of them are ungrateful. **74** And verily your Lord knows all that their hearts do hide. As well as all that they reveal. **75** Nor is there aught of the Unseen, in heaven or earth, but is (recorded) in a clear record.

76 Verily this Qur'ān does explain to the Children of Israel most of the matters in which they disagree. **77** And it certainly is a Guide and a Mercy to those who believe. **78** Verily your Lord will decide between them by His Decree: and He is Exalted in Might, All-Knowing. **79** So put your trust in Allah: for you are on (the path of) manifest Truth. **80** Truly you cannot cause the Dead to listen, nor can you cause the Deaf to hear the call, (especially) when they turn back in retreat. **81** Nor can you be a guide to the Blind, (to prevent them) from straying: only those will you get to listen who believe in Our Signs, and they will bow in Islam. **82** And when the Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), We shall produce from the earth a Beast to (face) them:²⁶⁰ he will speak to them, for that mankind did not believe with assurance in Our Signs.

SECTION 7: Passing Away of Opposition

83 One 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 Judgement Seat), (Allah) will say: "Did you reject My Signs, though you comprehended them not in

260. The Beast will be one of the Signs of the Last Day 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. [3313].

knowledge, or what was it you did?" **85** And the Word will be fulfilled against them, because of their wrong-doing, and they will be unable to speak (in plea). **86** See they not that We have made the night for them to rest in and the day to give 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 His (Presence) as beings conscious of their lowliness. **88** You see the mountains and think them firmly fixed: but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away: (such is) the artistry of Allah, Who disposes of all things in perfect order: for He is well acquainted with all that you do. **89** If any do good, good will (accrue) to them therefrom; and they will be secure from terror that Day. **90** And if any do evil, their faces will be thrown headlong into the Fire: "Do you receive a reward other than that which you have earned by your deeds?"

91 For me, I have been commanded to serve the Lord of this City, Him Who has sanctified it and to Whom (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'ān: 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 His Signs, so that you shall know them"; and your Lord is not unmindful of all that you do. □

Chapter 28

AL-QASAS (The Narration)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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 Hijrah.

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 (28:1-42).

So was the Holy Prophet Muḥammad 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 (28:43-60).

The Future is with those who repent, have faith, and do good: for all Mercy and Truth are with Allah (28:61-75).

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 (28:76-88).

*** **

SECTION 1: History of Moses

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Ta Sū Mīm.*²⁶¹ 2 These are Verses of the Book that makes (things) clear. 3 We rehearse to you some of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in Truth, for people who believe.

261. See 26:1. [3326]

4 Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief. 5 And We wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, 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,²⁶² and their hosts, at their hands, the very things against which they were taking precautions.

7 So We sent this inspiration to the mother of Moses: "Suckle (your child), but when you have fears about him, cast him into the river, but fear not nor grieve: for We shall restore him to you, and We shall make him one of Our messengers." 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 you: 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 But there came to be a void in the heart of the mother of Moses: she was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith), so that she might remain a (firm) believer. 11 And she said to the sister of (Moses), "Follow him" so she (the sister) watched him in the character of a stranger. And they knew 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 and be sincerely attached to 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 understand.

262. Hāmān was evidently Pharaoh's minister, not to be confused 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 485 to 464 B.C. [333!]

SECTION 2: *History of Moses*

14 When he reached full age, and was firmly established (in life), We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge: for thus do We reward those who do good. 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 religion, and the other, of his foes. Now the man of his own religion appealed to him against his foe, and Moses struck him with his fist and made an end of him. He said: "This is a work of Evil (Satan): for he is an enemy that manifestly misleads!" 16 He prayed: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do You then forgive me!" So (Allah) forgave him: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. 17 He said: "O my Lord! For that You have bestowed Your Grace on me, never shall I be a help to those who sin!" 18 So he saw the morning in the City, looking about, in a state of fear, when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again). Moses said to him: "You are truly, it is clear, a quarrelsome fellow!" 19 Then, when he decided to lay hold of the man who was an enemy to both of them, that man said: "O Moses! Is it your intention to slay me as you slew a man yesterday? Your intention is none other than to become a powerful violent man in the land, and not to be one who sets things right!" 20 And there came a man, running, from the furthest end of the City. He said: "O Moses! The Chiefs are taking counsel together about you, to slay you: so get you away, for I do give you sincere advice." 21 He therefore got away therefrom, looking about, in a state of fear. He prayed: "O my Lord! Save me from people given to wrong-doing."

SECTION 3: *History of Moses*

22 Then, when he turned his face towards (the land of) Madyan, he said: "I do hope that my Lord will show me the smooth and straight Path." 23 And when he arrived at the watering (place) in Madyan, 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." **24** So he watered (their flocks) for them; then he turned back to the shade, and said: "O my Lord! Truly am I in (desperate) need of any good that You do send me!" . . .

25 Afterwards one of the (damsels) came (back) to him, walking bashfully. She said: "My father invites you that he may reward you for having watered (our flocks) for us." So when he came to him and narrated the story, he said: "Fear you not: (well) have you escaped from unjust people." **26** Said one of the (damsels): "O my (dear) father! Engage him on wages: truly the best of men for you to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty" . . . **27** He said: "I intend to wed one of these my daughters to you, on condition that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten years, it will be (grace) from you. But I intend not to place you under a difficulty: you will find me, indeed, if Allah wills, one of the righteous." **28** He said: "Be that (the agreement) between me and you: whichever of the two terms I fulfil, let there be no ill-will to me. Be Allah a witness to what we say."

SECTION 4: History of Moses

29 Now when Moses had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he perceived a fire in the direction of Mount Tūr. He said to his family: "Tarry you; I perceive a fire; I hope to bring you from there some information, or a burning firebrand, that you may warm yourselves." **30** But when he came to the (Fire), a voice was heard from the right bank of the valley, from a tree in hallowed ground: "O Moses! Verily I am Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. **31** Now do you throw your 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 you are of those who are secure. **32** Move your hand into your bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm), and draw your hand close to your side (to guard) against fear. Those are the two credentials from your 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. **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 your arm through your brother, and invest you both with authority, so they shall not be able to touch you: with Our Signs shall you triumph,—you two as well as those who follow you."

36 When Moses came to them with Our clear Signs, they said: "This is nothing but sorcery faked up: never did we hear the like among our fathers of old!" **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." **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 Judgement no help shall they find. **42** In this world We made a curse to follow them: and on the Day of Judgement they will be among the loathed (and despised).

SECTION 5: A Prophet like Moses

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. **44** You were not on the Western side when We decreed the commission to Moses, nor were you a witness (of those events).²⁶³ **45** But We raised up (new) generations, and long were the ages that passed over them; but you were not a dweller among the people of Madyan, rehearsing Our Signs to them; but it is We Who send messengers (with inspiration). **46** Nor were you at the side of (the

263. The Sinai peninsula is in the northwest corner of Arabia. But the reference here is, I think, to the western side of the valley of Tuwā. Mount Tūr where Moses received the prophetic commission, is on the western side of the valley. [3376]

Mountain of Tūr when We called (to Moses). Yet (are you sent) as a Mercy from your Lord, to give warning to a people to whom no warner had come before you: in order that they may receive admonition. **47** If (We had) not (sent you to the Quraysh),—in case a calamity should seize them for (the deeds) that their hands have sent forth, they might say: “Our Lord! Why did You not send us a messenger? We should then have followed Your 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)!” **49** Say: “Then bring you a Book from Allah, which is a better guide than either of them, that I may follow it! (Do), if you are truthful!” **50** But if they listen not to you, 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: The Truth of Revelation

51 Now have We caused the Word to reach them themselves, in order that they may receive admonition. **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: indeed we have been Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will) from before this. **54** Twice will they be given 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; peace be to you: we seek not the ignorant.” **56** It is true you will not be able to guide everyone,²⁶⁴ whom you love; but Allah

264. The immediate occasion for this was the death of Abū Tālib, an uncle whom the Holy Prophet loved dearly and who had befriended and protected him. The Prophet was
(continued...)

guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.

57 They say: "If we were to follow the guidance with you, we should be snatched away 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 populations 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! **59** Nor was your Lord the one to destroy a population 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 you are given are but the conveniences of this life and the glitter thereof; but that which is with Allah is better and more enduring: will you not then be wise?

SECTION 7: Opponents Shall be Brought Low

61 Are (these two) alike?—one to whom We have made a goodly promise, and who is going to reach its (fulfilment), and one to whom We have given the good things of this life, but who, on the Day of Judgement, is to be among those brought up (for punishment)? **62** That Day (Allah) will call to them, and say "Where are My 'partners'?—whom you imagined (to be such)?" **63** Those against whom the charge 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) in Your presence: it was not us they worshipped." **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 Penalty (before them); (how they will

264. (...continued)

naturally anxious that he should die in the profession of the true Faith, but the pagan Quraysh leaders persuaded him to remain true to the faith of his fathers. This was an occasion of disappointment and grief to the Prophet. We are told that in such circumstances we should not grieve. All whom we love do not necessarily share our views or beliefs. We must not judge. Allah will guide whom He pleases and as He pleases. He alone knows the true inwardness of things. [3388]

wish) 'if only they had been open to guidance!'

65 That Day (Allah) will call to them, and say: "What was the answer you gave to the messengers?" **66** Then the (whole) story that Day will seem obscure to them (like light to the blind) and they will not be able (even) to question each other.

67 But any that (in this life) had repented, believed, and worked righteousness, will have hopes to be among those who achieve salvation.

68 Your Lord does create and choose as He pleases: no choice have they (in the matter): Glory to Allah! And far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)! **69** And your Lord knows all that their hearts conceal and all that they reveal. **70** And He is Allah: there is no god but He. To Him be praise, at the first and at the last: for Him is the Command, and to Him shall you (all) be brought back.

71 Say: See you? If Allah were to make the night perpetual over you to the Day of Judgement, what god is there other than Allah, who can give you enlightenment? Will you not then listen? **72** Say: See you? If Allah were to make the day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgement, what god is there other than Allah, who can give you a night in which you can rest? Will you not then see? **73** It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you night and day,—that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His Grace;—and in order that you may be grateful.

74 The Day that He will call on them, He will say: "Where are My 'partners'?—whom you imagined (to be such)?" **75** And from each people shall We draw a witness, and We shall say: "Produce your Proof": then shall they know that the Truth is in Allah (alone), and the (lies) which they invented will leave them in the lurch.

SECTION 8: Korah's Wealth Leads Him to Ruin

76 Qārūn was doubtless,²⁶⁵ of the people of Moses; but he acted insolently towards them: 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 loves not those who exult (in riches). 77 But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion in this world: but do you good, as Allah has been good to you, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief." 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 Qārūn 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 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 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 or restricts it, to any of His servants He pleases! 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."

265. 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 equality 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 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." [3404]

SECTION 9: The Prophet will Return to Makkah

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 you, will bring you back to the Place²⁶⁶ of Return. Say: "My Lord knows best who it is that brings true guidance, and who is in manifest error." **86** And you had not expected that the Book would be sent to you except as a Mercy from your Lord: therefore lend not you support in any way to those who reject (Allah's Message). **87** And let nothing keep you back from the Signs of Allah after they have been revealed to you: and invite (men) to your Lord, and be not of the company of those who join gods with Allah. **88** And call not, besides Allah, on another god. There is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His own Face. To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will you (all) be brought back. □

266. *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 *Juhfa*, on the road from Makkah to Madīnah, a short distance from Makkah, on the Hijrah 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. [3416]

AL-'ANKABŪT
(The Spider)

Introduction

This Sūrah is the last of the series begun with Sūrah 17, in which the growth of the spiritual 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 Sūrah 17.) It also closes the sub-series beginning with Sūrah 26, which is concerned with the spiritual Light, and the reactions to it at certain periods of spiritual history. (See Introduction to Sūrah 26.)

The last Sūrah 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 Sūrahs all bearing the Abbreviated Letters, *Alif Lām Mīm*, it forms a connecting link between the present series and those three Sūrahs.

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 Madyan, '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 Sūrah 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 Hijrah, to the struggling Brotherhood of Islam.

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 (29:1-27).

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 (29:28-44).

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 (29:45-69).

*** **

SECTION 1: Trials Purify

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm.*²⁶⁷

2 Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, “We believe”, and that they will not be tested? 3 We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false. 4 Do those who practise evil think that they will get the better of Us? Evil is their judgement! 5 For those whose hopes are in the meeting with Allah (in the Hereafter, let them strive); for 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 evil (that may be) in them, and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds. 8 We have enjoined on man kindness to parents: but if they (either of them) strive (to force) you to join with Me (in worship) anything of which you have no knowledge, obey them not. You have (all) to return to Me, and I will tell you (the truth) of all that you 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 you) from your Lord, they are sure to say, “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. 12 And the Unbelievers say to those who believe: “Follow our path, and we will bear (the consequences) of your

267. For these Abbreviated Letters see note to 2:1 and see Introduction to this Sūrah. [3422]

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, and on the Day of Judgement they will be called to account for their falsehoods.

SECTION 2: Noah and Abraham

14 We (once) sent Noah to his people, and he tarried among them a thousand years 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 to his people, "Serve Allah and fear Him: that will be best for you—if you understand! **17** For you do worship idols besides Allah, and you invent falsehood. The things that you worship besides Allah have no power to give you sustenance: then seek you sustenance from Allah, serve Him, and be grateful to Him: to Him will be your return. **18** And if you reject (the Message), so did generations before you: and the duty of the apostle 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. **21** He punishes whom He pleases, and He grants mercy to whom He pleases, and towards Him are you turned. **22** Not on earth nor in heaven will you be able (fleeing) to frustrate (His Plan), nor have you, besides Allah, any protector or helper."

SECTION 3: Abraham and Lūt

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 Penalty.

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.

Verily in this are Signs for people who believe. **25** And he said: "For you, you have taken (for worship) idols besides Allah, out of mutual love and regard between yourselves in this life; but on the Day of Judgement you shall disown each other and curse each other: and your abode will be the Fire, and you shall have none to help." **26** But Lūt had faith in Him: He said: "I will leave home for the sake of my Lord: for He is Exalted in Might, and Wise." **27** And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained among his progeny Prophethood and Revelation, and We granted him his reward in this life; and he was in the Hereafter (of the company) of the Righteous.

28 And (remember) Lūt: behold, he said to his people: "You do commit lewdness, such as no people in Creation (ever) committed before you. **29** Do you indeed approach men, and cut off the highway?—and practise wickedness (even) in your councils?" But his people gave no answer but this: they said: "Bring us the Wrath of Allah if you tell the truth." **30** He said: "O my Lord! Help You me against people who do mischief!"

SECTION 4: Opposition to Truth Ever a Failure

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 (addicted to) crime." **32** He said: "But there is Lūt there." They said: "Well do we know 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 you not, nor grieve: we are (here) to save you and your following, except your wife: she is of those who lag behind. **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'ayb. 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.

38 (Remember also) the ‘Ād and the Thamūd (people): clearly will appear to you from (the traces) of their buildings (their fate): the Evil One made their deeds alluring to them, and kept them back from the Path, though they were gifted with intelligence and skill. 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 of stones); some were caught by a (mighty) Blast; some We caused the earth to swallow up; and some We drowned (in the waters): it was not Allah Who injured (or oppressed) them: they injured (and oppressed) their own souls.

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 houses is the Spider's house;—if they but knew. 42 Verily Allah does 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 true (proportions): verily in that is a Sign for those who believe.

PART XXI

SECTION 5: The Qur'ān is a Purifier

45 Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that you do. 46 And dispute you not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, "We believe in the Revelation which has come down

to us and in that which came down to you; our Allah and your Allah is One; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam).” 47 And thus (it is) that We have sent down the Book to you. So the People of the Book believe therein, as also do some of these (pagan Arabs): and none but Unbelievers reject Our Signs. 48 And you were not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor are you (able) to transcribe it with your 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?” Say: “The Signs are indeed with Allah: and I am indeed a clear Warner.” 51 And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is Mercy and a Reminder to those who believe.

SECTION 6: Warning and Consolation

52 Say: “Enough is Allah for a Witness between me and you: He knows what is in the heavens and on earth. And it is those who believe in vanities and reject Allah, that will perish (in the end).”

53 They ask you to hasten on the Punishment (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,—suddenly, while they perceive not! 54 They ask you to hasten on the Punishment: 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, and (a Voice) shall say: “Taste you (the fruits) of your deeds!”

56 O My servants who believe! Truly, spacious is My Earth: therefore serve you Me—(and Me alone)! 57 Every soul shall have a taste of death: in the end to Us shall you be brought back. 58 But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness—to them shall We give a Home in Heaven,—lofty mansions beneath which flow rivers,—to dwell therein for ever;—an excellent reward for those who do (good)!—59 Those who persevere in patience, and put their trust in their Lord and Cherisher.

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 you 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. **63** And if indeed you ask them 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: *Triumph of the Faithful*

64 What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in 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; 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? **68** And who does more wrong 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 in Our (Cause),—We will certainly guide them to Our Paths: for verily Allah is with those who do right. □

AL-RŪM
(The Roman Empire)

Introduction

This Sūrah, as remarked in the Introduction to the last Sūrah, deals with the question of *Ma'ad* or the Final End of Things, from various points of view. In the last Sūrah, 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 Sūrah 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 Universal Plan points to the Hereafter. We shall see that the next two Sūrahs (31 and 32) present the theme in other aspects. All four are introduced with the Abbreviated Letters *Alif, Lam, Mim*, which (without being dogmatic) I have suggested as symbolical of the Past, Present and Future.

The chronology of this Sūrah is significant. It was revealed about the 7th or 6th year *before* the Hijrah, corresponding to 615-616 of the Christian era, when the tide of Persian conquest over the Roman Empire was running strong. The Christian Empire of Rome had lost Jerusalem to the Persians, and Christianity had been humbled in the dust. 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 Quraysh 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 30:1-6 revealed, clearly foreshadowing the final defeat of Persia 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 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 chequerboard of Time, compared to a mightier movement that was taking birth in the promulgation of Islam. In the seventh or sixth year *before* the Hijrah, and for a year or two after the Hijrah, 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 Tā'if (two years before the Hijrah) and the murder-plot on the eve of the Hijrah were yet to come. But the purpose of Allah is not to be thwarted. Badr (A.H. 2 = A.C. 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 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. The spiritual Revolution was an 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 (30:1-19).

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 (30:20-40).

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 (30:41-60).

*** **

SECTION I: A Great Prophecy

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm.*²⁶⁸ 2 The Roman Empire²⁶⁹ has been defeated,—3 In a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious,²⁷⁰—4 Within a few years.²⁷¹ With Allah is the Decision, in the Past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice,—5 With the help of Allah. He helps whom He will, and He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. 6 (It is) the promise of Allah. Never does Allah depart from His promise: but most men understand not. 7 They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless.

8 Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends 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

268. See 2:1 and Introduction to this Sūrah. [3504]

269. The remarkable defeats of the Roman Empire under Heraclius and the straits to which it was reduced were 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 A.C. 614-15, shortly before this Sūrah was revealed. [3505]

270. The Pagan Quraysh 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 Hijrah) and in 624, when Heraclius carried his campaign into the heart of Persia and the Makkan Quraysh were beaten off at Badr. [3506]

271. *Bid'* 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. [3507]

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. **10** In the long run evil in the extreme 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: The Two Parties

11 It is Allah Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it; then shall you be brought back to Him. **12** On the Day that the Hour will be established, the guilty will 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 that the Hour will be established,—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 (give) glory to Allah, when you reach eventide and when you rise in the morning; **18** Indeed, 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 from the living, and Who gives life to the earth after it is dead: and thus shall you be brought out (from the dead).

SECTION 3: Manifestations of Divine Power in Nature

20 Among His Signs is this, that He created you from dust; and then,—behold, you are men scattered (far and wide)! **21** And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, 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 in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know. **23** And among His Signs is the sleep that you take by night and by day, and the quest that you (make for livelihood) out of His Bounty: verily in that are Signs for those who listen. **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, you (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 process of) creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy. 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: Appeal to Human Nature

28 He does propound to you a similitude from your own (experience): do you have partners among those whom your right hands possess, to share as equals in the wealth We have²⁷² bestowed on you? Do you fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We explain the Signs in detail to a people that understand. **29** Nay, the wrong-doers (merely) follow their own lusts, being devoid of knowledge. But who will guide those whom Allah leaves astray? To them there will be no helpers.

30 So set you your face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not. **31**

272. 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? [3536]

Turn you back in repentance to Him, and fear Him: establish regular prayers, and be not you among those who join gods with Allah,—**32** Those who split up their Religion, and become (mere) Sects,—each party rejoicing in that which is with itself!

33 When trouble touches men, they cry to their Lord, turning back to Him in repentance: but when He gives them a taste of Mercy as from Himself, 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 you know (your folly). **35** Or have We sent down authority to them, which points out to them the things to which they pay part-worship? **36** When We give men a taste of Mercy, they exult thereat: and when some evil afflicts them because of what their (own) hands have sent forth, behold, they are in despair! **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 lay out for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah: but that which you lay out for charity, seeking the Countenance of Allah, (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" who can do any single one of these things? Glory to Him! And High is He above the partners they attribute (to Him)!

SECTION 5: Transformation

41 Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil). **42** Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before (you): most of them worshipped others besides Allah." **43** But

set you your face to the right Religion, before there come from Allah the Day which there is no chance of averting: on that Day shall men be divided (in two). **44** Those who reject Faith will suffer from that rejection: and those who work righteousness will spread their couch (of repose) for themselves (in heaven): **45** That He may reward those who believe and work righteous deeds, out of His Bounty. For He loves not those who reject Faith.

46 Among His Signs is this, that He sends the Winds, as heralds of Glad Tidings, giving you a taste of His (Grace and) Mercy,—that the ships may sail (majestically) by His Command and that you may seek of His Bounty: in order that you may be grateful. **47** We did indeed send, before you, messengers to their (respective) peoples, and they came to them with clear Signs: then, to those who transgressed, We meted out Retribution: and it was due from 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 you see raindrops 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 contemplate (O man!) the memorials of Allah's Mercy!—how He gives life to the earth after its death: verily the Same 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 you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they show their backs and turn away. **53** Nor can you lead back the blind from their straying: only those will you make to hear, who believe in Our Signs and submit (their wills in Islam).

SECTION 6: Overthrow of Opposition

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: He creates as He wills, and it is He Who has all knowledge and power. **55** On the Day that the Hour (of reckoning) will be established, 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 you did tarry, within Allah's Decree, to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the Day of Resurrection: but you—you were not aware!" **57** So on that Day no excuse of theirs will avail the transgressors, nor will they be invited (then) to seek grace (by repentance).

58 Verily We have propounded for men, in this Qur'ān, every kind of Parable: but if you bring to them any Sign, the Unbelievers are sure to say, "You do nothing but talk vanities." **59** Thus does Allah seal up the hearts of those who understand not. **60** So patiently persevere: for verily the promise of Allah is true: nor let those shake your firmness, who have (themselves) no certainty of faith. □

LUQMĀN

Introduction

The argument of the Final End of Things is here continued from another point of view. What is Wisdom? Where shall it be found? Will it 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 Luqmān 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 Sūrah has no significance. In the main, it belongs to the late Makkan 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 Luqmān the Wise, is true service to Allah, and consists in moderation (31:1-19).

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 (31:20-34).

*** **

SECTION 1: Believers Will be Successful

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm.*²⁷³ 2 These are Verses of the Wise Book,²⁷⁴—3 A

273. See n. 25 to 2:1 and Introduction to Sūrah 30. [3579]

274. This Sūrah 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 (*'amal*) the right course in life to (continued...)

Guide and a Mercy to the Doers of Good,—4 Those who establish regular prayer, and give regular charity, and have (in their hearts) the assurance of the Hereafter. 5 These are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and these are the ones who will prosper.

6 But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, 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 Penalty. 7 When Our Signs are rehearsed to such a one, he turns²⁷⁵ away in arrogance, as if he heard them not, as if there were deafness in both his ears: announce to him a grievous Penalty. 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, Wise.

10 He created the heavens without any pillars that you can see; He set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you; and He scattered through it beasts of all kinds. We send down rain from the sky, and produce on the earth every kind of noble creature, in pairs. 11 Such is the Creation of Allah: now show Me what is there that others besides Him have created: nay, but the Transgressors are in manifest error.

274. (...continued)

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" (*al-kitāb al-hakīm*) is one of the titles of the Qur'ān. [3580]

275. 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. [3585]

SECTION 2: Luqmān's Advice to His Son

12 We bestowed (in the past) wisdom on Luqmān:²⁷⁶ "Show (your) 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, Luqmān said to his son by way of instruction: "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: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: (hear the command), "Show gratitude to Me and to your parents: to Me is (your final) Goal. 15 But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not; yet bear them company in this life with justice (and consideration), and follow the way of those who turn to Me (in love): in the End the return of you all is to Me, and I will tell you the truth (and meaning) of all that you did." 16 "O my son!" (said Luqmān), "If there be (but) the weight of a mustard seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well-acquainted (with them). 17 O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever betide you; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. 18 And swell not your cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loves not any arrogant boaster. 19 And be moderate in your pace, and lower your voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass."

276. The sage Luqmān, after whom this Sūrah 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'ammār* (the long-lived). He is referred by some to the age of the 'Ād people, for whom see note to 7:65. 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 apologues are credited to him, similar to Aesop's Fables in Greek tradition. The identification of Luqmān and Aesop has no historical foundation, though it is true that the traditions about them influenced each other. [3593]

SECTION 3: Greatness of Divine Power

20 Do you not see that Allah has subjected 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? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah, without knowledge and without guidance, and without a Book 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)." What! Even if it is Satan beckoning them to the Penalty of the (blazing) Fire?

22 Whoever submits his whole self to Allah, and is a doer of good, has grasped indeed the most trustworthy handhold: and with Allah rests the End and Decision of (all) affairs. **23** But if any reject Faith, let not his rejection grieve you: to Us 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: in the end shall We drive them to a chastisement unrelenting.

25 If you ask them, who it is that created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "Allah". Say: "Praise be to Allah!" But most of them understand 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. **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** See you not that Allah merges Night into Day and He merges Day into Night; that He has subjected the sun, and the moon (to His Law), each running its course for a term appointed; and that Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do? **30** That is because Allah is the (only) Reality, and because whatever else they invoke besides Him is Falsehood; and because Allah,—He is the Most High, Most Great.

SECTION 4: **The Doom Comes**

31 See you 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 and give thanks. **32** When a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call to Allah, offering Him sincere devotion. But when He has delivered them safely to land, there are among them those that halt 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. Verily, the promise of Allah is true: let not then this present life deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah. **34** Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends down rain, and He Who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow; nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things). □

Chapter 32

AL-SAJDAH (The Prostration)

Introduction

This short Sūrah closes the series of four *Alif, Lām, Mīm* Sūrahs, which began with the 29th. Its theme is the mystery of Creation, the mystery of Time and the mystery of the *Ma'ād* (the Final End) as viewed through the light of Allah's revelation. The contemplation of these mysteries 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 significance.

Summary—The mystery of Creation, the mystery of Time, and the mystery of 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 (32:1-30).

*** **

SECTION 1: Islam Will be Established

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Alif Lām Mīm.*²⁷⁷

2 (This is) the revelation of the Book in which there is no doubt,—from the Lord of the Worlds. 3 Or do they say, "He has forged it"? Nay, it is the Truth from your Lord, that you may admonish a people to whom no warner has come before you: in order that they may receive guidance.

4 It is Allah Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all

277. See note to 2:1 and Introduction to Sūrah 30. [3628]

between them, in six Days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority): you have none, besides Him, to protect or intercede (for you): will you not then receive admonition? **5** He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning. **6** Such is He, the Knower of all things, hidden and open, the Exalted (in power), the Merciful;—**7** He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay, **8** And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised: **9** But He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks do you give! **10** And they say: "What! When we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a Creation renewed?" Nay, they deny the Meeting with their Lord! **11** Say: "The Angel of Death, put in charge of you, will (duly) take your souls: then shall you be brought back to your Lord."

SECTION 2: Believers and Disbelievers—a Comparison

12 If only you could see when the guilty ones will bend low their heads before their Lord, (saying:) "Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard: now then send us back (to the world): we will work rightcousness: for we do indeed (now) believe." **13** If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance: but the Word from Me will come true, "I will fill Hell with *Jinns* and men all together." **14** "Taste you then—for you forgot the Meeting of this Day of yours, and We too will forget you—taste you the Penalty of Eternity for your (evil) deeds!" **15** Only those believe in Our Signs, who, when they are recited to them, fall down in adoration, and celebrate the praises of their Lord, nor are they (ever) puffed up with pride. **16** Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: 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 are kept hidden (in reserve) for them—as a reward for their (good) deeds.

18 Is then the man who believes no better than the man who is rebellious and wicked? Not equal are they. 19 For those who believe and do righteous deeds, are Gardens as hospitable homes, for their (good) deeds. 20 As to those who are rebellious and wicked, their abode will be the Fire: every time they wish to get away therefrom, they will be forced thereinto, and it will be said to them: "Taste you the Penalty of the Fire, the which you were wont to reject as false." 21 And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior to the supreme Penalty, in order that they may (repent and) return. 22 And who does more wrong than one to whom are recited the Signs of his Lord, and who then turns away therefrom? Verily from those who transgress We shall exact (due) Retribution.

SECTION 3: *Dead Earth Will Receive Life*

23 We did indeed aforetime give the Book to Moses: be not then in doubt of its reaching (you): and We made it a guide to the Children of Israel. 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 your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgement, 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? 27 And do they not see that We do drive rain to parched soil (bare of herbage), and produce therewith crops, providing food for their cattle and themselves? Have they not the vision?

28 They say: "When will this decision be, if you are telling the truth?" 29 Say: "On the Day 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 are waiting. □

AL-AHZĀB
(The Confederates)

Introduction

The series of mystic Sūrahs beginning with Sūrah 26 having been closed with the last Sūrah, 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 *Al-Ahzāb* or the Confederates, who tried to surround and annihilate the Muslim community in Madīnah, is full of underhand intrigues on the part of such diverse enemies as the Pagan Quraysh, the Jews (Banū Naḍīr) who had already been expelled from Madīnah for their treachery, the Ghaṭfān tribe of Bedouin Arabs from the interior, and the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayzah in Madīnah. 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 became more firmly established than ever.

The Quraysh in Makkah had tried all sorts of persecution, boycott, insult, and bodily injuries to the Muslims, leading to their partial *Hijrah* to Abyssinia and their *Hijrah* as a body to Madīnah. The first armed conflict between them and the Muslims took place at Badr in Ramadān A.H. 2, when the Quraysh were signally defeated. (See note 3:13.) Next year (Shawwāl A.H. 3) they came to take revenge on Madīnah. The battle was fought at Uhud, and though the Muslims suffered severely, Madīnah 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 Madīnah with a force of 10,000 men in Shawwāl and Dhū al-Qa'dah A.H. 5. This is the siege of the Confederates referred to in 33:9-27, which lasted over two weeks: some accounts give 27 days. It caused much suffering, from hunger, cold, an 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 Madīnah 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 homes 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 Zaynabs) 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 Fātimah, then aged about 19 to 20, lovingly nursed her father's wounds at Uhud (A.H. 3); Rufaydah nursed Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh's wounds at the Siege of Madīnah by the Confederates (A.H. 5); and in the Khaybar expedition (A.H. 7) Muslim women went out from Madīnah for nursing service.

A portion of this Sūrah sums up the lessons of the Battle of the Trench and must have been revealed some time after that Battle (Shawwāl A.H. 5). The marriage with Zaynab referred to in verse 37 also took place in the same year. Some portions (*e.g.*, verse 27) were probably revealed in A.H. 7 after the Khaybar settlement.

Summary—The pagan customs in human relationships should be abandoned, and men and women should be held in honour according to natural relationships and spiritual positions (33:1-8).

The Battle of the Trench and its lessons: hypocrites and their fears: Truth and noble examples to be followed (33:9-27).

High position and seemly conduct for the Prophet's wives: unhappy marriages (like Zaynab's) not to be perpetuated on false scruples: Prophet's wives to be treated kindly and gently (33:28-52).

Respect due to Prophet and his family: slander to be avoided and punished: guard your words and your responsibilities (33:53-73).

*** **

SECTION 1: Spiritual and Physical Relationship

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O Prophet! Fear Allah, and listen not to the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites:²⁷⁸ verily Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. 2 But follow that which comes to you by inspiration from your Lord: for Allah is well acquainted with (all) that you do. 3 And put your trust in Allah, and enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.

4 Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body: nor has He made your wives whom you divorce by *Zihār*²⁷⁹ your mothers: nor has He made your adopted sons²⁸⁰ your sons. Such is (only) your

278. The fifth year A.H. was a critical year in the external history of early Islam, and this Sūrah 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 Madīnah and failed utterly. It consisted of the Makkan Unbelievers, the desert Arabs of Central Arabia, the Jews previously expelled for treachery from Madīnah, the Jews remaining in Madīnah, and the Hypocrites led by ‘Abdullāh ibn Ubayy, who have already been described in 9:43-110. 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 the Prophet’s household, after the slanders on ‘Ā’ishah had been stilled (24:11-26), and the true position of the Mothers of the Believers had been cleared; (3) A further exposition of the purity of sexual relations was given, based on the story of Zaynab, the “Mother of the Poor”. These points will be referred to in later notes. [3666]

279. This was an evil Arab custom, by which the husband selfishly deprived his wife of her conjugal rights and yet kept her to himself like a slave without her being free to remarry. He pronounced words implying that she was like his mother. After that she could not demand conjugal rights but was not free from his control and could not contract another marriage. See also 58:1-5, where this is condemned in the strongest terms and punishment is promised for it. A man sometimes said such words in a fit of anger: they did not affect him, but they degraded her position. [3670]

280. 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 not only *façon de parler* in men’s mouths, and should not be taken literally. The truth is the truth and
(continued...)

(manner of) speech by your mouths. But Allah tells (you) the Truth, and He shows the (right) Way. **5** Call them by (the names of) their fathers: that is juster in the sight of Allah. But if you know not²⁸¹ their father's (names, call them) your Brothers in faith, or your *Mawlās*. But there is no blame on you if you make a mistake²⁸² therein: (what counts is) the intention of your hearts: and Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. **6** The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers. Blood-relations among each other have closer personal ties, in the Decree of Allah, than (the Brotherhood of) Believers and Muhājirs: nevertheless do you what is just to your closest friends: such is the writing in the Decree (of Allah).

7 And remember We took from the Prophets their Covenant: as (We did) from you: from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary: We took from them a solemn Covenant: **8** That (Allah) may question the (Custodians) of Truth concerning the Truth they (were charged with): and He has prepared for the Unbelievers a grievous Penalty.

280. (...continued)

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; 4:23; but this does not apply to "adopted" sons. [3671]

281. Freedmen were often called after their master's name as the "son of so and so". When they were slaves, perhaps their fathers' names were lost altogether. It is more correct to speak of them as the *Mawlā* of so and so. But *Mawlā* 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. [3672]

282. What is aimed at is to destroy the superstition of erecting false relationships to the detriment of 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. [3673]

SECTION 2: The Allies' Attack on Madīnah

9 O you who believe! Remember the Grace of Allah, (bestowed) on you, when there came down on you hosts (to overwhelm you):²⁸³ but We sent against them²⁸⁴ a hurricane and forces that you saw not: but Allah sees (clearly) all that you do. 10 Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped²⁸⁵ up to the throats, and you imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah! 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 (even) say: "Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusions!"²⁸⁶ 13 Behold! A party among them said: "You men of

283. In this verse is summed up the beginning and the end of the fateful struggle of the Siege of Madīnah in A.H. 5. The composition of the unhalloved 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. [3679]

284. After a close investment of two to four weeks, during which the enemy were disheartened by their lack of 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 Madīnah, which is about 3,000 feet above 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 Madīnah fighting strength was no more than 3,000, and the Jewish tribe of the Banū Qurayzah 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 note to 33:1 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. [3680]

285. 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 Madīnah 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. [3682]

286. Before this year's mass attack on Madīnah, the Muslims had successfully reached
(continued...)

Yathrib! You cannot stand (the attack)! Therefore go back!" And a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet, saying, "Truly our houses²⁸⁷ 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), 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 covenant²⁸⁸ with Allah must (surely) be answered for. 16 Say: "Running away will not profit you if you are running away from death or slaughter; and even if (you do escape), no more than a brief (respite) will you 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?" 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 Coverous over you. Then when fear comes, you will see them looking to you, their eyes revolving, like (those of) one over whom hovers 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 of none effect: and that is easy for Allah. 20 They think that the Confederates have not withdrawn; and if the Confederates should come

286. (...continued)

the Syrian border to 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 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. [3683]

287. All the fighting men of Madīnah 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 forces inside the Trench. [3684]

288. Apparently, after the Battle of Uḥud, certain men who had 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. [3686]

(again), they would wish they were in the deserts (wandering) among the Bedouins, and seeking news about you (from a safe distance); and if they were in your midst, they would fight but little.

SECTION 3: Allies' Flight: Qurayzah Punished

21 You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of Allah. 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 completed their vow (to the extreme), 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 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, Able to enforce His Will. 26 And those of the People²⁸⁹ of the Book who aided them—Allah did take them down from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts. (So that)²⁹⁰ some you slew,²⁹¹ and some you made prisoners. 27 And He

289. The Banū Qurayzah (the Jewish tribe, who were bound by solemn engagements to help the defence of the city but intrigued with the enemies and treacherously aided them—*Ed.*) were filled with terror and dismay when Madīnah was free from the Qurayshī danger. They shut themselves up in their castles about three or four miles to the east (or north east) of Madīnah, 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'ādh, chief of the Aws tribe, with which they had been in alliance. [3702]

290. Sa'ad 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 the people, which the Lord thy God does give thee for an inheritance," *i.e.*, which is near (continued...)

made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and of a land which you had not frequented (before). And Allah has power over all things.

SECTION 4: The Prophet's Domestic Simplicity

28 O Prophet! Say to your Consorts: "If it be that you desire the life of this world, and its glitter,—then come!²⁹² I will provide for your

290. (...continued)

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 Banū Qurayzah deserved total extermination—of men, women, and children. They were in the territory of Madīnah itself, and further they had broken their engagements and helped the enemy. [3703]

291. Sa'ad adjudged them the mildest 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 Qurayzah were slain: the women were sold as captives of war; and their lands and properties were divided among the Muhājirs. [3704]

292. We now come to the subject of the position of the Consorts of Purity (*azwāj mutahharāt*), 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 Khadījah, the best of women and the best of wives. He married her fifteen years before he received the 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 Sawdā', 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. 'Ā'ishah, daughter of Abū Bakr, was clever and learned, and in *Hadīth* she is an important authority on the life of the Prophet. Zaynab, daughter of

(continued...)

enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner. **29** But if you seek Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, 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.

PART XXII

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. **32** O Consorts of the Prophet! You are not like any of the (other) women: if you do fear (Allah), be not too complacent of speech, lest one in whose heart is a disease should be moved with desire; but speak you 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 regular charity; and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you Members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless. **34** And recite what is rehearsed to you in your homes, of the Signs of Allah and His Wisdom: for Allah understands the finest mysteries and is well-acquainted (with them).”

SECTION 5: The Prophet's Marriage with Zaynab

35 For Muslim men and women,—for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women

292. (...continued)

Khuzaymah, was specially devoted to the poor: she was called the "Mother of the Poor". The other Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh, also worked for the poor, for whom she provided from the proceeds of her manual work, as she was skilled in leather work. But all the Consorts in their high position had to work and assist as Mothers of the *Ummah*. 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. [3706]

who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise,—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 anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong Path. 37 Behold! You did say to one who had received the grace of Allah²⁹³ and your favour: "Retain you (in wedlock) your wife, and fear Allah." But you did hide in your heart²⁹⁴ that which Allah was about to make manifest: you did fear the people, but it is more fitting that you should²⁹⁵ fear Allah. Then when Zayd had dissolved (his marriage) with her, with the necessary (formality), We joined her in marriage to you: in order that (in future) there may be no

293. This was Zayd, son of Hārithah, 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 to his own cousin Zaynab. The marriage however was not a happy one. See next note. [3722]

294. Zayd's marriage with the Prophet's cousin Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh, did not turn out to be a happy one. Zaynab the high-born looked down upon Zayd 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. Zayd 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 Zayd 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. Zayd'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. [3723]

295. All actual facts are referred to Allah. When the marriage is an unhappy one, Islam permits the bond to be dissolved, provided that all interests concerned are safeguarded. Apparently there was no issue here to be considered. Zaynab 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 note to 33:28 above. [3724]

difficulty to the Believers in (the matter of) marriage with the wives²⁹⁶ of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary (formality) (their marriage) with them. And Allah's command must be fulfilled. **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.

SECTION 6: The Prophet's Marriages

41 O you who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah, and do this often; **42** And glorify Him morning and evening. **43** He it is Who sends 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. **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 you as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings, and Warner,—**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 heed not their annoyances, but put your trust in Allah. For enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.

49 O you who believe! When you marry believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, no period of *'Iddah* have you to count in respect of them: so give them a present, and set them free in a handsome manner.

296. The Pagan superstition and taboo about adopted sons had to be destroyed. See 33:4-5 and notes above. [3726]

50 O Prophet! We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have paid their dowers; and those whom your right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to you; and daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncles and aunts, who migrated (from Makkah) with you; and any believing woman who dedicates her soul to the Prophet if the Prophet wishes to wed her;—this only for you, and not for the Believers (at large); We know what We have appointed for them as to their wives and the captives whom their right hands possess;—in order that there should be no difficulty for you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **51** You may defer (the turn of) any of them that you please, and you may receive any you please: and there is no blame on you if you invite one whose (turn) you hadst set aside. This is closer to the cooling of their eyes, the prevention of their grief, and their satisfaction—that of all of them—with that which you have to give them: and Allah knows (all) that is in your hearts: and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing. **52** It is not lawful for you (to marry more) women²⁹⁷ after this, nor to change them for (other) wives, even though their beauty attract you, except any your right hand should possess (as handmaidens): and Allah does watch over all things.

SECTION 7: Rules of Conduct in Domestic Relations

53 O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses,—until leave is given you,—for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation: but when you are invited, enter; and when you have taken your meal, disperse, without seeking familiar talk. Such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet: he is ashamed to dismiss you, but Allah is not ashamed (to tell you) the truth.

And when you ask (his ladies) for anything you want, ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs.

Nor is it right for you that you should annoy Allah's Messenger, or

297. 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 Muqawqas of Egypt. She became the mother of Ibrāhīm, who died in his infancy. [3754]

that you should marry his widows after him at any time. Truly such a thing is in Allah's sight an enormity. **54** Whether you reveal anything or conceal it, verily Allah has full knowledge of all things. **55** There is no blame (on these ladies if they appear) before their fathers 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.

56 Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send you 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: Those Who Spread Evil Reports

59 O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **60** Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition in the City, desist not, We shall certainly stir you up against them: then will they not be able to stay in it as your neighbours for any length of time: **61** They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain (without mercy). **62** (Such was) the practice (approved) of Allah among those who lived aforetime: no change will you find in the practice (approved) of Allah.

63 Men ask you concerning the Hour: say, "The knowledge thereof is with Allah (alone)": and what will make you 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. **66** The Day that their faces will be turned upside down 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 Penalty and curse them with a very great Curse!"

SECTION 9: An Exhortation to the Faithful

69 O you who believe! Be you not like those who vexed and insulted Moses, but Allah cleared him of the (calumnies) they had uttered: and he was honourable in Allah's sight. 70 O you who believe! Fear Allah, and (always) say a word directed to the Right: 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 highest achievement.

72 We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it;—he was indeed unjust and foolish;—73 (With the result) that Allah has to punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Unbelievers, men and women, and Allah turns in Mercy to the Believers, men and women: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. □

Chapter 34

SABA' (The City of Saba')

Introduction

Now we begin a series of Sūrah 34 to Sūrah 39 which recapitulate some of the features of the spiritual world. This Sūrah leads off with emphasis on Allah's Mercy and Power and Truth. Then (in Sūrah 35) we are told how angels manifest the Power of Allah, and how different is Good from Evil and Truth from Falsehood. Sūrah 36 is devoted to the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān that came through him. In Sūrah 37 the emphasis is on the snares of the Evil One; in Sūrah 38, 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 Sūrah 39, on the Final Judgement, which will sort out Faith from Unfaith and give to each its due.

The chronology has here no significance. This Sūrah belongs to the early Makkan 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 (34:1-30).

Faith and Unfaith will eventually find their true places and true values; Falsehood has no power: Truth is with Allah (34:31-54).

*** **

SECTION 1: Judgement is Certain

*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 Full of Wisdom, acquainted with all things. 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 The Unbelievers say, "Never to us will come the Hour": say, "Nay! But most surely, by my Lord, 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: 4 That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is Forgiveness and a Sustenance Most Generous." 5 But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them,—for such will be a Penalty,—a Punishment most humiliating.

6 And those to whom knowledge has come see that the (Revelation) sent down to you from your 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 you are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that you shall (then be raised) in a New Creation? 8 Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, or has a spirit (seized) him?"—Nay, it is those who believe not in the Hereafter, that are in (real) Penalty, and in farthest error. 9 See they not what is before them and behind them, of the sky and the earth? If We wished, We could cause the earth to swallow them up, or cause a piece of the sky to fall upon them. Verily in this is a Sign for every devotee that turns to Allah (in repentance).

SECTION 2: Favours Followed by Retribution

10 We bestowed Grace aforetime on David from Ourselves: "O you Mountains! Sing you back the Praises of Allah with him! And you birds (also)!" And We made the iron soft for him;—11 (Commanding), "Make you coats of mail, balancing well the rings of chain armour, and work you righteousness; for be sure I see (clearly) all that you 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 for him; and there were *Jinns* that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from Our command, We made him taste of the Penalty of the blazing Fire. 13 They worked for him as he desired,

(making) arches, images, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places): "Work you, sons of David, with thanks! But few of My servants are grateful!"

14 Then, when We decreed (Solomon's) death, nothing showed them his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his staff: so when he fell down, the *Jinns* saw plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have tarried in the humiliating Penalty (of their Task).

15 There was, for Saba',²⁹⁸ aforetime, a Sign in their homeland—two Gardens to the right and to the left. "Eat of the Sustenance (provided) by your Lord, and be grateful to Him: a territory fair and happy, and a Lord Oft-Forgiving!" 16 But they turned away (from Allah), and We sent against them the Flood (released) from the Dams, and We converted their two garden (rows) into "gardens" producing bitter fruit, and tamarisks, and some few (stunted) Lote trees. 17 That was the Requital We gave them because they ungratefully rejected Faith: and never do We give (such) requital except to such as are ungrateful rejecters. 18 Between them and the Cities 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." 19 But they said: "Our Lord! Place longer distances between our journey-stages":²⁹⁹ but they wronged themselves (therein). At length We made them as a tale (that is told), and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments.

298. This is the same city and territory in Yemen as is mentioned in 27:22: see note there as to its location. There the period was the time of Solomon and Queen Bilqīs. Here it is some centuries later. It was still a happy and prosperous country, amply irrigated from the Ma'rīb 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. [3810]

299. The covetous Saba' 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 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. [3818]

Verily in this are Signs for every (soul that is) patiently constant and grateful. **20** And on them did Satan prove true his idea, and they followed him, all but a party that believed. **21** But he had no authority over them,—except that We might test the man who believes in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it: and your Lord does watch over all things.

SECTION 3: *Victory for the Muslims*

22 Say: "Call upon other (gods) whom you fancy, besides Allah: they have no power,—not the weight of an atom,—in the heavens or on earth: no (sort of) share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper to Allah. **23** No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission. So far (is this the case) that, when terror is removed from their hearts (at the Day of Judgement, then) will they say, 'What is it that your Lord commanded?' They will say, 'That which is true and just; and He is the Most High, Most Great'." **24** Say: "Who gives you sustenance, from the heavens and the earth?" Say: "It is Allah; and certain it is that either we or you are on right guidance or in manifest error!" **25** Say: "You shall not be questioned as to our sins, nor shall we be questioned as to what you 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 you have joined with Him as partners: by no means (can you). Nay, He is Allah, the Exalted in Power, the Wise." **28** We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not. **29** They say: "When will this promise (come to pass) if you are telling the truth?" **30** Say: "The appointment to you is for a Day, which you cannot put back for an hour nor put forward."

SECTION 4: *The Leaders of Evil*

31 The Unbelievers say: "We shall neither believe in this scripture nor in (any) that (came) before it." Could you 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 had been despised will say to the arrogant ones: "Had it not been for you, we should certainly have been believers!" **32**

The arrogant ones will say to those who had been despised: "Was it we who kept you back from Guidance after it reached you? Nay, rather, it was you who transgressed." **33** Those who had been despised will say to the arrogant ones: "Nay! It was a plot (of yours) by day and by night: behold! you (constantly) ordered us to be ungrateful to Allah and to attribute equals to Him!" They will declare (their) repentance when they see the Penalty: We shall put yokes on the necks of the Unbelievers: it would only be a requital for their (ill) Deeds.

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 you have been sent." **35** They said: "We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished." **36** Say: "Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the Provision to whom He pleases, but most men understand not."

SECTION 5: Wealth Does Not Stand for Greatness

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 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 Punishment. **39** Say: "Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the Sustenance to such of His servants as He pleases: and nothing do you spend in the least (in His Cause) but He replaces it: for He is the Best of those who grant Sustenance.

40 One Day He will gather them all together, and say to the angels, "Was it you that these men used to worship?" **41** They will say, "Glory to You! our (tie) is with You—as Protector—not with 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 you the Penalty of the Fire,—the which you were wont to deny!"

43 When Our clear Signs are rehearsed to them, they say, "This is only 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 you as warners. **45** And their predecessors rejected (the Truth); these have not received a tenth of what We had granted to those: yet when they rejected My messengers, how (terrible) was My rejection (of them)!

SECTION 6: Truth will Prosper

46 Say: "I do admonish you on one point: that you do stand up before Allah,—(it may be) in pairs, 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 Penalty." **47** Say: "No reward do I ask of you: it is (all) in your interest: my reward is only due from Allah: and He is witness to all things." **48** Say: "Verily my Lord does cast the (mantle of) Truth (over His servants),—He that has full knowledge of (all) that is hidden." **49** Say: "The Truth has arrived, and Falsehood neither creates anything new, nor restores anything." **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 you could but see when they will quake with terror; but then 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 (continually) cast (slanders) on the Unseen from a position far off? **54** And between them and their desires, is placed a barrier, as was done in the past with their partisans: for they were indeed in suspicious (disquieting) doubt. □

FĀTIR
(The Originator of Creation)

Introduction

See Introduction to the last Sūrah.

This Sūrah 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 Evil.

It is an early Makkan Sūrah, but its chronology has no significance.

Summary—The forces which maintain Creation, as typified by angels, were themselves created by Allah, to Whom alone all praise is due: all else is naught (35:1-26).

All good is from Allah: who then will choose Evil, and reach the doom that goes with Evil? (35:27-45).

*** **

SECTION 1: Divine Favours

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Praise be to Allah, Who created (out of nothing) 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 does bestow on mankind there is none can withhold: what He does withhold, there is none can grant, apart from Him: and He is the Exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.

3 O men! Call to mind the grace of Allah unto you! Is there a Creator, other than Allah, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth? There is no god but He: how then are you deluded away from the Truth? **4**

And if they reject you, so were messengers rejected before you: to Allah go back for decision all affairs. **5** O men! Certainly the promise of Allah 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 Penalty: but for those who believe and work righteous deeds, is Forgiveness, and a magnificent Reward.

SECTION 2: Truth will Prevail

8 Is he, then, to whom the evil of his conduct is made alluring, so that he looks upon it 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 your soul go out in (vainly) sighing after 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, 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,—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 Penalty 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 Decree (ordained). All this is easy to Allah. **12** Nor are the two bodies of flowing water alike,—the one palatable, sweet, and pleasant to drink, and the other, salt and bitter. Yet from each (kind of water) do you eat flesh fresh and tender, and you extract ornaments to wear; and you see the ships therein that plough the waves, that you may seek (thus) of the Bounty of Allah that you may be grateful.

13 He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night, and He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law): each one runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allah your Lord: to Him belongs all Dominion. And those whom you invoke besides Him have not the

least power.³⁰⁰ **14** If you invoke them, they will not listen to your call, and if they were to listen, they cannot answer your (prayer). On the Day of Judgement they will reject your "Partnership". And none, (O man!) can tell you (the Truth) like the One Who is acquainted with all things.

SECTION 3: A New Generation will be Raised

15 O you men! It is you 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), even though he be nearly related. You can but admonish such as fear their Lord unseen and establish regular prayer. 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; **20** Nor are the depths of Darkness and the Light; **21** Nor are the (chilly) shade and the (genial) heat of the sun: **22** Nor are alike those³⁰¹ that are living and those that are dead. Allah can make any that He wills to hear; but you cannot make those to hear who are (buried) in graves. **23** You are no other than a warner.³⁰² **24** Verily We have sent you in truth, as a bearer of

300. Arabic *Qitmir*, translated here "the least power", literally means "the thin, white skin that covers the date stone". It has neither strength nor texture, and has no value whatever. Anyone relying on any power other than that of Allah relies on nothing whatever. The *Qitmir* is worse than the proverbial "broken reed". Cf 4:53 and 4:124, where the word *naqir*, 'the groove in a date stone', is used similarly for a thing of no value or significance. [3894]

301. The final contrast 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. [3905]

302. The function of a Prophet is to preach Allah's Truth, to point out the right Way, (continued...)

glad tidings, 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 you, so did their predecessors, to whom came their messengers with clear Signs, Books of dark prophecies, and the Book of Enlightenment. **26** In the end did I punish those who rejected Faith: and how (terrible) was My rejection (of them)!

SECTION 4: **The Elect**

27 See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue. **28** And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colours. Those truly fear Allah, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. **29** Those who rehearse the Book of Allah, establish regular prayer, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail: **30** For He will pay them their reward, nay, He will give them (even) more out of His Bounty: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).

31 That which We have revealed to you of the Book is the Truth,—confirming what was (revealed) before it: for Allah is assuredly—with respect to His servants—well acquainted and Fully Observant. **32** Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our servants as We have chosen: but there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds; that is the highest Grace. **33** Gardens of Eternity will they enter: therein will they be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls; and their garments there will be of silk. **34** And they will say: "Praise be to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) sorrow: for our Lord is indeed Oft-Forgiving,

302. (...continued)

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. [3906].

ready to appreciate (service): **35** Who has, out of His Bounty, settled us in a Home that will last: no toil nor sense of weariness shall touch us therein."

36 But those who reject (Allah)—for them will be the Fire of Hell: no term shall be determined for them, so they should die, nor shall its Penalty be lightened for them. Thus do We reward every ungrateful one! **37** Therein will they cry aloud (for assistance): "Our Lord! Bring us out: we shall work righteousness, 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 you (the fruits of your deeds): for the wrong-doers there is no helper."

SECTION 5: Punishment due to Evil Deeds

38 Verily Allah knows (all) the hidden things of the heavens and the earth: 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: if, then, any do reject (Allah), their rejection (works) against themselves: their rejection but adds to the odium for the Unbelievers in the sight of their Lord: their rejection but adds to (their own) undoing. **40** Say: "Have you seen (these) 'Partners' of yours whom you 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. **41** It is Allah Who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they cease (to function): and if they should fail, there is none—not one—can sustain them thereafter: verily He is Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.

42 They swore their strongest oaths by Allah that if a warner came to them, they would follow his guidance better than any (other) of the Peoples: but when a warner came to them, it has only increased their flight (from righteousness),—**43** On account of their arrogance in the land and their plotting of Evil, but the plotting of Evil will hem in only the authors thereof. Now are they but looking for the way the ancients

were dealt with? But no change will you find in Allah's way (of dealing): no turning off will you find in Allah's way (of dealing). **44** Do they not travel through the earth, and see 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. **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. □

Chapter 36

YĀ SĪN

Introduction

See Introduction to Sūrah 34. This particular Sūrah 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. But it is not permissible to be dogmatic about the meaning of Abbreviated Letters. This Sūrah 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 in solemn ceremonies after death.

In chronology it belongs to the middle or early Makkan period.

In Sūrah 37:130 (a cognate Sūrah) occurs the word *Ifyāsīn*.

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 (36:1-32).

Various Signs of Allah in nature and Revelation (36:33-50).

The Resurrection and the Hereafter (36:51-83).

*** **

SECTION 1: Truth of the Qur'ān

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Yā Sīn*.³⁰³ 2 By the Qur'ān, full of Wisdom,—3 You are indeed one

303. Some Commentators take *Yā* to be the vocative article, and *Sīn* to be the abbreviation of *Insān*, *Sīn* 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 Sūrah deals mainly with the Holy Prophet and his Message. But no dogmatic assertion can be made about the Abbreviated Letters, for which see note to Sūrah 2:1. *Yā Sīn* is usually
(continued...)

of the messengers, **4** On a straight Way. **5** It is a Revelation sent down by (Him), the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. **6** In order that you may admonish a people, whose fathers had received³⁰⁴ no admonition, and who therefore remain heedless (of the Signs of Allah).

7 The Word is proved true against the greater part of them: for they do not believe. **8** We have put yokes round their necks right up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up (and they cannot see). **9** And We have put a bar in front of them and a bar behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see. **10** The same is it to them whether you admonish them or you do not admonish them: they will not believe.

11 You can but admonish such a one as follows the Message and fears the (Lord) Most Gracious, unseen: give such a one, therefore, good tidings, of Forgiveness and a Reward most generous. **12** Verily We shall give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).

SECTION 2: Confirmation of the Truth

13 Set forth to them, by way of a parable, the (story of) the Companions 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 with a third: they said, "Truly, we have been sent on a mission to you." **15** The (people) said: "You are only men like ourselves; and (Allah) Most Gracious sends no sort of revelation: you do nothing but lie." **16** They said: "Our Lord does know that we have been sent on a mission to you: **17** And our duty is only to proclaim the clear Message." **18** The (people) said: "For us, we augur an evil omen

303. (...continued)

treated as a title of the Holy Prophet. [3943]

304. The Quraysh had received no Prophet before, and therefore one of themselves was made the vehicle for the universal Message to the whole world. [3946]

from you: if you desist not, we will certainly stone you. And a grievous punishment indeed will be inflicted on you by us." 19 They said: "Your evil omens are with yourselves: (deem you this an evil omen), if you are admonished? Nay, but you 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 have themselves received Guidance." 22 "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom you shall (all) be brought back. 23 Shall I take (other) gods besides Him? If (Allah) Most Gracious should intend some adversity for me, of no use whatever will be their intercession for me, nor can they deliver me. 24 I would indeed, if I were to do so, be in manifest Error. 25 For me, I have faith in the Lord of you (all): listen, then, to me!" 26 It was said: "Enter you the Garden." He said: "Ah me! Would that my People knew (what I know)!—27 For that my Lord³⁰⁵ has granted me Forgiveness and has enrolled me among those held in honour!"

PART XXIII

28 And We sent not down against his People, after him, any hosts from heaven, nor was it needful for Us so to do. 29 It was no more than a single mighty Blast, and behold! they were (like ashes) quenched and silent. 30 Ah! Alas for (My) servants! There comes not a messenger to them but they mock him! 31 See they not how many generations before them We destroyed? Not to them will they return: 32 But each one of them all—will be brought before Us (for judgement).

305. 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 his 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. [3972]

SECTION 3: Signs of the Truth

33 A Sign for them is the earth that is dead: We do give it life, and produce grain therefrom, of which you 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? **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 his course for a period determined for him: that is the decree of (Him), the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing. **39** And the Moon,—We have measured for her mansions (to traverse) till she returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date stalk. **40** It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law).

41 And a Sign for them is that We bore their race (through the Flood) in the loaded Ark; **42** And We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride. **43** If it were Our Will, 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.

45 When they are told, "Fear you that which is before you and that which will be after you, in order that you may receive Mercy," (they turn back). **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 you of (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)?—you are in nothing but manifest error." **48** Further, they say, "When will this promise (come to pass), if what you say is true?" **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: Reward and Punishment

51 The trumpet shall be sounded, when behold! from the sepulchres (men) will rush forth to their Lord! **52** They will say: "Ah! Woe unto us! Who has raised us up from our beds of repose?" . . . (A voice will say:) "This is what (Allah) Most Gracious had promised. And true was the word of the messengers!" **53** It will be no more than a single Blast, when lo! they will all be brought up before Us! **54** Then, on that Day, not a soul will be wronged in the least, and you shall but be repaid the meeds of your past Deeds.

55 Verily the Companions of the Garden shall that Day have joy in all that they do; **56** They and their associates will be in groves of (cool) shade, reclining on Thrones (of dignity); **57** (Every) fruit (enjoyment) will be there for them; they shall have whatever they call for; **58** "Peace!"—a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful!

59 "And O you in sin! Get you apart this Day! **60** Did I not enjoin on you, O you Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?—**61** And that you should worship Me, (for that) this was the straight Way? **62** But he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did you not, then, understand? **63** This is the Hell of which you were (repeatedly) warned! **64** Embrace you the (Fire) this Day, for that you (persistently) rejected (Truth)."

65 That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to Us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did. **66** If it had been Our Will, We could surely have blotted out their eyes; then should they have run about groping for the Path, but how could they have seen? **67** And if it had been Our Will, We could have transformed them (to remain) in their places; then should they have been unable to move about, nor could they have returned (after error).

SECTION 5: The Resurrection

68 If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature: will they not then understand?

69 We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, nor is it meet for him: this is no less than a Message and a Qur'ān making things clear: 70 That it may give admonition to any (who are) alive, and that the charge may be proved 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 their dominion?—72 And that We have subjected them to their (use)? Of them some do carry them and some they eat: 73 And they have (other) profits from them (besides), and they get (milk) to drink. Will they not then be grateful? 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: but they will be brought up (before Our Judgement Seat) as a troop (to be condemned). 76 Let not their speech, then, grieve you. Verily We know what they hide as well as what they disclose.

77 Does not man see that it is We Who created him from sperm? Yet behold! he (stands forth) as an open adversary! 78 And he makes comparisons 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! For He is well-versed in every kind of creation!—80 The same Who produces for you fire out of³⁰⁶ the green tree, when behold! you kindle

306. 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, 9:262, will be found a picture of British Guyana boys making a fire by rotating a stick in a round hole in a piece of wood lying on the ground. The Arab method was to use a wooden instrument called the *Zind*. It consisted of two pieces to be rubbed together. The upper was called the *Afūr* 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

(continued...)

therewith (your own fires)! **81** Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof?"—Yes, 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 you all be brought back. □

306. (...continued)

applied to the flint piece used for striking fire with steel. [4026]

Chapter 37

AL-ŞĀFFĀT (Those Ranged in Ranks)

Introduction

As explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 34, this is the fourth of a series of Sūrahs in which the mysteries of the spiritual world are manifested in different ways, tending to the defeat and final extirpation of Evil. 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 Sūrah belongs to the early middle Makkan period.

Summary—Through all the mysteries of the heavens and the earth, there is a sorting out of the evil against the good: their final destinations contrasted (37:1-74).

Peace and victory came to Noah, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Ilyās and Lūt, in their conflict with Evil (37:75-138).

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 (37:139-182).

*** **

SECTION 1: Unity will Prevail

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By³⁰⁷ those who range themselves in ranks, 2 And so are strong in

307. At a later stage, we shall study the general meaning of the adjurations in the Qur'ān indicated by the particle *wā*. Here we may note that the last Sūrah (*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. [4030]

repelling (evil), **3** And thus proclaim the Message (of Allah)!³⁰⁸ **4** Verily, verily, your Allah is One!—**5** Lord of the heavens and of the earth and all between them, and Lord of every point at the rising of the sun!

6 We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars,—**7** (For beauty) and for guard against all obstinate rebellious evil spirits, **8** (So) they should not strain their ears in the direction of the Exalted Assembly but be cast away from every side, **9** Repulsed, for they are under a perpetual penalty, **10** Except such as snatch away something by stealth, and they are pursued by a flaming fire, of piercing brightness.

11 Just ask their³⁰⁹ opinion: are they the more difficult to create, or the (other) beings We have created? Them have We created out of a sticky clay! **12** Truly do you marvel, 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 of old?” **18** Say you: “Indeed, and you shall then be humiliated (on account of your evil).” **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

308. 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 Allah, 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 37:165 below, the word *sāffāt* is used in the definite plural, and seems to be spoken by these beings, angels or men of Allah or both, according to how we interpret this verse. [4031]

309. *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? [4040]

Judgement!" **21** (A voice will say,) "This is the Day of Sorting Out, whose truth you (once) denied!"

SECTION 2: *The Judgement*

22 "Bring you 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: **25** 'What is the matter with you that you help not each other?'"

26 Nay, but that day they shall submit (to Judgement); **27** And they will turn to one another, and question one another. **28** They will say: "It was you who used to come to us from the right hand (of power and authority)!"³¹⁰ **29** They will reply: "Nay, you yourselves had no Faith! **30** Nor had we any authority over you. Nay, it was you who were a people in obstinate rebellion! **31** So now has been proved true, 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 truly we were ourselves astray."

33 Truly, that Day, they will (all) share in the Penalty. **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, **36** And say: "What! Shall we give up our gods for the sake of a Poet possessed?"³¹¹ **37** Nay! He has come with the (very) Truth, and he confirms (the Message of) the messengers (before him). **38** You shall indeed taste of the grievous Penalty;—**39** But it will be no more than the retribution of (the Evil) that you have wrought;—**40** But the sincere

310. 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. [4052]

311. 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. [4057]

(and devoted) Servants of Allah,—**41** For them is a Sustenance determined, **42** Fruits (Delights); and they (shall enjoy) honour and dignity, **43** In Gardens of Felicity, **44** Facing each other on Thrones (of dignity): **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; nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom. **48** And besides them will be chaste women, restraining their glances, with big eyes (of wonder and beauty). **49** As if they were (delicate) eggs closely guarded.

50 Then they will turn to one another and question one another. **51** One of them will start the talk and say: "I had an intimate companion (on the earth), **52** Who used to say, 'What! Are you amongst those who bear witness to the truth (of the Message)? **53** When we die and become dust and bones, shall we indeed receive rewards and punishments?'" **54** (A voice) said: "Would you like to look down?" **55** He looked down and saw him in the midst of the Fire. **56** He said: "By Allah! You were little short of bringing me to perdition! **57** Had it not been for the Grace of my Lord,³¹² I should certainly have been among those brought (there)! **58** Is it (the case) that we shall not die, **59** Except our first death, and that we³¹³ shall not be punished?" **60** Verily this is the supreme achievement! **61** For the like of this let all strive, who wish to strive.

62 Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of *Zaqqūm*?³¹⁴ **63** For We have truly made it (as) a trial for the wrong-doers. **64** For it is a

312. And he gratefully acknowledges his shortcomings: "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. [4069]

313. 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? [4070]

314. Cf. 17:60. This bitter tree of Hell is a symbol of the contrast with the beautiful Garden of heaven with its delicious fruits. [4072]

tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-Fire: **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, (messengers) to admonish them;—**73** Then see what was the end of those who were admonished (but heeded not),—**74** Except the sincere (and devoted) Servants of Allah.

SECTION 3: Noah and Abraham

75 (In the days of old), Noah cried to Us, and We are the best to hear prayer. **76** And We delivered him and his people from the Great Calamity, **77** And made his progeny to endure (on this earth); **78** And We left (this blessing) for him among generations to come in later times: **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 among those who followed His Way 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 you worship? **86** Is it a Falsehood—gods other than Allah—that you desire? **87** Then what is your idea about the Lord of the Worlds?" **88** Then did he cast a glance at the Stars. **89** And he said, "I am indeed sick (at heart)!" **90** So they turned away from him, and departed.

91 Then did he turn to their gods and said, "Will you not eat (of the offerings before you)? **92** What is the matter with you that you speak not (intelligently)?" **93** Then did he turn upon them, striking (them) with the right hand. **94** Then came (the worshippers) with hurried steps, and faced (him). **95** He said: "Worship you that which you have (yourselves) carved? **96** But Allah has created you and your handiwork!" **97** They said, "Build him a furnace, and throw him into

the blazing fire!" 98 (This failing), they then sought a stratagem against him, but We made them the ones most humiliated!

99 He said: "I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me!"³¹⁵ 100 O my Lord! Grant me a righteous (son)!" 101 So We gave him the good news³¹⁶ of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. 102 Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer you in sacrifice: now see what is your view!" (The son) said: "O my father! Do as you are commanded: you will find me, if Allah so wills one practising Patience and Constancy!" 103 So when they had both submitted their wills (to Allah), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice),³¹⁷ 104 We called out to him "O Abraham! 105 You have already fulfilled the vision!"—thus indeed do We reward those who do right. 106 For this was obviously

315. This was the *Hijrah* 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 21:69. [4095]

316. This was in the fertile land of Syria and Palestine. The boy thus born was, according to Muslim tradition, (which however is not unanimous on this point), the first-born son of Abraham, viz., Ismā'īl. The name itself is from the root *Sami'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). [4096]

317. 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 Isaac, 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, 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 Marwah which is identified with the Arab tradition about Ismā'īl. [4101]

a trial—107 And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice: 108 And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (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 him 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 obviously do wrong, to their own souls.

SECTION 4: Moses, Aaron, Elias and Lot

114 Again (of old) We bestowed Our favour on Moses and Aaron, 115 And We delivered them and their people from (their) Great Calamity; 116 And We helped them, so they overcame (their troubles); 117 And We gave them the Book which helps to make things clear; 118 And We guided them to the straight Way. 119 And We left (this blessing) for them among generations (to come) in later times: 120 “Peace and salutation to Moses and Aaron!” 121 Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. 122 For they were two of Our believing Servants.

123 So also was Elias³¹⁸ among those sent (by Us). 124 Behold, he said to his people, “Will you not fear (Allah)? 125 Will you call upon Ba’l 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, and they will certainly be called up (for punishment),—128 Except the sincere and devoted Servants of Allah

318. See 6:85. Elias is the same as Elijah, whose story will be found in the Old Testament in 1 Kings xvii-xix and 2 Kings i-ii. Elijah lived in the reign of Ahab (896-874 B.C.) and Ahaziah (874-872 B.C.), 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 Ahaziah were prone to lapse into the worship of Ba’l, 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 God and adopt Ba’l 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. [4112]

(among them). **129** And We left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times: **130** "Peace and salutation to such as Elias!" **131** Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. **132** For he was one of Our believing Servants.

133 So also was Lūt 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: **136** Then We destroyed the rest. **137** Verily, you pass by their (sites), by day—**138** And by night: will you not understand?

SECTION 5: Jonah and the Prophet's Triumph

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 condemned: **142** Then the big Fish did swallow him, and he had done acts worthy of blame. **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.

149 Now ask them their opinion: is it that your Lord has (only) daughters, and they have sons?—**150** Or that We created the angels female, and they are witnesses (thereto)? **151** Is it not that they say, from their own invention, **152** "Allah has begotten children"? But they are liars! **153** Did He (then) choose daughters rather than sons? **154** What is the matter with you? How judge you? **155** Will you not then receive admonition? **156** Or have you an authority manifest? **157** Then bring you your Book (of authority) if you be truthful!

158 And they have invented a blood-relationship between Him and the *Jinns*: but the *Jinns* know (quite well) that they have indeed to appear (before His Judgement Seat)! **159** Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the things they ascribe (to Him)! **160** Not (so do) the Servants of Allah,

sincere and devoted. **161** For, verily, neither you nor those you worship—**162** Can lead (any) into temptation concerning Allah, **163** Except such as are (themselves) going to the blazing Fire!

164 (Those ranged in ranks say): “Not one of us but has a place appointed; **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 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, sincere (and devoted)!” **170** But (now that the Qur’ān has come), they reject it: but soon will they know! **171** Already has Our Word been passed before (this) to Our Servants sent (by Us), **172** That they would certainly be assisted, **173** And that Our forces,—they surely must conquer. **174** So turn you away from them for a little while, **175** And watch them (how they fare), and they soon shall see (how you fare)!

176 Do they wish (indeed) to hurry on Our Punishment? **177** But when it descends into the open space before them, evil will be the morning for those who were warned (and heeded not)! **178** So turn you away from them for a little while, **179** And watch (how they fare) and they soon shall see (how you fare)! **180** Glory to your Lord, 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. □

Chapter 38

ŞĀD

Introduction

For the place of this Sūrah in the series of six, dealing with some of the mysteries of the spiritual world, see Introduction to Sūrah 34.

This Sūrah, both in chronology and subject matter, is cognate to Sūrah 37, 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 (38:1-26).

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 (38:27-64).

So also in the case of the final Messenger; his Gospel of Unity must triumph over all Jealousy and Arrogance in Allah's good time (38:65-88).

*** **

SECTION 1: **The Enemy's Discomfiture**

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Ṣād*.³¹⁹ By the Qur'ān, full of Admonition: (this is the Truth). **2** But the Unbelievers (are steeped) in Self-glory and Separatism. **3** How many generations before them did We destroy? In the end they cried (for mercy)—when there was no longer time for being saved!

4 So they wonder that a Warner has come to them from among themselves! And the Unbelievers say, "This is a sorcerer telling lies!" **5** Has he made the gods (all) into one Allah? Truly this is a wonderful thing!" **6** And the leaders among them go away (impatiently), (saying), "Walk you away, and remain constant to your gods! For this is truly a thing designed (against you)! **7** We never heard (the like) of this among the people of these latter days: 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 your 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 with the ropes and means (to reach that end)! **11** But there—will be put to flight even a host of confederates. **12** Before them (were many who) rejected messengers,—the people of Noah, and 'Ād, and Pharaoh, the Lord of Stakes, **13** And Thamūd, and the people of Lūt, and the Companions of the Wood;—such were the Confederates. **14** Not one (of them) but rejected the messengers, but My Punishment came justly and inevitably (on them).

319. *Ṣād* is a letter of the Arabic alphabet. It is used here as an Abbreviated Letter, for which see note to 2:1. See also the second paragraph of note 206 to 7:1 for this particular letter. No dogmatism is permissible in trying to interpret Abbreviated Letters. But it is suggested that it may stand for *Qasas* ("Stories"), in which the dominant consonant is *ṣ*. For this Sūrah 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 *Ṣād* does not occur at all in the name of Solomon. [4146]

SECTION 2: David's Enemies

15 These (today) only wait for a single mighty Blast, which (when it comes) will brook no delay. **16** They say: "Our Lord! Hasten to us our sentence (even) before the Day of Account!" **17** Have patience at what they say, and remember Our servant David, the man of strength: for he ever turned (to Allah). **18** It was We that made the hills declare, 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). **20** We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and sound judgement in speech and decision.

21 Has the Story of the Disputants reached you? Behold, they climbed over the wall of the private chamber; **22** When they entered the presence of David, 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 with injustice, but guide us to the even Path. **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 is (moreover) harsh to me in speech." **24** (David) said: "He has undoubtedly wronged you³²⁰ in demanding your (single) ewe to be added to his (flock of) ewes: truly many are the Partners (in business)³²¹ who wrong each other: not so do those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and how few are they?" And David

320. The circumstances were mysterious, the accusation was novel; 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. [4174]

321. 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 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 his vision 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. [4175]

gathered that We had tried him: he asked forgiveness of his Lord,³²² fell down, bowing (in prostration), and turned (to Allah in repentance). **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 you a vicegerent on earth: so judge you between men in truth (and justice): nor follow you the lusts (of your heart), for they will mislead you from the Path of Allah: for those who wander astray from the Path of Allah, is a Penalty grievous, for that they forget the Day of Account.

SECTION 3: Solomon and His Enemies

27 Not without purpose did We 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 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 unto you, full of blessings, that they may mediate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.

30 To David We gave Solomon (for a son),—³²³ how excellent in Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)! **31** Behold, there were brought³²⁴

322. 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 (*Muqarrabūn*, 56:11), 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. [4176]

323. 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'ān, 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). [4182]

324. The passages about David and Solomon have been variously interpreted by the Commentators. The versions which I have suggested have good authority behind them, (continued...)

before him, at eventide, coursers of the highest breeding, and swift of foot; **32** And he said, "Truly do I love³²⁵ the love of good, with a view to the glory 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 (without life); but he did turn (to Us in true devotion): **35** He said, "O my Lord! Forgive me, and grant me a Kingdom which, (it may be), suits not another after me: for You are the Grantor of Bounties (without measure)." **36** Then We subjected the Wind to his power, to flow gently to his order, however he willed,—**37** As also the evil ones,³²⁶ (including) every kind of builder and diver,—**38** As also others bound³²⁷ together in fetters. **39** "Such are Our Bounties: whether you bestow them (on others) or withhold them, no account will be asked." **40** And he enjoyed, indeed, a Near Approach to Us, and a beautiful Place of (final) Return.

SECTION 4: Job—Triumph of the Righteous

41 Commemorate Our servant Job. Behold he cried to his Lord: "The

324. (...continued)

though I have followed my own judgement in filling in the details. [4183]

325. 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. 27:19; 27:40, etc. His battles were not fought for lust of blood, but as *Jihād* in the cause of 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. [4185]

326. Cf. 21:82 and also 34:12-13: in the latter passage the spirits mentioned are called *Jinns*. The divers were probably those employed in pearl fisheries. [4194]

327. Cf. 14:49, where the same expression "bound together in fetters" is applied to Sinners on the Day of Judgement. [4195]

Evil One has afflicted me with distress³²⁸ and suffering!" **42** (The command was given:) "Strike with your 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 Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who have Understanding. **44** "And take in your hand a little grass, and strike³²⁹ therewith: and break not (your oath)." Truly We found him full of patience and constancy. How excellent in Our service! 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)—proclaiming the Message of the Hereafter. **47** They were, in Our sight, truly, of the company of the Elect and the Good.

48 And commemorate Ismā'īl, Elisha, and Dhu al-Kifl: each of them was of the company of the Good.

49 This is a Message (of admonition): and verily, for the Righteous, is a beautiful Place of (final) Return,—**50** Gardens of Eternity, whose doors will (ever) be open to them; **51** Therein will they recline (at ease): therein can they call (at pleasure) for fruit in abundance, and (delicious) drink; **52** And beside them will be chaste women

328. The distress was of many kinds, physical, mental, and spiritual. See 21:83. 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. [4199]

329. 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. [4202]

restraining³³⁰ their glances, (companions) of equal age.³³¹ **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 Indeed, such! But—for the wrong-doers will be an evil Place of (final) Return!—**56** Hell!—they will burn therein,—an evil bed (indeed, to lie on)!—**57** Indeed, such!—then shall they taste it,—a boiling fluid, and a fluid dark, murky, intensely cold!—**58** And other Penalties of a similar kind, to match them! **59** Here is a troop rushing headlong with you! No welcome for them! Truly, they shall burn in the Fire! **60** (The followers shall cry to the misleaders:) “Nay, you (too)! No welcome for you! It is you who have brought this upon us! Now evil is (this) place to stay in!” **61** They will say: “Our Lord! Whoever brought this upon us,—add to him a double Penalty in the Fire!” **62** And they will say: “What has happened to us that we see not men whom we used to number among the bad ones? **63** Did we treat them (as such) in ridicule, or have (our) eyes failed to perceive them?” **64** Truly that is just and fitting,—the mutual recriminations of the People of the Fire!

SECTION 5: Opposition to Prophets

65 Say: “Truly am I a Warner: no god is there but the One Allah, Supreme and Irresistible,—**66** The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all between,—Exalted in Might, able to enforce His Will, forgiving again and again.” **67** Say: “That is a Message supreme (above all),—**68** From which you do turn away! **69** No knowledge have I of the Chiefs on high, when they discuss (matters) among themselves. **70** Only this

330. Cf. 37:48 and 36:56. As we conceive happiness in this life, it is not complete if it is only solitary. How we hanker after someone who can share in our highest joy! That feeling is also figured here. [4209]

331. To make the metaphor of 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. [4210]

has been revealed to me: that I am to give warning plainly and publicly.”

71 Behold, your Lord said to the angels: “I am about to create man from clay: 72 When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall you down in obeisance unto him.” 73 So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: 74 Not so Iblīs: he was haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith. 75 (Allah) said: “O Iblīs! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My hands? Are you haughty? Or are you one of the high (and mighty) ones?” 76 (Iblīs) said: “I am better than he: You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.” 77 (Allah) said: “Then get you out from here: for you are rejected, accursed. 78 And My Curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgement.” 79 (Iblīs) said: “O my Lord! Give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised.” 80 (Allah) said: “Respite then is granted you—81 Till the Day of the Time Appointed.” 82 (Iblīs) said: “Then, by Your Power, I will put them all in the wrong,—83 Except Your Servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Your grace).” 84 (Allah) said: “Then it is just and fitting—and I say what is just and fitting—85 That I will certainly fill Hell with you and those that follow you,—every one.”

86 Say: “No reward do I ask³³² of you for this (Qur’ān), nor am I a pretender. 87 This is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds. 88 And you shall certainly know the truth of it (all) after a while.” □

332. Cf. 25:57; 26:109; 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—or, to use another metaphor, “to see His Face”. [4238]

Chapter 39

AL-ZUMAR (The Crowds)

Introduction

This is the last of the series of six Sūrahs beginning with Sūrah 34, which deal with the mysteries of the spiritual world, as leading up to the *Ma'ād*, or the Hereafter. See Introduction to Sūrah 34.

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 Allah, Who will separate Good from Evil at the last Day. The word *zumar* occurs in verses 71 and 73.

Its chronology has no significance. It belongs to the later Makkan period.

Summary—The variety in Creation yet points to the unity of Plan: there is only One Allah: to Him is due all worship and from Him flow all Justice and Grace (39:1-21).

There is unity in Revelation, and guidance comes from Allah alone: turn to Him only, for all else is false (39:22-52).

Allah's Mercy is all-embracing: despair not: seek it before it is too late: for Judgement and Justice will come for certain (39:53-75).

*** **

SECTION 1: Obedience to Allah

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. 2 Verily it is We Who have revealed the Book to you in Truth: so serve Allah, offering Him sincere devotion. 3 Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors other than Allah (say): "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful.

4 Had Allah wished to take to Himself a son, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of those whom He³³³ does create: but Glory be to Him! (He is above such things.) He is Allah, the One, the Irresistible. 5 He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law): each one follows a course for a time appointed. Is not He the Exalted in Power—He Who forgives again and again? 6 He created you (all) from a single Person: then created, of like nature, his mate; and He sent down for you eight head³³⁴ of cattle in pairs: He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness.³³⁵ Such is Allah, your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are you turned away (from your true Centre)?

7 If you reject (Allah), truly Allah has no need of you; but He likes not ingratitude from His servants: if you are grateful, He is pleased with you. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. In the end, to your Lord is your Return, when He will tell you the truth of all that you did (in this life). For He knows well all that is in (men's) hearts.

333. It is blasphemy to say that God begot a son. If that were true, He should have had a wife (6:101), and His son would have been of the same kind as Himself; whereas God is One, with no one else like unto Him (112:4). 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 God wanted someone else to help Him, He could have chosen the best of His creatures instead of lowering Himself to an animal act. But glory to God! 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. [4246]

334. See 6:143-4, 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 God 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 God in granting man dominion over cattle, see 36:71-73. [4250]

335. 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. But we might understand "three" in a cumulative rather than a numerical sense. [4252]

8 When some trouble touches man, he cries unto his Lord, turning to Him in repentance: but when He bestows a favour upon him as from Himself, (man) does forget what he cried and prayed for before, and he does set up rivals unto Allah, thus misleading others from Allah's Path. Say, "Enjoy your blasphemy for a little while: verily you are (one) of the Companions of the Fire!"

9 Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night 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."

SECTION 2: Believers and Disbelievers

10 Say: "O you My servants who believe! Fear your Lord. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world. Spacious is Allah's earth! 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 of those who bow to Allah in Islam." 13 Say: "I would, if I disobeyed my Lord, indeed have fear of the Penalty of a Mighty Day." 14 Say: "It is Allah I serve, with my sincere (and exclusive) devotion: 15 Serve you what you will besides Him." Say: "Truly, those in loss are those who lose their own souls and their people on the Day of Judgement: Ah! That is indeed the (real and) evident Loss!" 16 They shall have Layers of Fire above them, and Layers (of Fire) below them: with this does Allah warn off His Servants: "O My Servants! then fear you Me!"

17 Those who eschew Evil,—and fall not into 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, and follow the best (meaning) in it; those are the ones whom 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)? Would you, then, deliver one (who is) in the Fire? **20** But it is for those who fear their Lord, that lofty mansions, one above another, have been built: beneath them flow rivers (of delight): (such is) the Promise of Allah: never does Allah fail in (His) promise. **21** See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and leads it through springs in the earth?³³⁶ Then He causes to grow, therewith, produce of various colours: then it withers; you will 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: A Perfect Guidance

22 Is one whose heart Allah has opened to Islam, so that he has received Enlightenment from Allah, (no better than one hardhearted)? Woe to those whose hearts are hardened against celebrating the praises 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, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises. 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 fear the brunt of the Penalty on the Day of Judgement (and receive it) on his face, (like one guarded therefrom)? It will be said to the wrong-doers: "Taste you (the fruits of) what you 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 in the present life, but greater is the Punishment of the Hereafter, if they only knew!

336. 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 to 25:53. 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 God, clear to those who understand. [4273]

27 We have put forth for men, in this Qur'ān every kind of Parable, in order that they may receive admonition. 28 (It is) a Qur'ān in Arabic,³³⁷ without any crookedness (therein): in order that they may guard against Evil. 29 Allah puts forth a Parable—a man belonging to many partners at variance with each other, and a man belonging entirely to one master: are those two equal in comparison? Praise be to Allah! But most of them have no knowledge. 30 Truly you will die (one day), and truly they (too) will die (one day). 31 In the End will you (all), on the Day of Judgment, settle your disputes in the presence of your Lord.

PART XXIV

SECTION 4: Rejectors will be Abased

32 Who, then, does more wrong than one who utters a lie concerning Allah, and rejects the Truth when it comes to him; is there not in Hell an abode for blasphemers? 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 for, in the presence of their Lord: such is the reward of those who do good: 35 So that Allah will turn off 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 they try to frighten you with other (gods) besides Him! For such as Allah leaves to stray, there can be no guide. 37 And such as Allah does guide there can be none to lead astray. Is not Allah Exalted in Power, (able to enforce His Will), Lord of Retribution? 38 If indeed you ask them who it is that created³³⁸ the heavens and the earth, they would be sure to say,

337. 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. [4285]

338. Cf. 29:61; and also 23:85. Most worshippers of false gods are neither atheists nor sceptics. They admit the existence of God as an abstract proposition, but it has not come into
(continued...)

"Allah". Say: "See you then? the things that you invoke besides Allah,—can they, if Allah wills some Penalty for me, remove His Penalty?—or if He wills some Grace for me, can they keep back His Grace?" Say: "Sufficient is Allah for me! In Him trust those who put their trust." **39** Say: "O my people! Do whatever you can: I will do (my part): but soon will you know—**40** Who it is to whom comes a Penalty of ignominy, and on whom descends a Penalty that abides."

41 Verily We have revealed the Book to you in Truth, for (instructing) mankind. He, then, that receives guidance benefits his own soul: but he that strays injures his own soul. Nor are you set over them to dispose of their affairs.

SECTION 5: Punishment Cannot be Averted

42 It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death; and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep: those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back (from returning to life), but the rest He sends (to their bodies) for a term appointed. Verily in this are Signs for those who reflect. **43** What! Do they take for intercessors others besides Allah? Say: "Even if they have no power whatever and no intelligence?" **44** Say: "To Allah belongs exclusively (the right to grant) Intercession:³³⁹ to Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: in the End, it is to Him that you shall be brought back." **45** When Allah, the One and Only, is mentioned, the hearts of those who

338. (...continued)

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 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? [4299]

339. For *Shafa'ah* (Intercession, Advocacy) see 2:255; 10:3; 20:109, and 21:28. It follows that no one can intercede with God, except (1) by God's permission, and (2) for those who have prepared themselves by penitence for God's acceptance. Even in earthly Courts, Advocacy is not permitted to anyone; 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. [4311]

believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and horror; but when (gods) other than He are mentioned, behold, they are filled with joy! **46** Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Knower of all that is hidden and open! It is You that will judge between Your Servants in those matters about which they have differed."

47 Even if the wrong-doers had all that there is on earth, and as much more, (in vain) would they offer it for ransom from the pain of the Penalty on the Day of Judgement: but something will confront them from Allah, which they could never have counted upon! **48** For the evils of their deeds will confront them, and they will be (completely) encircled by that which they used to mock at! **49** Now, when trouble touches man, he cries to Us: but when We bestow a favour upon him as from Ourselves, he says, "This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge (I have)!" 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. And the wrong-doers of this (generation)—the evil results of their deeds will soon overtake them (too), and they will never be able to frustrate (Our Plan)! **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: Divine Mercy

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 you to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that you shall not be helped. **55** And follow the best of (the courses) revealed to you from your Lord, before the Penalty comes on you—of a sudden, while you 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 the Penalty: '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 you My Signs, and you did reject them: you were haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith!'"

60 On the Day of Judgement will you 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 to their place of salvation: no evil shall touch them, nor shall they grieve. 62 Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer 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 be in loss.

SECTION 7: The Final Judgement

64 Say: "Is it someone other than Allah that you order me to worship, O you ignorant ones?" 65 But it has already been revealed to you,—as it was to those before you,—"If you were to join (gods with Allah), truly fruitless will be your work (in life), and you will surely be in the ranks of those who lose (all spiritual good)." 66 Nay, but worship Allah, and be of those who give thanks. 67 No just estimate have they made of Allah, such as is due to Him: on the Day of Judgement the whole of the earth will be but His handful, 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, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded, when, behold, they will be standing and looking on! 69 And the Earth will shine with the glory of its Lord: the Record (of deeds) will be placed (open); the prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward and a just decision³⁴⁰ pronounced between them; and they will not be wronged (in the least). 70 And to every soul will be paid in full (the

340. It is in such a scene of Reality that Judgement will be held. Before the Throne of God, the book of each man's deeds and motives will be placed wide open, which all may see; the Prophets and the 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, and He will know every fact and circumstance, and His wisdom will give due weight to everything, great or small. [4345]

fruit) of its deeds; and (Allah) knows best all that they do.

SECTION 8: Each Party Meets with its Desert

71 The Unbelievers will be led to Hell in a crowd:³⁴¹ until, when they arrive there, its gates will be opened. And its keepers will say,³⁴² "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 Punishment has been proved true against the Unbelievers!" 72 (To them) will be said: "Enter you the gates of Hell, to dwell therein: and evil is (this) abode of the arrogant!"

73 And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in crowds: until behold, they arrive there; its gates will be opened; and its keepers will say: "Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter you here, to dwell therein." 74 They will say: "Praise be to Allah, Who has truly fulfilled His Promise to us, and has given us (this) land in heritage: we can dwell in the Garden as we will: how excellent a reward for those who work (righteousness)!" 75 And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne (Divine) on all sides, singing Glory and Praise to their Lord. The Decision between them (at Judgement) will be in (perfect) justice, and the cry (on all sides) will be, "Praise be to Allah,³⁴³ the Lord of the Worlds!" □

341. *Crowds*: this is the word which gives the keynote to the Sūrah. 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! [4347]

342. 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". [4348]

343. These are the opening words of the first Sūrah, and they describe the atmosphere of the final Bliss in Heaven, in the Light of the Countenance of their Lord, The Universal Lord of all! [4355]

GHĀFIR or AL-MU'MIN
(Forgiver) or (The Believer)

Introduction

This Sūrah is called Ghāfir (Forgiver, see verse 3). It is also called "The Believer" (*Mu'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). In Sūrah 23, called "The Believers" (*Mu'minūn*), 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 Sūrahs (40-46) to which are affixed the Abbreviated Letters *Hā Mīm*. Chronologically they all belong to the same period, the later Makkan Period, and they immediately follow the last Sūrah in time. About the Abbreviated Letters generally, see note to Sūrah 2:1. As to the precise meaning of *Hā Mīm* no authoritative explanation is available. If *Mīm* here has a signification similar to *Mīm* in *Alif, Lām, Mīm* (see note to Sūrah 2:1), it means the End of things, the Last Day, and all these Sūrahs direct our special attention to that *Hā*, the emphatic guttural, in contrast with the softer breathing of *Alif*, may be meant to suggest that the Beginning (see note to 2:1, last paragraph) is only for the End, the Present for the Future, and to emphasise the eschatological element in Faith. But this is mere conjecture, and should be taken for no more than it is worth.

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 *Hamīm* in that sense is used in Sūrahs 40 and 41 (40:18 and 41:34), while in the other Sūrahs we have words of equivalent import, e.g., *walī* or *naṣīr* (42:8 and 31); *qarīn* (43:36, 38); *mawlā* (44:41); *awliyā'* or *nāṣirīn* (45:19, 34); and *awliyā'* (46:32). Is it permissible to connect the Abbreviated Letters *Hā Mīm* with these ideas as expressed in the word *Hamīm*?

Another suggestion worthy of consideration is that *Hā* stands for *Hayy*, and *Mīm* for *Qayyūm*. These are two attributes of Allah, meaning, (1) the Living, and (2) the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. The one points to Life, and Revelation, and the other to the Hereafter and Eternity; and both these matters are specially dealt with in the seven *Hā Mīm* Sūrahs. The first letter of *Hayy*

(Hā) is appropriate for life, and the last letter of *Qayyūm* is appropriate for the Last Days, the *Ma'ād*, the Hereafter. Again, this is mere conjecture, and should not be taken for more than it is worth.

Summary—Faith is ever justified, for Allah forgives; but evil deeds must have evil fruits, for Allah knows and is just (40:1-20).

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 (40:21-50).

No doubt is there of the Future Judgement; the Power, Goodness, and Justice of Allah are manifest; will man dispute, or will he accept the Signs before it is too late? (40:51-85).

*** **

SECTION 1: Protection of the Faithful

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm.*³⁴⁴ **2** The revelation of this Book is from Allah, Exalted in Power, Full of Knowledge,—**3** Who forgives Sin, accepts Repentance, is Strict in Punishment, and has a Long Reach (in all things). There is no god but He: to Him is the Final Goal.

4 None can dispute about the Signs of Allah but the Unbelievers. Let not, then, their strutting about through the land deceive you! **5** But (there were people) before them, who denied (the Signs),—the people of Noah, and the Confederates (of Evil) after them; and every people plotted against their prophet, to seize him, and disputed by means of vanities, therewith to condemn the Truth; but it was I that seized them! And how (terrible) was My Requital! **6** Thus was the Decree of your Lord proved true against the Unbelievers; that truly they are Companions of the Fire!

7 Those who sustain the Throne (of Allah) and those around it sing

344. See paragraphs 2-4 of the Introduction to this Sūrah. [4356]

Glory and Praise to their Lord; believe in Him; and implore Forgiveness for those who believe: “Our Lord! Your Reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in Repentance, and follow Your Path; and preserve them from the Penalty of the blazing Fire! **8** And grant, our Lord! that they enter the Gardens of Eternity, which You have promised to them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity! For You are (He), the Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom. **9** And preserve them from (all) ills; and any whom You do preserve from ills that Day,—on them will You have bestowed Mercy indeed: and that will be truly (for them) the highest Achievement.”

SECTION 2: Failure of Opponents

10 The Unbelievers will be addressed: “Greater was the aversion of Allah to you than (is) your aversion to yourselves, seeing that you were called to the Faith and you used to refuse.” **11** They will say: “Our Lord! Twice have You made us without life, and twice have You 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 the Only (object of worship), you did reject Faith, but when partners were joined to Him, you believed! The Command is with Allah, Most High, Most Great!”

13 He it is Who shows you His Signs, and sends down sustenance for you from the sky: but only those receive admonition who turn (to Allah). **14** Call you, then, upon Allah with sincere devotion to Him, even though the Unbelievers may detest it. **15** Raised high above ranks (or degrees), (He is) the Lord of the Throne (of authority): by His Command does He send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of His servants He pleases, that it may warn (men) of the Day of Mutual Meeting,—**16** The Day whereon they will (all) come forth: not a single thing concerning them is hidden from Allah. Whose will be the dominion that Day? That of Allah, the One, the Irresistible! **17** That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned; no injustice will there be that Day, for Allah is Swift in taking account.

18 Warn them of the Day that is (ever) drawing near, when the hearts will (come) right up to the throats to choke (them); no intimate friend nor intercessor will the wrong-doers have, who could be listened to. **19** (Allah) knows of (the tricks) that deceive with the eyes, 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. Verily it is Allah (alone) Who hears and sees (all things).

SECTION 3: A Warning in Moses' History

21 Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before them? They were even superior to them in strength, and in the traces (they 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 with clear (Signs), but they rejected them: so Allah called them to account: for He is Full of Strength, Strict in Punishment.

23 Of old We sent Moses, with Our Signs and an Authority manifest, **24** To Pharaoh, Hāmān, and Qārūn; but they called (him) "a sorcerer telling lies!" **25** Now, when he came to them in Truth, from Us, they said, "Slay the sons of those who believe 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! What I fear is lest he should change your religion, or lest he should cause mischief to appear in the land!" **27** Moses said: "I have indeed called upon my Lord and your Lord (for protection) from every arrogant one who believes not in the Day of Account!"

SECTION 4: A Believer of Pharaoh's People

28 A Believer, a man from among the people of Pharaoh, who had concealed his faith, said: "Will you slay a man because he says, 'My

Lord is Allah'?'³⁴⁵ —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 telling³⁴⁶ 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! **29** O my people! Yours is the dominion this day: you 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 which I see (myself),³⁴⁷ 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 the Day (of disaster) of the Confederates (in sin):³⁴⁸—**31** Something like the fate of the people of Noah, the 'Ād, and the Thamūd, and those who came after them: but Allah never wishes injustice to His Servants. **32** And O my people! I fear for you a Day when there will be mutual calling (and wailing),—**33** A Day when you shall turn your backs and flee: no defender shall you 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, with clear Signs, but you

345 There is nothing to justify the identification of this man with the man mentioned in 28:20, 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. [4396]

346. 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 God? 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 God? But suppose that he is really inspired by God to tell you the truth and warn you against evil, what will be your fate when God's Wrath descends? For it must descend if he is a true Messenger sent by God." [4397]

347. 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.' [4400]

348. Cf. 38:11-13, and 40:5. [4402]

ceased not to doubt of the (mission) for which he had come: at length, when he died, you said: 'No messenger will Allah send after him.' Thus does Allah leave to stray such as transgress and live in doubt,—35 (Such) as dispute about the Signs of Allah, without any authority that has reached them. Grievous and odious (is such conduct) in the sight of Allah and of the Believers. Thus does Allah seal up every heart—of arrogant and obstinate transgressors."

36 Pharaoh said: "O Hāmān! 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 mount up to the Allah of Moses: but as far as I am concerned, 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 of Pharaoh led to nothing but perdition (for him).

SECTION 5: The End of Pharaoh's People

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) convenience: 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 to Salvation while you call me to the Fire! 42 You do call upon me to blaspheme against Allah, 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 you do call me to one who is not fit to be called to, 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 you remember what I say to you (now). My (own) affair I commit to Allah: for Allah (ever) watches over His Servants."

45 Then Allah saved him from (every) ill that they plotted (against him), but the brunt of the Penalty 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 that Judgement will be established: "Cast you 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 you 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, Allah has judged between (His) Servants!" 49 Those in the Fire will say to the Keepers of Hell: "Pray to your Lord to lighten us the Penalty 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 pray (as you like)! But the prayer of those without Faith is nothing but (futile wandering) in (mazes of) error!"

SECTION 6: Messengers Receive Divine Help

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 will stand forth,—52 The Day when no profit will it be to Wrong-doers to present their excuses, but they will (only) have the Curse and the Home of Misery, 53 We did aforetime give Moses the (Book of) Guidance, and We gave the Book in inheritance to the Children of Israel,—54 A Guide and a Message to men of understanding. 55 Patiently, then, persevere: for the Promise of Allah is true: and ask forgiveness for your fault, and celebrate the Praises of your Lord in the evening and in the morning. 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 understand 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 you learn by admonition! 59 The Hour will certainly come: therein is no doubt: yet most men believe not. 60 And your Lord says:

"Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell—in humiliation!"

SECTION 7: The Power of Allah

61 It is Allah Who has made the Night for you, that you may rest therein, and the Day as that which helps (you) to see. Verily Allah is full of Grace and Bounty to men: yet most men give no thanks. **62** Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things; there is no god but He: then how you are deluded away from the Truth! **63** Thus are deluded those who are wont to reject the Signs of Allah.

64 It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape—and made your shapes beautiful,—and has provided for you Sustenance, 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): there is no god but He: call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds!

66 Say: "I have been forbidden to invoke those whom you invoke besides Allah,—seeing that the clear Signs have come to me from my Lord; and I have been commanded to bow (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 you may learn wisdom. **68** It is He Who gives Life and Death; and when He decides upon an affair, He says to it, "Be", and it is.

SECTION 8: The End of Opposition

69 See you not those that dispute concerning the Signs of Allah? How are they turned away (from Reality)?—**70** Those who reject the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent Our messengers: but soon shall they know,—**71** When the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged along,—**72** In the boiling fetid fluid; then in the Fire shall they be burned, **73** Then shall it be said to them: "Where are the

(deities) to which you gave part-worship,—74 In derogation of Allah?" They will reply: "They have 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 you were wont to rejoice on the earth in things other than the Truth, and that you were wont to be insolent. 76 Enter you the gates of Hell, to dwell therein: and evil is (this) abode of the arrogant!"

77 So persevere in patience; for the Promise of Allah is true: and whether We show you (in this life) some part of what We promise them,—or We take your soul (to Our Mercy) (before that),—(in any case) it is to Us that they shall (all) return. 78 We did aforetime send messengers before you: of them there are some whose story We have related to you, and some whose story We have not related to you. It was not (possible) for any messenger to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allah: but when the Command of Allah was issued, the matter was decided in truth and justice, and there perished, there and then, those who stood on Falsehoods.

SECTION 9: The End of Opposition

79 It is Allah Who made cattle for you, that you may use some for riding and some for food; 80 And there are (other) advantages in them for you (besides); that you may through them attain to any need (there may be) in your hearts; and on them and on ships you are carried. 81 And He shows you (always) His Signs: then which of the Signs of Allah will you deny? 82 Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the End of those 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 Punishment, they said: "We believe in Allah,—the one Allah—and we reject the partners we used to join with Him." 85 But their professing the Faith 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 perish (utterly)!□

FUSSILAT or HĀ MĪM
(Expounded)

Introduction

This is the second of the series of seven Sūrahs bearing the Abbreviated Letters *Hā Mīm*, as explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 40. To prevent confusion with other Sūrahs of the *Hā Mīm* series, the word *Sajdah* is sometimes added to the title, making it *Hā Mīm al-Sajdah*, the double title being necessary as there is another Sūrah called *Sajdah* (Sūrah 32). To avoid the double title, it is sometimes called *Fussilat*, from the occurrence of the word in verse 3.

The meaning of *Hā Mīm* has been explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 40., where will also be found a note on the chronology and general theme of the seven *Hā Mīm* Sūrahs.

For this particular Sūrah 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? (41:1-32).

The fruits of Faith and Unfaith, Truth and Falsehood (41:33-54).

*** **

SECTION 1: Invitation to the Truth

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm*.³⁴⁹ 2 A revelation from (Allah), Most Gracious, Most Merciful—3 A Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail;—a Qur'ān in Arabic, for people who understand—4 Giving Good News

349. Abbreviated Letters: See Introduction to Sūrah 40. See also 40:8 and 41:34. [4462]

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 you do invite us, and in our ears is a deafness, and between us and you is a screen: so do you (what you will); for us, we shall do (what we will!)" **6** Say you: "I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me by inspiration, that your God is one God: so stand true to Him, and ask for His forgiveness." And woe to those who join gods with Allah,—**7** Those who practise not regular charity, and who even deny the Hereafter. **8** For those who believe and work deeds of righteousness is a reward that will never fail.

SECTION 2: The Warning

9 Say: Is it that you deny Him Who created the earth in two Days?³⁵⁰ And do you join equals with Him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds. **10** He set on the (earth), mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measured therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, in four Days, in accordance with (the needs of) those who seek (sustenance). **11** Moreover He comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: "Come you together, willingly or unwillingly." They said: "We do come (together), in willing obedience." **12** So He completed them as seven firmaments in two

350. 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 7:54 and 32:4. 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 15:19-20. [4470]

Days,³⁵¹ and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. And We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard. Such is the Decree of (Him) the Exalted in Might, Full of Knowledge.

13 But if they turn away, say you: "I have warned you of a stunning Punishment (as of thunder and lightning) like that which (overtook) the 'Ād and the Thamūd!" **14** Behold, the messengers came to them, from before them and behind them, (preaching): "Serve none but Allah." They said, "If our Lord had so pleased, He would certainly have sent down angels (to preach): now we reject your mission (altogether)." **15** Now the 'Ād 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 Penalty of humiliation in this life; but the Penalty of a Hereafter will be more humiliating still: and they will find no help. **17** As to the Thamūd, We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to Guidance: so the stunning Punishment of humiliation seized them, because of what they had earned. **18** But We

351. For "Days", which may include thousands of years, see 7:54. 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 God created light; the second, the firmament; the third, the earth and vegetation; the fourth, the stars and planets; 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) God did not rest, and never rests. "His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them"; (2) God's work has not ended; His activity still goes on, 32:5; 7:54; (3) man in our scheme does not come in with land animals; his advent is much later; (4) our stages are not sharply divided from each other, as in the above scheme, where the stars and planets having been created on the fourth day, it is not intelligible how the first three days were counted, nor how vegetation grew on the third day. Our stages for earth and heavens are not in sequence of time for the heavens and the earth. Our six stages are broadly speaking, (1) the throwing off of our planet from cosmic matter; (2) its cooling and condensing; (3) and (4) the growth of vegetable and animal life; (5) and (6) the parallel growth of the starry realm and our solar system. [4477]

delivered those who believed and practised righteousness.

SECTION 3: Man's Evidence Against Himself

19 On 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 you witness against us?" They will say: "Allah has given us speech,—(He) Who gives speech to everything: He created you for the first time, and unto Him were you to return. 22 You did not seek to hide yourselves, lest your hearing, your sight, and your skins should bear witness against you! But you did think that Allah knew not many of the things that you used to do! 23 But this thought of yours which you did entertain concerning your Lord, has brought you to destruction, and (now) have you become of those utterly lost!" 24 If, then, they have patience, the Fire will be a home for them! And if they beg to be received into favour, into favour will they not (then) be received. 25 And We have destined for them intimate companions (of like nature), who made alluring to them what was before them and behind them; and the sentence among the previous generations of *Jinns* and men, who have passed away, is proved against them; for they are utterly lost.

SECTION 4: Believers Strengthened

26 The Unbelievers say: "Listen not to this Qur'ān, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that you may gain the upper hand!" 27 But We will certainly give the Unbelievers a taste of a severe Penalty, and We will requite them for the worst of their deeds. 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, among *Jinns* and men, who misled us: we shall crush them beneath our feet, so that they become the vilest (before all)."

30 In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is Allah", and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to

time): "Fear you not!" (they suggest), nor grieve! But receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), that which you were promised! **31** We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall you have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall you have all that you ask for!—**32** A hospitable gift from One Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!"

SECTION 5: Effect of the Revelation

33 Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam"? **34** Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and you was hatred become as it were your 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 you by the Evil One, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One Who hears and knows all things.

37 Among His Signs are the Night and the Day, and the Sun and the Moon. Adore not the sun and the moon, but adore Allah, Who created them, if it is Him you wish to serve. **38** But if the (Unbelievers) are arrogant, (no matter): for in the presence of your 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: you see the earth barren and desolate; but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred 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 you will: verily He sees (clearly) all that you 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. **42** No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: it is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise. **43**

Nothing is said to you that was not said to the messengers before you: that your Lord has at His command (all) Forgiveness as well as a most grievous Penalty. **44** Had We sent this as a Qur'ān (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic 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, and it is blindness in their (eyes): they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!"

SECTION 6: Gradual Spread of Truth

45 We certainly gave Moses the Book aforetime: but disputes arose therein. Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your 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 your Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His servants.

PART XXV

47 To Him is referred the Knowledge of the Hour (of Judgement: He knows all): no date-fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive (within her womb) nor bring forth (young) but by His Knowledge. The Day that (Allah) will propound to them the (question), "Where are the Partners (ye attributed) to Me?" they will say, "We do assure You 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 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 of some mercy from Ourselves, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, "This is due to my (merit): I think not that the Hour (of Judgement) 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 Penalty.

51 When We bestow favours on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us); and when evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!

52 Say: "See you if the (Revelation) is (really) from Allah, and yet do you reject it? Who is more astray than one who is in a schism far (from any purpose)?" **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. Is it not enough that your Lord does witness all things? **54** Ah indeed! Are they in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord? Ah indeed! It is He that does encompass all things!□

AL-SHŪRĀ
(Consultation)

Introduction

This is the third Sūrah of the *Hā Mīm* series of seven Sūrahs, for which see the Introduction to Sūrah 40.

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 (42:38); which explains the title of the Sūrah.

Summary—The Contrast of blasphemy and disputation against Revelation, Unity, and Faith, as relying on the Signs and the Mercy of Allah (42:1-29).

Evil comes through men's own deeds, of which they cannot avoid the consequences, but Guidance comes through Allah's Mercy and Revelation (42:30-53).

*** **

SECTION 1: Divine Mercy in Giving Warning

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm*.³⁵² 2 *'Ayn Sīm Qāf*.³⁵³ 3 Thus does (He) send inspiration to you as (He did) to those before you—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. 5 The heavens are almost rent asunder

352. See Introduction to Sūrah 40, paragraphs 2-4. [4526]

353. This Sūrah 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. [4527]

from above them (by His Glory): and the angels celebrate the Praises of their Lord, 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 does watch over them; and you are not the disposer of their affairs. 7 Thus have We sent by inspiration to you an Arabic Qur'ān: that you may warn the Mother of Cities³⁵⁴ 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. 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: Judgement is Given

10 Whatever it be wherein you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah: such is Allah my Lord: in Him I trust, and to Him I turn. 11 (He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, 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 (all things). 12 To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth: He enlarges and restricts 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—that which We have sent by inspiration to thee—and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that you should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein: to those who worship other things than Allah, hard is the (way) to which you call them. Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him). 14 And they became

354. The City of Makkah. See 6:92. This is undoubtedly a Makkan verse. Even apart from the *Qiblah*, Makkah is the centre of Islam, and "all around her" is the whole world. [4534]

divided only after knowledge reached them,—through selfish envy as between themselves. Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, (tending) to a Term appointed, the matter would have been settled between them: but truly those who have inherited the Book after them are in suspicious (disquieting) doubt concerning it.

15 Now then, for that (reason), call (them to the Faith), and stand steadfast as you are commanded, nor follow you their vain desires; but say: "I believe in the Book which Allah has sent down; and I am commanded to judge justly between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord: for us (is the responsibility for) our deeds, and for you for your deeds. There is no contention between us 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,—futile is their dispute in the sight of their Lord: on them is Wrath, and for them will be a Penalty terrible. **17** It is Allah Who has sent down the Book in Truth, and the Balance (by which to weigh conduct). And what will make you realise that perhaps the Hour is close at hand? **18** Only those wish to hasten it who believe not in it: those who believe 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 to His servants: He gives Sustenance to whom He pleases: and He has Power and can carry out His Will.

SECTION 3: Allah's Dealing is Just

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 has no share or lot in the Hereafter.

21 What! Have they partners (in godhead), who have established for them some religion without the permission of Allah? Had it not been for the Decree of Judgement, the matter would have been decided between them (at once). But verily the wrong-doers will have a grievous Penalty. **22** You will 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 luxuriant meads of the Gardens: they shall have, before their Lord, all that they

wish for. That will indeed be the magnificent Bounty (of Allah). **23** That is (the Bounty) whereof 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." And if anyone earns any good, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).

24 What! Do they say, "He has forged a falsehood against Allah"? But if Allah willed, He could seal up your heart. And Allah blots out Vanity, and proves the Truth by His Words. For He knows well the secrets of all hearts. **25** He is the One that accepts repentance from His Servants and forgives sins: and He knows all that you do. **26** And He listens to those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, and gives them increase of His Bounty: but for the Unbelievers there is a terrible Penalty. **27** If Allah were to enlarge 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. For He is with His Servants Well-Acquainted, Watchful. **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.

SECTION 4: Believers Should be Patient

30 Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness. **31** Nor can you frustrate (aught), (fleeing) through the earth; nor have you, besides Allah, anyone 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 in this are Signs for everyone who patiently perseveres and is grateful. **34** Or He can cause them to perish because of the (evil) which (the men) have earned; but much does He forgive. **35** But let those know, who dispute about Our Signs, that there is for them no way of escape.

36 Whatever you are given (here) is (but) a convenience of this life: but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting: (it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; **37** Those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, when they are angry even then forgive; **38** Those who listen to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation;³⁵⁵ who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance; **39** And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves.

40 The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah: for (Allah) loves not those who do wrong.³⁵⁶ **41** But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong (done) to them, against such there is no cause of blame. **42** The blame is only against those who oppress men with wrong-doing and insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right and justice: for such there will be a Penalty grievous. **43** But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.

SECTION 5: Revelation Guides Aright

44 For any whom Allah leaves astray, there is no protector thereafter. And you will see the wrong-doers, when in sight of the Penalty, say: "Is there any way (to effect) a return?" **45** And you will see them

355. *Consultation*. This is the keyword of the Sūrah, 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 God. 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*. [4579]

356. God 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 God. [4583]

brought forward to the (Penalty), in a humble frame of mind because of (their) disgrace, (and) looking with a stealthy glance. And the Believers will say: "Those are indeed in loss, who have given to perdition their own selves and those belonging to them on the Day of Judgement. Behold! Truly the wrong-doers are in a lasting Penalty!" 46 And no protectors have they to help them, other than Allah. And for any whom Allah leaves to stray, there is no way (to the Goal).

47 Listen you to your Lord, before there come a Day which there will be no putting back, because 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 (of your sins)! 48 If then they turn away, We have not sent you as a guard over them. Your duty is but to convey (the Message). And truly, when We give man a taste of a Mercy from Ourselves, he does 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 (and plans). He bestows (children) male or female according to His Will (and Plan), 50 Or He bestows both males and females, and He leaves barren whom He will: for He is full of knowledge and power.

51 It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration,³⁵⁷ or from behind a veil,³⁵⁸ or by the sending of a

357. God is Most High, Most Wise: man is, in spite of his high destiny, often the lowest of the low (95:5). Yet God, out of His infinite Mercy and Grace, has bestowed His Revelation on man. How does it come about? Three ways are mentioned: (1) *Wahyun*, Inspiration; (2) from behind a veil; and (3) by the sending of a Messenger: see the notes following.

Arabic *Wahyun*, translated here "Inspiration", is interpreted to be of two kinds: (1) a suggestion thrown by God 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 God are conveyed in human language. [4598]

messenger³⁵⁹ 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 inspiration to you: you knew 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 you do 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!□

358. *Behind a veil*: not of course a material veil, but the mystic veil of Light.

Ṣaḥīḥ 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." [4599]

359. *Messenger: Rasūl*: the angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations were given to the Holy Prophet. These spiritual visions, conveying the message of Revelation, are the basis of the Qur'ān. [4600]

AL-ZUKHRUF
(The Gold Adornments)

Introduction

This is the fourth Sūrah of the *Hā Mīm* series of seven Sūrahs. For their chronology and general theme see the Introduction to Sūrah 40.

This Sūrah 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 keyword (*Zukhruf*, Gold Adornments) occurs in verse 38, but the idea occurs all through the Sūrah.

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 (43:1-25).

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? (43:26-56).

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 (43:57-89).

*** **

SECTION 1: Revelation is a Divine Favour

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm*.³⁶⁰ 2 By the Book that makes things clear,— 3 We have made it a Qur'ān in Arabic, that you may be able to understand (and learn wisdom). 4 And verily, it is in the Mother of the Book, in Our Presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom.

360. Abbreviated Letters: see Introduction to Sūrah 40, paragraphs 2-4. [4604]

5 Shall We then take away the Message from you and repel (you), for that you are a people transgressing beyond bounds? 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 (them)—stronger in power than these;—and (thus) has passed on the Parable of the peoples of old.

9 If you were 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 (Indeed, the same that) has made for you the earth (like a carpet) spread out, and has made for you roads (and channels) therein, in order that you 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 you be raised (from the dead);—12 That has created pairs in all things, and has made for you ships and cattle on which you ride, 13 In order that you may sit firm and square on their backs, and when so seated, you may celebrate the (kind) favour of your Lord, and say, "Glory to Him Who has subjected these to our (use), for we could never have accomplished this (by ourselves), 14 And to our Lord, surely, must we turn back!" 15 Yet they attribute to some of His servants a share with Him (in His godhead)! Truly is man a blasphemous ingrate avowed!

SECTION 2: Polytheism Condemned

16 What! Has He taken daughters out of what He Himself creates, and granted to you sons for choice? 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 (Allah) Most Gracious,

we should not have worshipped such (deities)!" Of that they have no knowledge! They do nothing but lie! **21** What! Have We given them a Book before this, to which they are holding fast? **22** Nay! They say: "We found 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 you to any people, the wealthy ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps." **24** He said: "What! Even if I brought you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?" They said: "For us, we deny that you (prophets) are sent (on a mission at all)." **25** So We exacted retribution from them: now see what was the end of those who rejected (Truth)!

SECTION 3: Allah's Choice of a Prophet

26 Behold! Abraham said to his father and his people: "I do indeed clear myself of what you worship: **27** (I worship) only Him Who made me, and He will certainly guide me." **28** And he left it as a Word to endure among those who came after him, that they may turn back (to Allah). **29** Indeed, 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'ān sent down to some leading man in either of the two (chief) cities?" **32** Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord? 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 your Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass. **33** And were it not that (all) men might become of one (evil) way of life, We would provide, for everyone that blasphemes against (Allah) Most Gracious, silver roofs for their houses and (silver) stairways on which to go up, **34** And (silver) doors to their houses, and thrones (of silver) on which they could recline, **35** And also

adornments³⁶¹ of gold. But all this were nothing but conveniences of the present life: the Hereafter, in the sight of your Lord is for the Righteous.

SECTION 4: **Opposition to Truth is Punished**

36 If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of (Allah) Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him. **37** Such (evil ones) really hinder them from the Path, but they think that they are being guided aright! **38** At length, when (such a one) comes to Us, he says (to his evil companion): "Would that between me and you were the distance of East and West!" Ah! Evil is the companion (indeed)! **39** When you have done wrong, it will avail you nothing, that Day, that you shall be partners in Punishment!

40 Can you 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 you away, We shall be sure to exact retribution from them, **42** Or We shall show you that (accomplished) which We have promised them: for verily We shall prevail over them. **43** So hold you fast to the Revelation sent down to you; verily you are on a straight Way. **44** The (Qur'ān) is indeed the Message, for you and for your people; and soon shall you (all) be brought to account. **45** And question you Our messengers whom We sent before you; did We appoint any deities other than (Allah) Most Gracious, to be worshipped?

SECTION 5: **Pharaoh's Opposition to Moses**

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." **47** But when he came to them with Our Signs, behold, they ridiculed them. **48** We showed them Sign 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 you sorcerer! Invoke your Lord for us according to

361. *Adornments of gold*: the keyword to this Sūrah. All false glitter and adornments of this world are as nothing. They more often hinder than help. [4637]

His covenant with you; for we shall truly accept guidance." **50** But when We removed the Penalty 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) these streams flowing underneath my (palace)? What! See you not then? **52** Am I not better than this (Moses), who is a contemptible wretch and can scarcely express himself clearly? **53** Then why are not 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 provoked Us, We exacted retribution from them, and We drowned them all. **56** And We made them (a people) of the Past and an Example to later ages.

SECTION 6: Jesus as Prophet

57 When (Jesus) the son of Mary is held up as an example, behold, your people raise a clamour thereat (in ridicule)! **58** And they say, "Are our gods best, or he?" This they set forth to you, only by way of disputation: indeed, 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 of Israel. **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 you Me: this is a straight Way. **62** Let not the Evil One 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 you dispute: therefore fear Allah and obey me. **64** For Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord: so worship you Him: this is a straight Way." **65** But sects from among themselves fell into disagreement: then woe to the wrong-doers, from the Penalty of a Grievous Day! **66** Do they only wait for the Hour—that it should come on them suddenly, while they perceive not? **67** Friends on that day will be foes, one to another,—except the Righteous.

SECTION 7: The Two Parties

68 My devotees! No fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall you grieve,—69 (Being) those who have believed in Our Signs and bowed (their wills to Ours) in Islam. 70 Enter you the Garden, you and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing. 71 To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in: and you shall abide therein (for ever). 72 Such will be the Garden of which you are made heirs for your (good) deeds (in life). 73 You shall have therein abundance of fruit, from which you shall have satisfaction.

74 The Sinners will be in the Punishment of Hell, to dwell therein (for ever): 75 Nowise will the (punishment) be lightened for them, and in despair will they be there overwhelmed. 76 Nowise shall We be unjust to them: but it is they who have been unjust themselves. 77 They will cry: "O Mālik!³⁶² Would that your Lord put an end to us!" He will say, "Nay, but you shall abide!"

78 Verily We have brought the Truth to you: but most of you have a hatred for Truth. 79 What! Have they settled some Plan (among themselves)? But it is We Who settle things. 80 Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? Indeed (We do), and Our messengers are by them, to record.

81 Say: "If (Allah) Most Gracious had a son, I would be the first to worship." 82 Glory to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne (of Authority)! (He is free) from the things they attribute (to Him)! 83 So leave them to babble and play (with vanities) until they meet that Day of theirs, which they have been promised. 84 It is He Who is Allah in heaven and Allah on earth; and He is Full of Wisdom and Knowledge. 85 And blessed is He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all between them: with Him is the knowledge of the Hour (of Judgement): and to Him shall you be

362. *Mālik*: one who is lord or possessor; one who is in charge; applied to the Angel in charge of Hell. [4674]

brought back. **86** And those whom they invoke besides Allah have no power of intercession;—only he who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him). **87** If you ask them, who created them, they will certainly say, Allah: How then are they deluded away (from the Truth)? **88** (Allah has knowledge) of the (Prophet's) cry, "O my Lord! Truly these are people who will not believe!" **89** But turn away from them, and say "Peace!" But soon shall they know!□

AL-DUKHĀN
(The Smoke)

Introduction

For the chronology and the general theme of the Sūrah of the *Hā Mīm* series of which this is the fifth, see the Introduction to Sūrah 40.

The theme of this particular Sūrah 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.

Summary—Revelation explains clearly how worldly pride and arrogance may come to naught, even at long odds, against spiritual truths (44:1-29).

A people may be given all blessings and may fail in its trust, as did Israel: will the Quraysh learn the lesson of Good and Evil? (44:30-59).

*** **

SECTION 1: Lighter Punishment Followed by Severer Punishment

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm*.³⁶³ 2 By the Book that makes things clear;—3 We sent it down during a blessed night: for We (ever) wish to warn (against Evil). 4 In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom, 5 By command, from Our Presence. For We (ever) send (revelations), 6 As a Mercy from your Lord: for He hears and knows (all things); 7 The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them, if you (but) have an assured faith. 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.

363. These Abbreviated Letters are discussed in the Introduction to Sūrah 40, paragraphs 2-4. [4688]

9 Yet they play about in doubt. 10 Then watch you for the Day that the sky will bring forth a kind of smoke (or mist) plainly visible, 11 Enveloping the people: this will be a Penalty grievous. 12 (They will say): "Our Lord! Remove the Penalty from us, for we do really believe!" 13 How shall the Message be (effectual) for them, 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!" 15 We shall indeed remove the Penalty for a while, (but) truly you will revert (to your ways). 16 One 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; 19 And be not arrogant as against Allah: for I come to you with authority manifest. 20 For me, I have sought safety with my Lord and your Lord, against your injuring me. 21 If you believe me not, at least keep yourselves away from me." 22 (But they were aggressive): 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 you are sure to be pursued. 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 cornfields and noble buildings, 27 And wealth (and conveniences of life), 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: Good and Evil Rewarded

30 We did deliver aforetime the Children of Israel from humiliating Punishment, 31 Inflicted by Pharaoh, for he was arrogant (even) among inordinate transgressors. 32 And We chose them aforetime above the nations, knowingly, 33 And granted them Signs in which there was a manifest trial.

34 As to these (Quraysh), 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 you say is true!" 37 What! Are they better than the people of Tubba'³⁶⁴ and those who were before them? We destroyed them because they were guilty of sin.

38 We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, merely in (idle) sport; 39 We created them not except for just ends: but most of them do not understand. 40 Verily the Day of Sorting Out is the time appointed for all of them.—41 The Day when no protector can avail his client in aught, and no help can they receive, 42 Except such as receive Allah's Mercy: for He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.

SECTION 3: Good and Evil Rewarded

43 Verily the tree of Zaqqūm,³⁶⁵ 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 you him and drag him into the midst of the blazing Fire! 48 Then pour over his head the Penalty of Boiling Water. 49 Taste you (this)! Truly were you mighty, full of honour! 50 Truly this is what you 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 join them to Companions with beautiful, big, and lustrous eyes. 55 There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; 56 Nor will they there

364. *Tubba'* is understood to be a title or family name of the Himyar kings in Yemen, of the tribe of Hamdān. 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 Yemen, which led to their coming into Islam. This was of course much later than the date of this Sūrah. [4715]

365. The opposite of "delicious Fruits" is the terrible tree of *Zaqqūm*, which is further described in 37:62-68. Also see 17:60. [4722]

taste Death, except the first death; and He will preserve them from the Penalty of the blazing Fire,—**57** As a Bounty from your Lord! That will be the supreme achievement!

58 Verily, We have made this (Qur'ān) easy, in your tongue, in order that they may give heed. **59** So wait you and watch; for they (too) are waiting. □

AL-JĀTHIYAH
(The Kneeling Down)

Introduction

This is the sixth Sūrah of the *Hā Mīm* series: for their general theme and chronology, see the Introduction to S. 40.

Summary—The title, *Al-Jāthiyah* (The Kneeling Down, or Bowing the Knee), taken from verse 28, expresses the leading idea in the Sūrah. 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.

*** **

SECTION 1: Denial of Revelation

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm.*³⁶⁶ **2** The revelation of the Book is from Allah the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. **3** Verily in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who believe. **4** And in the creation of yourselves and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are Signs for those of assured Faith. **5** And in the alternation of Night and Day, and the fact that Allah sends down Sustenance 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 of Allah, which We rehearse to you in Truth: then in what exposition will they believe after (rejecting) Allah and His Signs?

7 Woe to each sinful dealer in Falsehoods: **8** He hears the Signs of

366. See Introduction to Sūrah 40, paragraphs 2-4. [4735]

Allah rehearsed to him, yet is obstinate and lofty, as if he had not heard them: then announce to him a Penalty grievous! **9** And when he learns something of Our Signs, he takes them in jest: for such there will be a humiliating Penalty. **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 Penalty.

11 This is (true) Guidance and for those who reject the Signs of their Lord, is a grievous Penalty of abomination.

SECTION 2: Truth of the Revelation

12 It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that you may seek of His Bounty, and that you 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 look forward to the Days of Allah: it is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each people according to what they have earned. **15** If anyone does a righteous deed, it ensures to the benefit of his own soul; if he does evil, it works against (his own soul). In the end will you (all) be brought back to your Lord.

16 We did aforetime grant to the Children of Israel the Book, the Power of Command, and Prophethood; We gave them, for Sustenance, things good and pure; and We favoured them above the nations. **17** And We granted them clear Signs in affairs (of Religion): it was only after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms, through insolent envy among themselves. Verily your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgement as to those matters in which they set up differences. **18** Then We put you on the (right) Way³⁶⁷ of Religion: so follow you that (Way), and follow not the desires of those

367. Shari'ah 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 Makkan verse had been revealed. [4756]

who know not. **19** They will be of no use to you 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 seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds—that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgement that they make.

SECTION 3: Denial of Judgement

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 be wronged. **23** Then see you 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 after Allah (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will you 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 you 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 Judgement about which there is no doubt": but most men do not understand.

SECTION 4: The Doom

27 To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and the Day that the Hour of Judgement is established,—that Day will the dealers in Falsehood perish! **28** And you will see every sect bowing the knee: every sect will be called to its Record: "This Day shall you be recompensed for all that you did! **29** This Our Record speaks about you with truth: for We were wont to put on record all that you did."

30 Then, as to those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His Mercy: that will be the Achievement for all to

see. **31** But as to those who rejected Allah, (to them will be said): "Were not Our Signs rehearsed to you? But you 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), you used to say, 'We know not what is the Hour: we only think it is an idea, and we have no firm assurance.'" **33** Then will appear to them the evil (fruits) of what they did, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at!

34 It will also be said: "This Day We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours! And your abode is the Fire, and no helpers have you! **35** This, because you 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 shall they be received into Grace.

36 Then Praise be to Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth—Lord and Cherisher of all the Worlds! **37** To Him be glory throughout the heavens and the earth: and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom!□

AL-AHQĀF
(Winding Sand-tracts)

Introduction

This is the seventh and last Sūrah of the *Hā Mīm* series. For the general theme and chronological place of these Sūrahs see the Introduction to Sūrah 40.

The *Ahqāf* (mentioned in verse 21) are the long and winding crooked tracts of sandhills, characteristic of the country of the 'Ād people, adjoining Ḥaḍramawt and Yemen: see 7:65. These people had, at that time, probably a fertile irrigated country, but their sins brought on the calamity mentioned in 46:24-25. The lesson of this Sūrah 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 (46:1-35).

*** **

PART XXVI

SECTION 1: Truth of Revelation

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Hā Mīm.*³⁶⁸ **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 you see what it is you invoke besides Allah? Show me what it is they have created on earth, or have they a share in the

368. See Introduction to Sūrah 40, paragraphs 2-4. [4774]

heavens? Bring me a Book (revealed) before this, or any remnant of knowledge (you may have), if you 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 Judgeent, 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 reject their worship (altogether)!

7 When Our clear Signs are rehearsed to them, the Unbelievers say, of the Truth when it comes to them: "This is evident sorcery!" **8** Or do they say, "He has forged it"? Say: "Had I forged it, then can you obtain no single (blessing) for me from Allah. He knows best of that whereof you talk (so glibly)! Enough is He for a witness between me and you! And He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." **9** Say: "I am no bringer of new-fangled doctrine 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." **10** Say: "See you? If (this teaching) be from Allah, and you reject it, and a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to its similarity (with earlier scripture), and has believed while you are arrogant, (how unjust you are!) Truly, Allah guides not a people unjust."

SECTION 2: *Witness of Truth*

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!" And seeing that they guide not themselves thereby, they will say, "This is an (old,) falsehood!" **12** And before this, was 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, "Our Lord is Allah," and remain firm (on that Path),—on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. **14** Such shall be Companions of the Garden, dwelling therein (for ever): a recompense for their (good) deeds.

15 We have enjoined on man 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.³⁶⁹ At length, when he reaches the age of full strength³⁷⁰ and attains forty years, he says, "O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as You may approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to You and truly do I bow (to You) in Islam." 16 Such are they from whom We shall accept the best 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) who says to his parents, "Fie on you! Do you hold out the promise to me that I shall be raised up, even though generations have passed before me (without rising again)?" And the two seek Allah's aid, (and rebuke the son): "Woe to you! Have faith! For the promise of Allah is true." But he says, "This is nothing but tales of the ancients!" 18 Such are they against whom is proved the Sentence 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

369. In 31:14 the time of weaning was stated to be at the age of two years, *i.e.*, 24 months. See also 2:233. That leaves six months as the *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 *average* period is 280 days, or ten times the inter-menstrual 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 month; 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. [4790]

370. The age of full strength (*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. [4791]

that (Allah) may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them. **20** And on the Day that the Unbelievers will be placed before the Fire, (it will be said to them): "You received your good things in the life of the world, and you took your pleasure out of them: but today shall you be recompensed with a Penalty of humiliation: for that you were arrogant on earth without just cause, and that you (ever) transgressed."

SECTION 3: The Fate of 'Ād

21 Mention (Hūd) one of 'Ād's (own) brethren: behold, he warned his people about the winding Sand-tracts: but there have been warners before him and after him: "Worship you none other than Allah: truly I fear for you the Penalty of a Mighty Day." **22** They said: "Have you come in order to turn us aside from our gods? Then bring upon us the (calamity) with which you do threaten us, if you are telling the truth!" **23** He said: "The Knowledge (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 you are a people in ignorance!"... **24** Then, when they saw the (Penalty in the shape of) a cloud traversing the sky, coming to meet their valleys, they said, "This cloud will give us rain!" "Nay, it is the (calamity) you were asking to be hastened!—a wind wherein is a grievous Penalty! **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 (you Quraysh!) 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 by that which they used to mock at!

SECTION 4: A Warning

27 We destroyed aforetime populations round about you; 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.

29 Behold, We turned towards you a company³⁷¹ of *Jinns* (quietly) listening to the Qur'ān: 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 of their sins). **30** They said, "O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Moses, confirming what came before it: it guides (men) to the Truth and to a straight Path. **31** O our people, listen to the one who invites (you) to Allah, and believe in him: He will forgive you your faults, and deliver you from a Penalty grievous. **32** If any does not listen to the one who invites (us) to Allah, he cannot frustrate (Allah's Plan) on earth, and no protectors can he have besides Allah: such men (wander) 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? Indeed, verily He has power over all things. **34** And on the Day that the Unbelievers will be placed before the Fire, (they will be asked,) "Is this not the Truth?" They will say, "Indeed, by our Lord!" (One will say:) "Then taste you the Penalty, for that you were wont to deny (Truth)!"

35 Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers). On the Day that they see the (Punishment) promised them, (it will be) as if they had not tarried more than an hour in a single day. (Yours but) to proclaim the Message: but shall any be destroyed except those who transgress?□

371. A company of *Jinns*. *Nafar* (company) may mean a group of from three to ten persons. For *Jinns*, see 6:100. They listened to the reading of the Qur'ān 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. [4809]

MUHAMMAD

Introduction

We have examined and followed the current arrangement of the Sūrahs 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 Sūrahs, but these are again grouped according to subject matter.

We begin the first of such groups with a group of three Sūrahs (47-49), which deal with the organisation of the Muslim *Ummah* or community both for external defence and in internal relations. The present Sūrah deals with the necessity of defence against external foes by courage and strenuous fighting, and dates from about the first year of the Hijrah, 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 (47:1-19).

Faint-heartedness condemned; those who strive and those who turn away will be sorted out (47:20-38).

*** **

SECTION 1: Opponents Will Perish in War

*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 render astray (from their mark). 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. 3 This because those who reject Allah follow vanities, while those who believe follow the Truth from their Lord: thus does Allah set forth for men their lessons by similitudes. 4 Therefore, when you meet the

Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are you 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, some with others. But those who are slain in the Way of Allah,—He will never let their deeds be lost. **5** Soon will He guide them and improve their condition, **6** And admit them to the Garden which He has announced for them.

7 O you who believe! If you will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly. **8** But those who reject (Allah),—for them is destruction, and (Allah) will render their deeds astray (from their mark). **9** That is because they hate the Revelation of Allah; so He has made their deeds fruitless. **10** Do they not travel 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. **11** That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, but those who reject Allah have no protector.

SECTION 2: Oppressors Shall be Brought Low

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)³⁷² and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode. **13** And how many cities, with more power than your city which has driven you out, have We destroyed (for their sins)? And there was none to aid them. **14** Is then one who is on a clear (Path) from his Lord, no better than one to whom the evil of his conduct seems pleasing, and such as follow their own lusts?

372. 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 inkling 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. [4830]

15 (Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; 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; and Grace from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?

16 And among them are men who listen to you, but in the end, when they go out from you, 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 Guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint (from evil). 18 Do they then only wait³⁷³ for the Hour,—that it should come on them suddenly? But already have come some tokens thereof, and when it (actually) is on them, how can they benefit then by their admonition? 19 Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how you move about and how you dwell in your homes.

SECTION 3: The Weak-hearted Ones

20 Those who believe say, "Why is not a Sūrah sent down (for us)?" But when a Sūrah of basic or categorical meaning is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein, you will see those in whose hearts is a disease looking at you with a look of one in a swoon at the approach of death. But more fitting for them—21 Were it to obey and say what

373. 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 Sūrah was revealed, viz., about a year after the Hijrah, already there were Signs that the plans of the Pagans to crush Islam were crumbling to pieces. The Hijrah showed how much good-will there was in Madīnah 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. [4840]

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 you were put in authority, that you will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin?

23 Such are the men whom Allah has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight. **24** Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'ān, or are their hearts locked up by them? **25** Those who turn back as apostates after Guidance was clearly shown to them,—the Evil One has instigated them and buoyed them up with false hopes. **26** This, because they said 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) when the angels take their souls at death, and smite their faces and their backs? **28** This because they followed that which called forth the Wrath of Allah, and they hated Allah's good pleasure; so He made their deeds of no effect.

SECTION 4: An Exhortation

29 Or do those in whose 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 you, and you should have known them by their marks: but surely you will know them by the tone of their speech! And Allah knows all that you do. **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 reject Allah, hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, and resist the Messenger, after Guidance has been clearly shown to them, will not injure Allah in the least, but He will make their deeds of no effect. **33** O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and make not vain your deeds! **34** Those who reject Allah, and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, then die rejecting Allah,—Allah will not forgive them.

35 Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when you should be 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: and if you believe and guard against Evil, He will grant

you your recompense, and will not ask you (to give up) your possessions. **37** If He were to ask you for all of them, and press you, you would covetously withhold, and He would bring out all your ill-feeling. **38** Behold, you 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 you that are needy. If you turn back (from the Path), He will substitute in your stead another people; then they would not be like you!□

AL-FATH
(The Victory)

Introduction

1. This is the second of the group of three Madīnah Sūrah described in the Introduction to Sūrah 47. Its date is fixed by the mention of the Treaty of Hudaibīyah, Dhū al-Qa'dah A.H. 6 = February 628 (see 9:13).

2. Hudaibīyah is a plain, a short day's march to the north of Makkah, a little to the west of the Madīnah-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 *Qiblah* was towards the Ka'bah. 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 2:194), which included the month of Dhū al-Qa'dah. In Dhū al-Qa'dah A.H. 6, therefore, the Prophet desired to perform the *Umrah* or lesser pilgrimage (2:196), unarmed, but accompanied by 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 became alarmed, 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 Hudaibīyah, where negotiations took place. On the one hand, the Prophet was unwilling to give the Quraysh any pretended excuse for violence in the Sacred Territory; on the other, the Quraysh 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 Hudaibīyah (48:18) 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 Quraysh had chosen to confront him.

4. A peaceful Treaty was therefore concluded, known as the Treaty of Hudaibīyah. 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 or make

an alliance with it; (3) that if a Quraysh 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 Madīnah. 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 the Muslim Banū Khuzā'ah (who were in alliance with the Prophet), but this led to the conquest of Makkah and the sweeping away of the autocracy. Meanwhile Ḥudaybiyah was a great victory, morally and socially, as well as politically, and its lessons are expounded in this Sūrah, as the lessons of Badr were expounded in 8:42-48, and of Uhud in 3:121-129, 149-180.

Summary—Victory comes from cool courage, devotion, faith, and patience, as shown at Ḥudaybiyah; therefore remember Allah, and follow His Prophet (48:1-29).

*** **

SECTION 1: **Hudaybiyah Truce was a Victory**

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Verily We have granted you a manifest Victory:³⁷⁴ 2 That Allah may forgive you your faults of the past and those to follow; fulfil His favour to you; and guide you on the straight Way; 3 And that Allah may help you with powerful help. 4 It is He Who sent down Tranquillity into the hearts of the Believers, that they may 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 ever, and remove their ills from them;—and that is, in the sight of Allah, the highest achievement (for man).—6 And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Polytheists, men and women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil: the Wrath of Allah is on them: He has cursed 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 you as a witness, as a bringer of Glad Tidings, and as a Warner: 9 In order that you (O men) may believe in Allah and His Messenger, that you may assist and honour Him, and celebrate His praises morning and evening. 10 Verily those who pledge³⁷⁵ their fealty

374. This is best referred to the Treaty of Hudaybiyah, for which see the Introduction to this Sūrah. By this Treaty the Makkan Quraysh, 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. [4866]

375. In the Hudaybiyah negotiations, when it was uncertain whether the Quraysh 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 their fealty to the Prophet, by placing hand on hand according to the Arab custom: see paragraph 3 of the Introduction to this Sūrah. This in itself was a wonderful demon-

(continued...)

to you do no less than pledge their fealty to Allah: the Hand of Allah is over their hands: then anyone who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and anyone who fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah,—Allah will soon grant him a great Reward.

SECTION 2: The Defaulters

11 The desert Arabs who³⁷⁶ lagged behind will say to you: "We were engaged in (looking after) our flocks and herds, and our families: do you then ask forgiveness for us."³⁷⁷ They say with their tongues what is not 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 loss³⁷⁸ or to give you some profit? But Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. **12** Nay, you thought that the Messenger and the Believers would never return to their families; this seemed pleasing in your hearts,³⁷⁹ and you conceived an evil thought, for you are a people lost

375. (...continued)

stration of moral and material strength, a true Victory; it is called *Bay'ah al-Riḡwān* (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.

'Alayhu is an archaic form for *'Alayhi*. [4877]

376. When the Prophet started from Madīnah on the Makkah journey which ended in Ḥudaybiyah, 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 Makkans 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 afterthought, and in any case made after the return of the Prophet and his party with enhanced prestige to Madīnah. [4878]

377. They said this with their tongues, but no thought of piety was in their hearts. [4879]

378. 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 Ḥudaybiyah? And in any case they need not think that all their real and secret motives were not known to Allah. [4880]

379. Their faith was so shaky that they thought the worst would happen, and that the (continued...)

(in wickedness).” **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, and He punishes whom He wills: but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

15 Those who lagged behind³⁸⁰ (will say), when you (are free to) march and take booty (in war): “Permit us to follow you.” They wish to change Allah’s decree: Say: “Not thus will you follow us: Allah has already declared (this) beforehand”: then they will say, “But you are³⁸¹ jealous of us.” Nay, but little do they understand (such things). **16** Say to the desert Arabs who lagged behind: “You shall be summoned (to fight) against a people given to vehement war: then shall you fight, or they shall submit. Then if you show obedience, Allah will grant you a goodly reward, but if you turn back as you did before, He will punish you with a grievous Penalty.” **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 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 Penalty.

379. (...continued)

Makkan 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. [4881]

380. 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 Sūrah 8 and Introduction to Sūrah 8, paragraph 2. On the contrary *Jihād* is hard striving, in war and peace, in the Cause of Allah. [4883]

381. 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. [4886]

SECTION 3: More Victories for Islam

18 Allah's Good Pleasure³⁸² was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to you under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory;³⁸³ 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 shall³⁸⁴ acquire, and He has given³⁸⁵ you these beforehand; and He has restrained the hands of men from you; that it may be a Sign for³⁸⁶ the Believers, and that He may guide you to a straight Path; 21 And other gains (there are), which are not within your power, but which Allah has compassed: and Allah has power over all things.

22 If the Unbelievers should fight you, they would certainly turn their backs; then would they find neither protector nor helper. 23 (Such has been) the practice (approved) of Allah already in the past: no change will you find in the practice (approved) of Allah. 24 And it is He Who has restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the midst of Makkah, after that He gave you the victory over them. And Allah sees well all that you do. 25 They are the ones who denied Revelation and hindered you from the Sacred Mosque and the

382. 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 Hudaibiyah. [4892]

383. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah itself was a "speedy Victory": it followed immediately after the *Bay'ah*. [4895]

384. The gains so far seen from the *Bay'ah* and their calm and disciplined behaviour were certainly great; but greater still were to follow in the spiritual sense, 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. [4896]

385. The first fruits of the *Bay'ah* were the victory or treaty of Hudaibiyah, the cessation for the time being of the hostility of the Makkah Quraysh, 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." [4897]

386. Hudaibiyah (in both the *Bay'ah* and the Treaty) was truly a signpost for the Believers: it showed the solidarity of Islam, and the position which the Muslims had won in the Arab world. [4898]

sacrificial animals,³⁸⁷ detained from reaching their place of sacrifice. Had there not been believing men and believing women whom you did not know that³⁸⁸ you were trampling down and on whose account a crime 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. If they had been apart, We should certainly have punished the Unbelievers among them with a grievous punishment. **26** While the Unbelievers got up in their hearts heat and cant—the heat³⁸⁹ and cant 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: Ultimate Triumph of Islam

27 Truly did Allah fulfil the vision for His Messenger: you shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what you knew not, and He granted, besides this, a speedy victory. **28** It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim

387. The Muslims from Madinah had brought the animals for sacrifice with them, and had put on the *ihram* or pilgrim's garb (see 2:197), 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 2:196. The sacrifice was therefore actually offered at Hudaibiyah. [4903]

388. 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. [4904]

389. While the Unbelievers were blustering and excited, and meticulously objected to introductory words such as "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, from Muhammad, the Prophet of God" (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 judgement, a trust that was vindicated by the events that followed. [4907]

it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness. 29 Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Torah; and their similitude in the Gospel is 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, 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. □

AL-HUJURĀT
(The Inner Apartments)

Introduction

This is the third of the group of three Madīnan Sūrahs, which began with Sūrah 47. See the Introduction to that Sūrah.

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 keyword "*Hujurāt*" (Inner Apartments) occurs in verse 4.

Its date is referred to the Year of Delegations, A.H. 9, when a large number of delegations of all kinds visited Madīnah 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 (49:1-18).

*** **

SECTION 1: Respect for the Prophet

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

O you who believe! Put not yourselves forward³⁹⁰ before Allah and His Messenger; but fear Allah: for Allah is He Who hears and knows all things.

390. 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'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be on him) for guidance and let nothing else take precedence over them. [4919]

2 O you who believe! Raise not your voices³⁹¹ above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk, as you may speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds become³⁹² vain and you perceive not. 3 Those that lower their voice in the presence of Allah's Messenger,—their hearts has Allah tested for piety: for them is Forgiveness and a great Reward.

4 Those who shout out³⁹³ to you from without the Inner Apartments—most of them lack understanding. 5 If only they had patience until you could come out to them, it would be best for them: but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6 O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done.

7 And know that among you is Allah's Messenger: were he, in many matters, to follow your (wishes), you would certainly fall into misfortune: but Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you unbelief, wickedness, and rebellion: such indeed are those who walk in righteousness;—8 A grace and favour from Allah; and Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom.

391. 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. [4920]

392. 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. [4921]

393. To shout aloud to your Leader from outside his Chambers 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, in the Court of a spiritual King, much is forgiven that is due to lack of knowledge and understanding. In the earthly Court, ignorance of the Law excuses 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. [4923]

9 If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make you peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; 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 you may receive Mercy.

SECTION 2: Respect for Muslim Brotherhood

11 O you 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, 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 you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (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 dead³⁹⁴ brother? Nay, you would abhor it . . . But fear Allah: for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

13 O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you 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).

394. 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! [4932]

14 The desert Arabs say, "We believe." Say, "You have no faith; but you (only) say, 'We have submitted our wills to Allah,' for not yet has Faith entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not belittle aught of your deeds: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." **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 you instruct 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 you 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 you be true and sincere. **18** Verily Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth: and Allah sees well all that you do." □

QĀF

Introduction

We now come to a group of seven Makkan Sūrahs (50-56), 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 (47-49) dealt with the external and internal relations of the *Ummah* 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 Sūrah belongs to the early Makkan 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? (59:1-29).

A vision of the Day of Recompense and the Day of Reality (50:30-45).

SECTION 1: The Resurrection

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Qāf*:³⁹⁵ By the Glorious Qur'ān (you are 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

395. This is an Abbreviated Letter. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see note to 2:1. This particular Abbreviated Letter *Qāf* occurs only here as a single letter, and in combination at the beginning of Sūrah 42, where I was unable to explain the full combination. Here the *Qāf* is taken by several Commentators to represent *Quḍīyah al-Amr*, "the matter has been decreed," with reference to the eschatological trend of the Sūrah. Allah knows best. [4939]

(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). **5** But they deny the truth when it comes to them: so they are in a confused state. **6** Do they not look at the sky above them?—how We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? **7** And the earth—We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)—**8** To be observed and commemorated by every devotee turning (to Allah). **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) 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 of Noah, the Companions of the Rass, the Thamūd, **13** The 'Ād, Pharaoh, the Brethren of Lūt, **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). **15** Were We then weary with the first Creation, that they should be in confused doubt about a new Creation?

SECTION 2: The Resurrection

16 It was We Who created man, and We know what dark 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 sentinel by him, ready (to note it). **19** And the stupor of death will bring truth (before his eyes): “This was the thing which you were trying to escape!”

20 And the Trumpet 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, and an (angel) to bear witness. **22** (It will be said:) “You were heedless of this; now have We removed

your veil, and sharp is your sight this Day!" **23** And his Companion will say: "Here is (his record) ready with me!" **24** (The sentence will be:) "Throw, throw 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 Penalty." **27** His Companion will say: "Our Lord! I did not make him transgress, but he was (himself) far astray." **28** He will say: "Dispute not with each other in My Presence: I had already in advance sent you Warning. **29** The Word changes not before Me, and I do not the least injustice to My Servants."

SECTION 3: The Resurrection

30 One Day We will ask Hell, "Are you filled to the full?" It will say, "Are there any more (to come)?"

31 And the Garden will be brought near to the Righteous,—no more a thing distant. **32** (A voice will say:) "This is what was promised for you,—for everyone who turned (to Allah) in sincere repentance, who kept (His Law), **33** Who feared (Allah) Most Gracious unseen, and brought a heart turned in devotion (to Him): **34** Enter you therein in Peace and Security; this is a Day of Eternal Life!" **35** There will be for them therein all that they wish,—and more besides in Our Presence.

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 earnestly witnesses (the truth).

38 We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six Days, nor did any sense of weariness touch Us. **39** Bear, then, with patience, all that they say, and celebrate the praises of your 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 postures of adoration. **41** And listen for the Day when the Caller will call out from a place quite near,—**42** The Day when they will hear a

(mighty) Blast 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 Goal—**44** The Day when the Earth will be rent asunder, from (men) hurrying out: that will be a gathering together, —quite easy for Us.

45 We know best what they say; and you are not one to overawe them by force. So admonish with the Qur'ān such as fear My Warning! □

AL-DHĀRIYĀT
(The Winds That Scatter)

Introduction

This is an early Makkan Sūrah, the second of the seven Sūrahs forming a group dealing with Revelation and the Hereafter. See Introduction to Sūrah 50. This Sūrah 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 (51:1-23).

Past events and what you see before you point to the unflinching consequences of all you do: Allah, of His Grace, sends you a Reminder: the loss is your own if you reject and deny (51:24-60).

*** **

SECTION 1: Falsehood is Doomed

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the (Winds) that scatter broadcast; **2** And those that lift and bear away heavy weights; **3** And those that flow with ease and gentleness; **4** And those that distribute and apportion by Command;—**5** Verily that which you are promised is true; **6** And verily Judgement and Justice must indeed come to pass.

7 By the Sky with (its) numerous Paths, **8** Truly you are in a doctrine discordant, **9** Through which are deluded (away from the Truth) such as would be deluded. **10** Woe to the falsehood-mongers,—**11** Those who (flounder) heedless 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 you your trial!

This is what you used to ask to be hastened!"

15 As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Springs, **16** Taking joy in the things which their Lord gives them, because, before then, they lived a good life. **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 and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy), him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was³⁹⁶ prevented (from asking).

20 On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith, **21** As also in your own selves: will you not then see? **22** And in heaven is your Sustenance, as (also) that which you are promised. **23** Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth, as much as the fact that you can speak intelligently to each other.

SECTION 2: The Fate of Previous Nations

24 Has the story³⁹⁷ reached you, of the honoured guests of Abraham? **25** Behold, they entered his presence, and said: "Peace!" He said, "Peace!" (and thought, "These seem) unusual people." **26** Then he turned quickly to his household, brought out a fatted calf, **27** And placed it before them ... he said, "Will you not eat?" **28** (When they did not eat), he conceived a fear of them. They said, "Fear not," and

396. 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, especially when we think of wealth and possessions in a spiritual sense, as including spiritual gifts and talents; (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. 2:177; also 2:273-274. [5001]

397. Cf. 11:69-73, where further details of the story will be found. Cf. also 15:51-56. [5005]

they gave him glad tidings of a son endowed with knowledge. **29** But his wife came forward (laughing) aloud: she smote her forehead and said: "A barren old woman!" **30** They said, "Even so has your Lord spoken: and He is full of Wisdom and Knowledge."

PART XXVII

31 (Abraham) said: "And what, O you 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 your 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 just (Muslim) persons except in one house:³⁹⁸ **37** And We left there a Sign for such as fear the grievous Penalty.

38 And in Moses (was another Sign): behold, We sent him to Pharaoh, with authority manifest. **39** But (Pharaoh) turned back with his Chiefs, 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 'Ād (people) (was another Sign): behold, We sent against them the devastating Wind: **42** It left nothing whatever that it came up against, but reduced it to ruin and rotteness.

43 And in the Thamūd (was another Sign): behold, they were told, "Enjoy (your brief day) for a little while!" **44** But they insolently defied the Command of their Lord: so the stunning noise (of an earthquake) seized them, even while they were looking on. **45** Then they could not even stand (on their feet), nor could they help themselves.

46 So were the people of Noah before them: for they wickedly transgressed.

398. That was the house of Lūt: and even there, his wife had no faith: she disobeyed the Command and perished: 11:81. [5014]

SECTION 3: Judgement is Sure

47 With power and skill did We construct the Firmament: for it is We Who create the vastness of Space. 48 And We have spread out the (spacious) earth: how excellently We do spread out! 49 And of everything We have created pairs: that you may receive instruction. 50 Hasten you then (at once) to Allah: I am from Him a Warner to you, clear and open! 51 And make not another 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!" 53 Is this the legacy they have transmitted, one to another? Nay, they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds! 54 So turn away from them: not thine is the blame. 55 But teach (thy Message): for teaching benefits the Believers.

56 I have only created *Jinns* and men, that they may serve Me. 57 No Sustenance do I require of them, nor do I require that they should feed Me. 58 For Allah is He Who gives (all) Sustenance,—Lord of Power,—Steadfast (forever). 59 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)! 60 Woe, then, to the Unbelievers, on account of that Day of theirs which they have been promised! □

AL-TŪR
(The Mount)

Introduction

This is the third of the group of seven Makkan Sūrah described in the Introduction to Sūrah 50.

It is, like its predecessor, an early Makkan Sūrah. The points here emphasised 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? (52:1-49).

SECTION 1: Success of the Faithful

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Mount (of Revelation); **2** By a Decree inscribed; **3** In a Scroll unfolded; **4** By the much-frequented House; **5** By the Canopy Raised High; **6** And by the Ocean filled with Swell;—**7** Verily, the Doom of your Lord will indeed come to pass;—**8** There is none can avert it;—**9** On the Day when the firmament will be in dreadful commotion. **10** And the mountains will fly hither and thither.

11 Then woe that Day to those that treat (Truth) as Falsehood;—**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 you were wont to deny! **15** Is this then a fake, or is it you that do not see? **16** Burn you therein: the same is it to you whether you bear it with patience, or not: you but receive the

recompense of your (own) deeds."

17 As to the Righteous, they will be in Gardens, and in Happiness,—**18** Enjoying the (Bliss) which their Lord has bestowed on them, and their Lord shall deliver them from the Penalty of the Fire. **19** (To them will be said:) "Eat and drink you, with profit and health, because of your (good) deeds." **20** They will recline (with ease) on Thrones (of dignity) arranged in ranks; and We shall join them to Companions, with beautiful big and lustrous eyes.

21 And those who believe and whose families 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. **22** And We shall bestow on them, of fruit and meat, anything they shall desire. **23** They shall there exchange, one with another, a (loving) cup free of frivolity, free of all taint of ill. **24** Round about them will serve, (devoted) to them. Youths (handsome) as Pearls well-guarded.

25 They will advance to each other, engaging in mutual enquiry. **26** They will say: "Aforetime, we were not without fear for the sake of our people. **27** But Allah has been good to us, and has delivered us from the Penalty of the Scorching Wind. **28** Truly, we did call unto Him from of old: truly it is He, the Beneficent, the Merciful!"

SECTION 2: Opponents are Doomed

29 Therefore proclaim you the praises (of your Lord): for by the Grace of your Lord, you are no (vulgar) soothsayer, nor are you one possessed. **30** Or do they say:—"A Poet! We await for him some calamity (hatched) by Time!" **31** Say you: "Await you!—I too will wait along with you!" **32** Is it that their faculties of understanding urge them to this, or are they 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 recital 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. 37 Or are the Treasures of your Lord with them, or are they the managers (of affairs)? 38 Or have they a ladder, 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 daughters and you have sons? 40 Or is it that you do ask for a reward, so that they are burdened with a load of debt?—41 Or that the Unseen is in their hands, and they write it down? 42 Or do they intend a plot (against you)? But those who defy Allah are themselves involved 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 (perforce) swoon (with terror),—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: but most of them understand not. 48 Now await in patience the command of your Lord: for verily you are in Our eyes: and celebrate the praises of your Lord the while you stand forth, 49 And for part of the night also praise you Him,—and at the retreat of the stars!□

Chapter 53

AL-NAJM (The Star)

Introduction

This is an early Makkan Sūrah, and is the fourth of the series of seven which were described in the Introduction to Sūrah 50.

The particular theme of this Sūrah 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 source and goal of all things.

In some Sūrahs 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 Sūrah. So in 46:1, the words: "Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom", are carried forward from the last verse of Sūrah 45, and indeed the same words occur in the first verse of Sūrah 45. So, again the words: "Most Merciful, Oft-Forgiving"; in 34:2, refer back to the words: "Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful": in the last line of Sūrah 33. In 54:1, the nearness of Judgement recalls the same idea at the end of the previous Sūrah (53:57). 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 (53:1-32).

Those who turn away are petty and ignorant, not knowing that Allah is the source and goal of all things—in men, in nature, and in the events of history: therefore serve you Him (53:33-62).

*** **

SECTION 1: Eminence to be Attained by the Prophet

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Star when it goes down,—2 Your Companion is neither

astray³⁹⁹ 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 one⁴⁰⁰ Mighty in Power, 6 Endued with Wisdom: for he appeared (in stately form); 7 While he was in the highest part of the horizon: 8 Then he approached and came closer, 9 And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths⁴⁰¹ or (even) nearer; 10 So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant—(conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. 11 The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw.

12 Will you then dispute with him concerning what he saw? 13 For indeed he saw him at a second descent,⁴⁰² 14 Near the Lote-tree⁴⁰³ beyond which none may pass: 15 Near it is the Garden of Abode. 16 Behold, the Lote-tree was shrouded (in mystery unspeakable!) 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 you seen Lāt, and 'Uzzā, 20 And another, the third (goddess), Manāt? 21 What! For you the male sex, and for Him, the female? 22

399. "Your Companion" is the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who had lived among the Quraysh all his life. 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. [5086]

400. This is referred by the Commentators to the angel Gabriel, through whom the inspiration came. Cf. 81:20. [5087]

401. Two bow-shots (counting 100 to 150 yards to a bow-shot) would be a clearly visible distance. [5089]

402. The first occasion when Gabriel appeared in a visible form was at the Mountain of Light, when he brought his first revelation beginning with *Iqra'*. The second was at the Prophet's *Mi'rāj* or Ascension: see Introduction to Sūrah 17, paragraphs 2-4. These were the only two occasions when Gabriel appeared in visible form. [5092]

403. For the Lote-tree in its literal meaning, see 24:16. The wild Lote is thorny; under cultivation it yields good fruit and shade, and is symbolic of heavenly bliss, as here and in 56:28. [5093]

Behold, such would be indeed a division most unfair! **23** These are nothing but names which you have devised,—you and your fathers,—for which God has sent down no authority (whatever). They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own 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 it is to God that the End and the Beginning (of all things) belong.

SECTION 2: Nothing Avails Against Truth

26 How many so ever be the angels in the heavens, their intercession will avail nothing except after God 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 as far as knowledge will reach them. Verily your Lord knows best those who stray from His Path, and He knows best those who receive guidance.

31 Indeed, to God 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 shameful deeds, only (falling into) small faults,—verily your Lord is ample in forgiveness. He knows you well when He brings you out of the earth, and when you are hidden in your mothers' wombs. Therefore justify not yourselves: He knows best who it is that guards against evil.

SECTION 3: God's Power Manifested in Destruction of Falsehood

33 See you one who turns back, **34** Gives a little, then hardens (his heart)?⁴⁰⁴ **35** What! Has he knowledge of the Unseen so that he can

404. The particular reference in this passage, according to Bayḍawī is to Walid ibn (continued...)

see? 36 Nay, is he not acquainted with what is in the books of Moses—37 And of Abraham who fulfilled his engagements?—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 your Lord is the final Goal; 43 That it is He Who grants Laughter and Tears; 44 That it is He Who grants Death and Life; 45 That He did create in pairs,—male and female, 46 From a seed when lodged (in its place); 47 That He has promised a Second Creation (Raising of the Dead); 48 That it is He Who gives wealth and satisfaction; 49 That He is the Lord of Sirius (the Mighty Star); 50 And that it is He Who destroyed the (powerful) ancient 'Ād (people), 51 And the Thamūd, nor gave them a lease of perpetual life. 52 And before them, the people of Noah, for that they were (all) most unjust and most insolent transgressors.

53 And He destroyed the Overthrown Cities (of Sodom and Gomorrah), 54 So that (ruins unknown) have covered them up. 55 Then which of the gifts of your Lord, (O man,) will you dispute about? 56 This is a Warner, of the (series of) Warners of old! 57 The (Judgement) ever approaching draws near: 58 No (soul) but Allah can lay it bare. 59 Do you then wonder at this recital? 60 And will you laugh and not weep,—61 Wasting your time in vanities? 62 But fall you down in prostration to Allah, and adore (Him)!□

404. (...continued)

Mughīrah, who bargained with a Quraysh Pagan for a certain sum if the latter would take upon himself the sins of Wafīd. 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. [5108]

Chapter 54

AL-QAMAR (The Moon)

Introduction

This is an early Makkan Sūrah, the fifth in the series dealing with Judgement, and the truth of Revelation, as explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 50.

The theme of the Sūrah 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 Qur'ān (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 Judgement is near, 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? (54:1-55).

*** **

SECTION 1: Judgement to Overtake Opponents

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 The Hour (of Judgement) is near, and the moon is cleft asunder. **2** But if they see a Sign, they turn away, and say, "This is (but) transient magic." **3** They reject (the warning) and follow their (own) lusts but every matter has its appointed time. **4** There have already come to them Recitals wherein there is (enough) to check (them), **5** Mature wisdom;—but (the preaching of) Warners profits them not.

6 Therefore, (O Prophet,) turn away from them. The Day that the Caller will call (them) to a terrible affair, **7** They will come forth,—their eyes humbled—from (their) graves, (torpid) 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, and said, "Here is one possessed!", and he was driven out. **10** Then he called on his Lord: "I am one overcome: do You then help (me)!" **11** So We opened the gates of heaven, with water pouring forth. **12** And We caused the earth to gush forth with springs, so the waters met (and rose) to the extent decreed. **13** But We bore him on an (Ark) made of broad planks and caulked with palm-fibre: **14** She floats under Our eyes (and care): a recompense to one who had been rejected (with scorn)! **15** And We have left this as a Sign (for all time): then is there any that will receive admonition?

16 But how (terrible) was My Penalty and My Warning? **17** And We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

18 The 'Ād (people) (too) rejected (Truth): then how terrible was My Penalty and My Warning? **19** For We sent against them a furious wind, on a Day of violent Disaster, **20** Plucking out men as if they were roots of palm-trees torn up (from the ground). **21** Indeed, how (terrible) was My Penalty and My Warning! **22** But We have indeed made the Qur'ān easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

SECTION 2: Thamūd and Lot's People

23 The Thamūd (also) rejected (their) Warners. **24** For they said: "What! A man! A solitary one from among ourselves! Shall we follow such a one? Truly should we then be straying in mind, and mad! **25** Is it that the Message is sent to *him*, of all people amongst us? Nay, he is a liar, an insolent one!" **26** Ah! They will know on the morrow, which is the liar, the insolent one! **27** For We will send the she-camel by way of trial for them. So watch them, (O Sālih), and possess yourself in patience! **28** And tell them that the water is to be divided between them: 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 Penalty and My Warning! **31** For We sent against them a single mighty Blast, and they became like the dry stubble used by one who pens cattle. **32** And We have indeed made the Qur'ân easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

33 The people of Lût rejected (his) Warning. **34** We sent against them a violent tornado with showers of stones, (which destroyed them), except Lût's household: them We delivered by early Dawn,—**35** As a Grace from Us: thus do We reward those who give thanks. **36** And (Lût) did warn them of Our Punishment, but they disputed about the Warning. **37** And they even sought to snatch away his guests from him, but We blinded their eyes. (They heard:) "Now taste you My Wrath and My Warning." **38** Early on the morrow an abiding Punishment seized them: **39** "So taste you My Wrath and My Warning." **40** And We have indeed made the Qur'ân easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?

SECTION 3: Pharaoh and the Prophet's Opponents

41 To the people of Pharaoh, too, aforesaid, came Warners (from Allah). **42** The (people) rejected all Our Signs; but We seized them with such Penalty (as comes) from One Exalted in Power, able to carry out His Will. **43** Are your Unbelievers, (O Quraysh), better than they? Or have you an immunity in the Sacred Books? **44** Or do they say: "We acting together can defend ourselves"? **45** Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs. **46** Nay, the Hour (of Judgement) is the time promised them (for their full recompense): and that Hour will be most grievous and most bitter. **47** Truly those in sin are the ones straying in mind, and mad. **48** The Day they will be dragged through the Fire on their faces, (they will hear:) "Taste you the touch of Hell!" **49** Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure. **50** And Our Command is but a single (Act),—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): **53** Every matter, small and great, is on record.

54 As to the Righteous, they will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers, **55** In an Assembly of Truth, in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent. □

AL-RAHMĀN
(The Most Gracious)

Introduction

The majority of Commentators consider this an early Makkan Sūrah, though some consider at least a part of it as dating from Madīnah. The greater part of it is undoubtedly early Makkan.

It is highly poetical and most sublime, and the refrain "Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?" is interspersed 31 times among its 78 verses.

It is the sixth of the series of seven dealing with Revelation, the favours of God, and the Hereafter: see Introduction to Sūrah 50.

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—God 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 God will endure through the ages (55:1-34).

Ultimately all evil shall return to its destination, as well as all Good, but ever blessed is the name of God, Lord of Glory, Honour and Bounty (55:35-78).

*** **

SECTION 1: Divine Beneficence

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 (God) Most Gracious! **2** It is He Who has taught the Qur'ān.

3 He has created man: **4** He has taught him speech (and Intelligence).

5 The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; **6** And the

herbs and the trees—both (alike) bow in adoration. **7** And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), **8** In order that you may not transgress (due) balance. **9** So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. **10** It is He Who has spread out the earth 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 of your Lord will you deny?

14 He created man from sounding clay like unto pottery, **15** And He created *Jinns* from fire free of smoke: **16** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

17 (He is) Lord of the two Easts⁴⁰⁵ and Lord of the two Wests: **18** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

19 He has let free the two bodies of flowing water, meeting together: **20** Between them is a Barrier which they do not transgress: **21** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

22 Out of them come Pearls and Coral: **23** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

24 And His are the Ships sailing smoothly through the seas, lofty as mountains: **25** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

SECTION 2: Judgement of the Guilty

26 All that is on earth will perish: **27** But will abide (forever) the Face of your Lord,—full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. **28** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

405. *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 Sūrah Allah is Lord of every region of the earth and sky, and He scatters His bounties everywhere. [5184]

29 Of Him seeks (its need) every creature in the heavens and on earth: every day in (new) Splendour does He (shine)! 30 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

31 Soon shall We settle your affairs, O both you worlds! 32 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

33 O you assembly of *Jinns* and men! If it be you can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass you! Not without authority shall you be able to pass! 34 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

35 On you will be sent (O you evil ones both!) a flame of fire (to burn) and a smoke (to choke): no defence will you have: 36 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? 37 When the sky is rent asunder, and it becomes red like ointment: 38 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? 39 On that Day no question will be asked of man or *Jinn* as to his sin, 40 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? 41 (For) the sinners will be known by their Marks: and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet. 42 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? 43 This is the Hell which the Sinners deny: 44 In its midst and in the midst of boiling hot water will they wander round! 45 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

SECTION 3: Reward of the Righteous

46 But for such as fear the time when they will stand before (the Judgement Seat of) their Lord, there will be two Gardens—47 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—48 Containing all kinds (of trees and delights);—49 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—50 In them (each) will be two Springs flowing (free); 51 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—52 In them will be Fruits of every kind, two and two. 53 Then which of the favours of your Lord will you 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). **55** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? **56** In them will be (Maidens), chaste, restraining their glances, whom no man or *Jinn* before them has touched;—**57** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—**58** Like unto rubies and coral. **59** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? **60** Is there any Reward for Good—other than Good? **61** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

62 And besides these two, there are two other Gardens,—**63** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—**64** Dark-green in colour (from plentiful watering). **65** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you 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 you deny? **68** In them will be Fruits, and dates and pomegranates: **69** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny? **70** In them will be fair (Companions), good, beautiful;—**71** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—**72** Companions restrained (as to their glances), in (goodly) pavilions;—**73** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—**74** Whom no man or *Jinn* before them has touched;—**75** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?—**76** Reclining on green Cushions and rich Carpets of beauty. **77** Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?

78 Blessed be the name of your Lord, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. □

AL-WĀQI'AH
(The Inevitable Event)

Introduction

This is the seventh and last Sūrah of the series devoted to Revelation and the Hereafter, as explained in the Introduction to Sūrah 50.

It belongs to the early Makkan period, with the possible exception of one or two verses.

The theme is the certainty of the Day of Judgement and its adjustment of true Values (56:1-56); God's Power, Goodness and Glory (56:57-74); and the truth of Revelation (56:75-96).

Summary—When the Day of Judgement 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 God, in exalted Bliss; the Companions of the Right Hand, in Bliss; and the Companions of the Left Hand, in Misery (56:1-56).

Surely the Power and Goodness of God, of which Revelation is a Sign, should lead man to accept the Message and glorify Him (56:57-96).

*** **

SECTION 1: Three Classes of Men

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When the Event Inevitable comes to pass, 2 Then will no (soul) entertain falsehood concerning 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 you 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? 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).

11 These will be those Nearest to Allah: **12** In Gardens of Bliss: **13** A number of people from those of old, **14** And a few from those of later times. **15** (They will be) on Thrones encrusted (with gold and precious stones), **16** Reclining on them, facing each other. **17** Round about them will (serve) 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: **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,—**23** Like unto Pearls well-guarded. **24** A Reward for the deeds of their past (life). **25** No frivolity will they hear therein, nor any taint of ill,—**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 Tāh 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, **34** And on Thrones (of Dignity), raised high. **35** We have created (their Companions) of special creation, **36** And made them virgin-pure (and undefiled),—**37** Beloved (by nature), equal in age,—**38** For the Companions of the Right Hand.

SECTION 2: The Gully

39 A (goodly) number from those of old, **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 and in Boiling Water, **43** And in the shades of Black Smoke: **44** Nothing (will there be) to refresh, nor to please: **45** For that they were wont to be indulged, before that, in wealth (and luxury), **46** And

persisted obstinately in wickedness supreme! **47** And they used to say, "What! When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then indeed be raised up again?—**48** (We) and our fathers of old?" **49** Say: "Indeed, those of old and those of later times, **50** All will certainly be gathered together for the meeting appointed for a Day well-known. **51** Then will you truly.—O you that go wrong, and treat (Truth) as Falsehood!—**52** You will surely taste of the Tree of Zaqqūm. **53** Then will you fill your insides therewith, **54** And drink Boiling Water on top of it: **55** Indeed you shall drink like diseased camels raging with thirst!" **56** Such will be their entertainment on the Day of Requital!

57 It is We Who have created you: why will you not witness the Truth? **58** Do you then see?—the (human Seed) that you throw out,—**59** Is it you who create it, or are We the Creators? **60** We have decreed Death to be your common lot, and We are not to be frustrated, **61** From changing your Forms and creating you (again) in (Forms) that you know not. **62** And you certainly know already the first form of creation: why then do you not celebrate His praises?

63 See you the seed that you sow in the ground? **64** Is it you that cause it to grow, or are We the Cause? **65** Were it Our Will, We could crumble it to dry powder, and you would be left in wonderment, **66** (Saying), "We are indeed left with debts (for nothing): **67** Indeed are we shut out (of the fruits of our labour)"

68 See you the water which you drink? **69** Do you bring it Down (in rain) from the Cloud or do We? **70** Were it Our Will, We could make it salt (and unpalatable): then why do you not give thanks?

71 See you the Fire which you kindle? **72** Is it you who grow the tree which feeds the fire, or do We grow it? **73** We have made it a memorial (of Our handiwork), and an article of comfort and convenience for the denizens of deserts. **74** Then celebrate with praises the name of your Lord, the Supreme!

SECTION 3: Judgement is Inevitable

75 Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars,—76 And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if you 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 you would hold in light esteem? 82 And have you made it your livelihood that you should declare it false? 83 Then why do you not (intervene) when (the soul of the dying man) reaches the throat,—84 And you the while (sit) looking on,—85 But We are nearer to him than you, and yet see not,—86 Then why do you not—if you are exempt from (future) account,—87 Call back the soul, if you are true (in the claim of Independence)?

88 Thus, then, if he be of those Nearest to Allah, 89 (There is for him) Rest and Satisfaction, and a Garden of Delights. 90 And if he be of the Companions of the Right Hand, 91 (For him is the salutation), "Peace be unto you", from the Companions of the Right Hand. 92 And if he be of those who treat (Truth) as Falsehood, who go wrong, 93 For him is Entertainment with Boiling Water. 94 And burning in Hell-Fire. 95 Verily, this is the very Truth and Certainty.

96 So celebrate with praises the name of your Lord, the Supreme. □

AL-HADĪD
(Iron)

Introduction

We have now studied the contents of nearly nine-tenths of the Qur'ān. We have found that the arrangement of the Sūrahs in the present Text is not haphazard, but that they follow a distinct logical order more helpful for study than the chronological order. The comprehensive scheme of building up the new *Ummah* or Brotherhood and its spiritual implications is now complete. The remaining tenth of the Qur'ān may be roughly considered in two parts. The first contains ten Sūrahs (Sūrah 57 to Sūrah 66), all revealed in Madīnah, and each dealing with some special point which needs emphasis in the social life of the *Ummah*. The second (Sūrah 67 to 94) contains short Makkan lyrics, each dealing with some aspect of spiritual life, expressed in language of great mystic beauty.

The present Madīnan Sūrah is chiefly concerned with spiritual 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 (57:1-29).

SECTION 1: Establishment of the Kingdom of Allah

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth,—let it declare 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 Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things. **4** He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, and is moreover firmly established on the Throne (of authority). 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 wherever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do. **5** To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: and all affairs are referred 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 heirs. For, those of you who believe and spend (in charity),—for them is a great Reward. **8** What cause have you why you should not believe in Allah?—and the Messenger invites you to believe in your Lord, and has indeed taken your Covenant, if you are men of Faith. **9** He is the One Who sends to His Servant 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. **10** And what cause have you why you should not spend in the cause of Allah?—for to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought, before the Victory, (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 you do.

SECTION 2: *Light and Life Given by the Prophet*

11 Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan? For (Allah) will increase it manifold to his credit, and he will have (besides) a liberal reward. **12** One Day shall you see the believing men and the believing women—how their Light runs 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 ever! This is indeed the highest Achievement!” **13** One Day will the Hypocrites—men and women—say to the Believers: “Wait for us! Let us borrow (a light)

from your Light!" It will be said: "Turn you back to your rear! Then seek a light (where you can)!" So a wall will be put up between them, with a gate therein. 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?" (The others) will reply, "True! But you led yourselves into temptation; you looked forward (to our ruin); you 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. **15** This Day shall no ransom be accepted of you, nor of those who rejected Allah. Your abode is the Fire: that is the proper place to claim you: and an evil refuge it is!"

16 Has not the time arrived 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 Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors. **17** Know you (all) that Allah gives life to the earth after its death! Already have We shown the Signs plainly to you, that you may learn wisdom. **18** For those who give in charity, men and women, and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan, it shall be increased manifold (to their credit), and they shall have (besides) a liberal reward. **19** And those who believe in Allah and His messengers—they are the Sincere (lovers of Truth), and the Witnesses (who testify), in the eyes of their Lord: they shall have their Reward and their Light. But those who reject Allah and deny Our Signs,—they are the Companions of Hell-Fire.

SECTION 3: Truth Shall be Established

20 Know you (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: how rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good

Pleasure (for the devotees of God). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception? **21** Be you foremost (in seeking) Forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth, prepared for those who believe in God and His messengers: that is the Grace of God, which He bestows on whom He pleases: and God is the Lord of Grace abounding.

22 No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for God: **23** In order that you may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favours bestowed upon you. For God loves not any vainglorious boaster,—**24** Such persons as are covetous and commend covetousness to men, and if any turn back (from God's Way), verily God 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 (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron, in which is (material for) mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind, that God may test who it is that will help, unseen, Him and His messengers: for God is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might (and able to enforce His Will).

SECTION 4: Double Reward for Believers

26 And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them 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 who followed him Compassion and Mercy. But the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of God; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors.

28 O you that believe! Fear God, and believe in His Messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy; He will provide for you a Light by which you shall walk (straight in your path), and He will forgive you (your past): for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

29 That the People of the Book may know that they have no power whatever over the Grace of God, that (His) Grace is (entirely) in His Hand, to bestow it on whoever He wills. For God is the Lord of Grace abounding. □

Chapter 58

AL-MUJĀDALAH (The Woman Who Pleads)

Introduction

This is the second of the ten Madīnan Sūrahs referred to in the Introduction to the last Sūrah. Its subject matter is the acceptance of a woman's Plea on behalf of herself and her children (see 58:1 below), and a condemnation of all secret counsels and intrigues in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The date is somewhat close to that of Sūrah 33, 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 (58:1-22).

*** **

PART XXVIII

SECTION 1: Safeguarding Women's Rights

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Allah has indeed heard (and accepted) the statement of the woman who pleads⁴⁰⁶ with you concerning her husband and carries her

406. The immediate occasion was what happened to Khawlah bint Tha'labah, wife of Aws the 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, but did not leave the wife free to leave the husband's home, or to contract a second marriage. Such a custom was in any case degrading to a woman. It was particularly hard on Khawlah, for she loved her husband and pleaded that she had little children who she had no resources herself to support and whom under *Zihār* her husband was not bound to

(continued...)

complaint (in prayer) to Allah: and Allah (always) hears the arguments between both sides among you: for Allah hears and sees (all things). 2 If any men among you divorce their wives by *Zihār* (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) iniquitous and false: but truly Allah is One that blots out (sins), and forgives (again and again). 3 But those who divorce their wives by *Zihār*, 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 you admonished to perform: and Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do. 4 And if any has not (the wherewithal), he should fast for two months consecutively before they touch each other. But if any is unable to do so, he should feed sixty indigent ones. This, that you may show your faith in Allah and His Messenger. Those are limits (set by) Allah. For those who reject (Him), there is a grievous Penalty. 5 Those who resist 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 Penalty,—6 On the Day that Allah will raise them all up (again) and show them the Truth (and meaning) of their conduct. Allah has reckoned its (value), though they may have forgotten it, for Allah is Witness to all things.

SECTION 2: Secret Counsels Condemned

7 See you not that Allah does know (all) that is in the heavens and on earth? There is not a secret consultation between three, but He makes the fourth among them,—nor between five but He makes the sixth,—nor between fewer nor more, but He is in their midst, wherever they be: in the end will He tell them the truth of their conduct, on the Day of Judgement. For Allah has full knowledge of all things. 8 Turn you not your sight towards those who were forbidden secret counsels yet revert to that which they were forbidden (to do)? And they hold secret counsels among themselves for iniquity and hostility, and

406. (...continued)

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 33:4. [5330]

disobedience to the Messenger. And when they come to you, they salute you, not as Allah salutes you, (but in crooked ways): and they say to themselves, "Why does not Allah punish us for our words?" Enough for them is Hell: in it will they burn, and evil is that destination!

9 O you who believe! When you hold secret counsel, do it not for iniquity and hostility, and disobedience to the Prophet; but do it for righteousness and self-restraint; and fear Allah, to Whom you shall be brought back. **10** Secret counsels are only (inspired) by the Evil One, in order that he may cause grief to the Believers; but he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits; and on Allah let the Believers put their trust.

11 O you who believe! When you are told to make room in the assemblies, (spread out and) make room: (ample) room will Allah provide for you. And when you are told to rise up, rise up: Allah will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted (mystic) Knowledge. And Allah is well-acquainted with all you do.

12 O you who believe! When you 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 you find not (the wherewithal), Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **13** Is it that you are afraid of spending sums in charity before your private consultation (with him)? If, then, you do not so, and Allah forgives you, then (at least) establish regular prayer; practise regular charity; and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do.

SECTION 3: Internal Enemy to be Guarded Against

14 Turn you not your attention to those who turn (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. **15** Allah has prepared for them a severe Penalty: evil indeed are their deeds. **16** They have

made their oaths a screen (for their misdeeds): thus they obstruct (men) from the Path of Allah: therefore shall they have a humiliating Penalty. **17** Of no profit whatever to them, against Allah, will be their riches nor their sons: they will be Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein (for ever)! **18** One day will Allah raise them all up (for Judgement): then will they swear to Him as they swear to you: and they think that they have something (to stand upon). No, indeed! they are but liars! **19** The Evil One has got the better of them: so he has made them lose the remembrance of Allah. They are the Party of the Evil One. Truly, it is the Party of the Evil One that will perish!

20 Those who resist 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 One full of strength, able to enforce His Will. **22** You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit 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. They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will achieve Felicity. □

AL-HASHR
(The Gathering or Banishment)

Introduction

This is the third of the series of ten short Madīnan Sūrahs, dealing each with a special point in the life of the *Ummah*: see Introduction to Sūrah 57. The special theme here is how treachery to the *Ummah* on the part of its enemies recoils on the enemies themselves, while it strengthens the bond between the different sections of the *Ummah* itself, and this is illustrated by the story of the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of the Banū Naḍīr in Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 4.

This fixes the date of the Sūrah.

Summary—The expulsion of the treacherous Jews from the neighbourhood of Madīnah was smoothly accomplished: their reliance on their fortified positions and on the faith of their allies in treachery proved futile. But the internal bonds in the *Ummah* were strengthened. Such is the wisdom of Allah, Lord of the Most Beautiful Names (59:1-24).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Exiled Jews

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare 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 Book⁴⁰⁷ from their homes at the first gathering (of the forces). Little did

407. This refers to the Jewish tribe of the Banū Naḍīr whose intrigues and treachery nearly undid the Muslim cause during the perilous days of the battle of Uhud in
(continued...)

you think that they would get out: and they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah! But the (Wrath of) Allah came to them from quarters⁴⁰⁸ from which they little expected (it), and cast terror into their hearts, so that they destroyed their dwellings by their own⁴⁰⁹ hands and the hands of the Believers. Take warning, then, O you with eyes (to see)! **3** And had it not been that Allah had decreed banishment for them, He would certainly have punished them in this world: 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 anyone resists Allah, verily Allah is severe in Punishment. **5** Whether you cut down (O you Muslims!) the tender palm trees, or you left them standing on their roots, it was by leave of Allah, and in order that He might cover with shame the rebellious transgressors.

407. (...continued)

Shawwāl, A.H. 3. Four months after, in Rabī' al-Awwal, A.H. 4, steps were taken against them. They were asked to leave the strategic position which they occupied, about three miles south of Madīnah, endangering the very existence of the *Ummah* in Madīnah. At first they demurred, relying on their fortresses and on their secret alliances with the Pagans of Makkah and the Hypocrites of Madīnah. 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 Khaybar: see 33:27. The Banū Nadīr richly deserved punishment, but their lives were spared, and they were allowed to carry away their goods and chattels. [5369]

408. They had played a double game. Originally they were sworn allies of the Madīnan Muslims under the Holy Prophet, but they secretly intrigued with the Makkān Pagans under Abū Sufyān and the Madīnan 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 Quraysh of Makkah and the Hypocrites of Madīnah would help them, but they did not help them. On the contrary the eleven day 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. [5371]

409. 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 Muslim forces. [5372]

6 What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger (and taken away) from them—for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry; but Allah gives power to His messengers over any He pleases: and Allah has power over all things. 7 What Allah has bestowed⁴¹⁰ on His Messenger (and taken away) from the people⁴¹¹ of the townships,—belongs to Allah,—to His Messenger 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 assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.

8 (Some part is due) to the indigent Muhājirs,⁴¹² 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 sincere ones;—9 But those who before them, had homes⁴¹³ (in Madīnah) and had adopted the Faith,—show

410. The Jews had originally come from outside Arabia, and seized the land near Madīnah. They refused to adapt themselves to the people of Arabia, and were in fact a thorn in the side of the genuine Arabs of Madīnah. Their dispossession is therefore a restoration of the land to its original people. But the word *Aḥū'* 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 *Anḡāl*, or spoils, taken after actual fighting, about which see 8:1 and 41. [5379]

411. *The people of the townships*: the townships were the Jewish settlements round Madīnah, of the Banū Nadīr, and possibly of other tribes. Cf. the "townships" mentioned in 59:14 below. The reference cannot be to the Wādī al Qurā (Valley of Towns), now Madā'in Šālīḥ, which was subjugated after Khaybar and Fadak in A.H. 7, unless this verse is later than the rest of the Sūrah. [5380]

412. The *Muhājirs* are those who forsook their homes and property in Makkah in order to assist the Holy Prophet in his migration to Madīnah (*Hijrah*). Their devotion and sincerity were proved beyond doubt by their self-denial, and they were now to be rewarded. [5382]

413. This refers to the *Anṣār* (the Helpers), the people of Madīnah, who accepted Islam when it was persecuted in Makkah, and who invited the Holy Prophet to join them and become their Leader in Madīnah. The *Hijrah* was possible because of their good-will and their generous hospitality. They entertained the Prophet and all the refugees (*Muhājirs*) 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 *Ummah* got its own resources, the Helpers regularly gave and the Refugees regularly received. The Helpers counted it a privilege to

(continued...)

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 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 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) against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."

SECTION 2: The Hypocrites Fail in Their Promise to the Jews

11 Have you not observed the Hypocrites say to their misbelieving brethren among the People of the Book?—"If you are expelled, we too will go out with you, and we will never listen to anyone in your affair; and if you are attacked (in fight) we will help you." But Allah is witness 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. **13** Of a truth you are stronger (than they) because of the terror in their hearts, (sent) by 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. Strong is their fighting (spirit) amongst themselves: you would think they were united, but their hearts are divided: that is because they are a people devoid of wisdom.

15 Like those who lately⁴¹⁴ preceded them, they have tasted the evil

413. (...continued)

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 Nadīr 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. [5383]

414. The immediate reference was probably to the Jewish goldsmith tribe of the Qaynuqā', who were also settled in a fortified township near Madīnah. They were also punished and (continued...)

result of their conduct; and (in the Hereafter there is) for them a grievous Penalty;—**16** (Their allies deceived them), like the Evil One, when he says to man, "Deny Allah": but when (man) denies Allah, (the Evil One) says, "I am free of you: 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: An Exhortation

18 O you who believe! Fear Allah, and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow. Indeed, fear Allah: for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do. **19** And be you not like those who forgot Allah; and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors! **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.

21 Had We sent down this Qur'ān on a mountain, verily, you would have seen it humble itself and cleave 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;—Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. **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 Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him. **24** He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, does declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. □

414. (...continued)

banished for their treachery, about a month after the battle of Badr, in which the Makkan Pagans had suffered a signal defeat, in Shawwāl, A.H. 2. The Nadīr 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. [5392]

AL-MUMTAHANAH
(The Woman To Be Examined)

Introduction

This is the fourth of the ten Madīnan Sūrahs, each dealing with a special point in the life of the *Ummah*.

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. For the latter there is hope of mercy and forgiveness. The question of women and cross-marriages is equitably dealt with.

The date is after the Pagans had broken the treaty of Hudaibiyah, for which see Introduction to Sūrah 48—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 (60:1-13).

*** **

SECTION 1: Friendly Relations with Enemies

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

O you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends (or protectors),—offering them (your) love,⁴¹⁵ even though they have

415. The immediate occasion for this was a secret letter sent by one Hātib, a *Muhājir*, from Madīnah, to the Pagans at Makkah, in most friendly terms, seeking 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 the instruction was given for future guidance. This was shortly

(continued...)

rejected the Truth that has come to you, and have (on the contrary) driven out the Prophet and yourselves (from your homes), (simply) because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come out to strive in My Way and to seek My Good Pleasure, (take them not as friends), holding secret converse of love (and friendship) with them: for I know full well all that you conceal and all that you reveal. And any of you that does this has strayed from the straight Path. **2** If they were to get the better of you,⁴¹⁶ they would behave to you as enemies, and stretch forth their hands and their tongues against you for evil; and they desire that you should reject the Truth. **3** Of no profit to you will be your relatives and your children on the Day of Judgement: He will judge between you: for Allah sees well all that you 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 you worship besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has arisen, between us and you, enmity and hatred for ever,—unless you believe in Allah and Him alone”: but not when Abraham said to his father: “I will pray for forgiveness for you, though I have no power (to get) aught on your behalf from Allah.” (They prayed): “Our Lord! In You do we trust, and to You do we turn in repentance: to You is (our) final Goal. **5** Our Lord! Make us not a (test and) trial for the Unbelievers, but forgive us, our Lord! For You are

415. (...continued)

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. [5409]

416. Besides the question of your fidelity to your own people, even your own selfish interests require you to beware of secret intrigues with your enemies. They will welcome you as cat's paws. 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 pervert you from the Path of Truth and righteousness and to win you over to their evil ways. [5411]

the Exalted in Might, the Wise.” 6 There was indeed in them 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 Wants, Worthy of all Praise.

SECTION 2: Friendly Relations with Non-Muslims

7 It may be that Allah will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom you (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 with them: for Allah loves those who are just. 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 you who believe! When there come to you believing women refugees, examine (and test) them: Allah knows best as to their Faith: if you ascertain that they are Believers, then send them not back to the Unbelievers. They are not lawful (wives) for the Unbelievers, nor are 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 you marry them on payment of their dower to them. But hold not to the guardianship of unbelieving women: ask for what you 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, and you have an accession (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 you believe.

12 O Prophet! When believing women come to you to take the oath of fealty to you, 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 falsehood, and that they will not disobey you in any just matter,—then do you receive their fealty, and pray to Allah for the forgiveness (of their sins): for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

13 O you who believe! Turn not (for friendship) to people on whom is the Wrath of Allah. Of the Hereafter they are already in despair, just as the Unbelievers are in despair about those (buried) in graves. □

Chapter 61

AL-SAFF (The Battle Array)

Introduction

This is the fifth Sūrah of the series of short Madīnan Sūrahs beginning with Sūrah 57. Its subject matter is the need for discipline, practical work, and self-sacrifice in the cause of the *Ummah*. Its date is uncertain, but it was probably revealed shortly after the battle of Uhud, 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 (61:1-14).

*** **

SECTION 1: Triumph of Islam

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

2 O you who believe! Why say you that which you do not? 3 Grievously odious is it in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not. 4 Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.

5 And remember, Moses said to his people: "O my people! Why do you vex and insult me, though you 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 Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad."⁴¹⁷ But when he came to them with clear Signs,⁴¹⁸ they said, "This is evident sorcery!"

7 Who does greater wrong than one who invents falsehood against Allah, even as he is being invited to Islam? And Allah guides not those who do wrong. 8 Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths: but Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it). 9 It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it).

SECTION 2: Establishment of Truth Needed Sacrifices

10 O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty?—11 That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: that will be best for you, if you but knew! 12 He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens

417. "Ahmad" or "Muhammad": the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word *Pericyltos*. 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". Our scholars contend that Paracletos is a corrupt reading for Pericyltos, and that in the 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" (21:107) and "most kind and merciful to the Believers" (9:128). See also 3:81. [5438]

418. 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! [5439]

beneath which Rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Achievement. 13 And another (favour will He bestow,) which you do love,—help from Allah and a speedy victory. So give the Glad Tidings to the Believers.

14 O you who believe! Be you 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: but We gave power to those who believed, against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed. □

Chapter 62

AL-JUMU'AH (Congregation)

Introduction

This is the sixth Sūrah in the Madīnan series of short Sūrahs which began with Sūrah 57.

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 Madīnan period, say between A.H. 2 and 3.

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 (62:1-11).

*** **

SECTION 1: Muslims Chosen for Divine Favours

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, does declare the Praises and Glory of Allah,—the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Exalted in Might, the Wise. 2 It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom—although they had been, before, in manifest error;—3 As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them, 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: and Allah is the Lord of the highest bounty.

5 The similitude of those who were charged with the (obligations of the) Mosaic Law, but who subsequently failed in those (obligations), is that of a donkey 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 you that stand on Judaism! If you think that you are friends to Allah, to the exclusion of (other) men, then express your desire for Death, if you 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 you flee will truly overtake you: then will you be sent back to the Knower of things secret and open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!"

SECTION 2: Friday Prayers

9 O you 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): that is best for you if you but knew! 10 And when the Prayer is finished, then may you disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of Allah: and celebrate the Praises of Allah often (and without stint): that you may prosper.

11 But when they see some bargain or some amusement, they disperse headlong to it, and leave you standing. Say: "The (blessing) from the Presence of Allah is better than any amusement or bargain! And Allah is the Best to provide (for all needs)." □

AL-MUNĀFIQŪN
(The Hypocrites)

Introduction

This is the seventh of the ten short Madīnan Sūrahs 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 Madīnah: see 3:167. This Sūrah may be referred to some time after that event, say about A.H. 4 or possibly A.H. 5 if the words reported in verse 8 were uttered in the expedition against the Banū Muṣṭaliq, A.H. 5.

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 (63:1-11).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Hypocrites

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When the Hypocrites come to you, they say, "We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah." Certainly, Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the Hypocrites are indeed liars. **2** They have made their oaths 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 set on their hearts: therefore they understand not.

4 When you look at them, their exteriors please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are as (worthless as hollow)

pieces of timber propped up, (unable to stand on their own). They think that every cry is against them. 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 forgiveness", they turn aside their heads, and you would see them turning away their faces in arrogance.

6 It is equal to them whether you pray for their forgiveness or not. 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,⁴¹⁹ to the end that they may disperse (and quit Madīnah)." But to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth; but the Hypocrites understand not. **8** They say, "If we return to Madīnah, surely the more honourable (element) will expel therefrom the meaner."⁴²⁰ But honour belongs to Allah and His Messenger, and to the Believers; but the Hypocrites know not.

SECTION 2: An Exhortation

9 O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own. **10** And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before Death should come to any of you and he should say, "O my Lord! Why did You 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." **11** But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed (for it) has come; and Allah is well acquainted with (all) that you do. □

419. The *Muhājirīn*, who had come to be with the Holy Prophet in Madīnah in exile, were received, helped, entertained by the *Anṣār* (Helpers). The Hypocrites in Madīnah did not like this, and tried in underhand ways to dissuade the good folk of Madīnah from doing all they could for the exiles. But their tricks did not succeed. [5474]

420. Words of this import were spoken by 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy, the leader of the Madīnah Hypocrites to or about the Exiles, in the course of the expedition against the Banū Muṣṭaliq in the fourth or fifth year of the *Hijrah*. He had hopes of leadership which were disappointed by the coming to Madīnah 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. [5475]

Chapter 64

AL-TAGHĀBUN (The Mutual Loss and Gain)

Introduction

This is the eighth of the short Madīnan Sūrahs, 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 Madīnan Sūrah, of the year 1 of the Hijrah or possibly even of the Makkan period just before the Hijrah.

Summary—Both the Unbelievers and the Believers were created by the One True Allah, 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? (64:1-18).

*** **

SECTION 1: Disbelievers Warned

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, does declare 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 that are Believers: and Allah sees well all that you do. 3 He has created the heavens and the earth in just proportions, and has given you shape, and made your shapes beautiful: and to Him is the final Goal. 4 He knows what is in the heavens and on earth; and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal: indeed, 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; and they had a grievous Penalty. 6 That was because there came to them messengers with clear Signs, but

they said: "Shall (mere) human beings direct us?" So they rejected (the Message) and turned away. But Allah can do without (them): and Allah is free of all needs, Worthy of all praise.

7 The Unbelievers think that they will not be raised up (for Judgement). Say: "Indeed, by my Lord, you shall surely be raised up; then shall you be told (the truth) of all that you 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 you do. **9** The Day that He assembles you (all) for a Day of Assembly,—that will be a Day of mutual loss and gain (among you), and those who believe in Allah and work righteousness—He will remove from them their ills, and He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever: that will be the supreme Achievement. **10** But those who reject Faith and treat Our Signs as falsehoods, they will be Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein for ever: and evil is that Goal.

SECTION 2: An Exhortation

11 No kind of calamity can occur, except by the leave of Allah: and if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (aright): for Allah knows all things. **12** So obey Allah, and obey His Messenger: but if you turn back, the duty of Our Messenger is but to proclaim (the Message) clearly and openly. **13** Allah! There is no god but He: and on Allah, therefore, let the Believers put their trust.

14 O you who believe! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them! But if you forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. **15** Your riches and your children may be but a trial: but in the Presence of Allah, is the highest Reward.

16 So fear Allah as much as you can; listen and obey; and spend in charity for the benefit of your own soul. And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls,—they are the ones that achieve prosperity. **17** If you loan to Allah, a beautiful loan, He will double it to your (credit), and He will grant you Forgiveness: for Allah is Most Ready to appreciate (service), Most Forbearing,—**18** Knower of what is hidden and what is open, Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom. □

Chapter 65

AL-TALĀQ (Divorce)

Introduction

This is the ninth of the ten short Madīnan Sūrahs dealing with the social life of the Community. The aspect dealt with here is Divorce, and the necessity of 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 Sūrah 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 Dāwūd, *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 Sūrah linked with the question of insolent impiety and its punishment.

The date is somewhere about A.H. 6, but the chronology has no significance.

Summary—Provision to be made for women in case of Divorce; insolent impiety always leads to punishment (65:1-12).

*** **

SECTION 1: Supplementary Divorce Rules

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

1 O Prophet! When you do divorce women,⁴²¹ divorce them at their prescribed periods, and count (accurately) their prescribed periods: and

421. 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 you...": are addressed to the Community collectively.[5503]

fear Allah your Lord:⁴²² and turn them not out of their houses,⁴²³ nor shall they (themselves) leave,⁴²⁴ 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: you know not if perchance Allah will bring about thereafter some new situation. **2** Thus when they fulfil their term appointed, either take them back on equitable terms or part with them on equitable terms; and take for witness two persons from among you, endued with justice, and establish the evidence (as) before Allah. Such is the admonition given to him who believes in Allah and the Last Day. And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, **3** And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose: 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 you have any doubts, is three months,

422. *'Iddah*, as a technical term in divorce law, is explained in 2:228. Its general meaning is "a prescribed period": in that general sense it is used in 2:185 for a prescribed period of fasting. [5505]

423. 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 roundabout way. Commentators suggest that the divorce should not be pronounced during the courses. Read with 2:222, 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. [5506]

424. 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 *'iddah*, 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. [5507]

and for those who have no courses (it is the same): for those who carry (life within their wombs), their period is until they deliver their burdens: and for those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy. **5** That is the Command of Allah, which He has sent down to you: and if anyone fears Allah, He will remove his ills from him, and will enlarge his reward.

6 Let the women live (in *'iddah*) in the same style as you live, according to your means: annoy them not, so as to restrict them. And if they carry (life in their wombs), then 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 you find yourselves in difficulties, let another woman suckle (the child) on the (father's) behalf. **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.

SECTION 2: Makkah Warned

8 How many populations that insolently opposed the command of their Lord and of His messengers, did We not then call to account—to severe account?—and We imposed on them an exemplary Punishment. **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 (in the Hereafter). Therefore fear Allah, O you men of understanding—who have believed!—for Allah has indeed sent down to you a Message,—**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 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 and of the earth a similar number. Through the midst of them (all) descends His Command: that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah comprehends all things in (His) Knowledge. □

AL-TAHRĪM
(Prohibition)

Introduction

This is the tenth and last of the series of short *Madīnan Sūrahs* which began with *Sūrah 57*: see Introduction to that *Sūrah*. 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 even if their lot is cast with the wicked (66:1-12).

*** **

SECTION 1: The Prophet's Domestic Relations

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O Prophet! Why hold you to be forbidden that which Allah has made lawful to you? You seek to please your consorts. But Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁴²⁵ **2** Allah has already ordained for you,

425. 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 33:28. But they were human beings after all, and were subject to the weaknesses of their sex, and they sometimes failed. The imprudence of 'Ā'ishah (see 24:11) once caused serious difficulties: the Holy Prophet's mind was sorely distressed, and he renounced the society of his wives for some time. This renunciation seems to be referred to here. The situation was none the less difficult for him because 'Ā'ishah was a daughter of Abū Bakr, one of the truest and most
(continued...)

(O men), the dissolution 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 confidence⁴²⁶ to one of his consorts, and she then divulged it (to another), and Allah made it known to him, he confirmed⁴²⁷ part thereof and repudiated a part. Then when he told her thereof, she said, "Who told you this?" He said, "He told me Who knows and is well-acquainted (with all things)." 4 If you two turn in repentance to Him, your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if you back up each other against him, truly Allah is his Protector, and

425. (...continued)

intimate of his Companions and lieutenants. The Commentators usually cite the following incident in connection with the revelation of these verses. It is narrated from 'Ā'ishah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd and others that the Holy Prophet usually visited his wives daily after 'Asr Prayer. Once it so happened that he stayed longer than usual at the quarters of Zaynab bint Jahsh, for she had received from somewhere some honey which the Holy Prophet liked very much. "At this", said 'Ā'ishah, "I felt jealous, and I, Hafsa, Sawdah and Safiyah 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. [5529]

426. 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 note 425 above will help us to understand this passage. The sacred words imply that the matter was of great importance 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. [5532]

427. The moral we have to draw is manifold: (1) If anything is told to us in confidence, especially by one at the head of affairs, we must not divulge it even 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) When the whispered version is compared with the true version and the actual facts, it will be found that the whispered version is in great part untrue, due to the misunderstanding and exaggeration inevitable in the circumstances. (4) The breach of confidence must inevitably rebound to the shame of the guilty party, whose surprise only covers a sense of humiliation. [5533]

Gabriel, and (every) righteous one among those who believe,—and furthermore, the angels—will back (him) up.

5 It may be, if he divorced you (all), 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 travel (for Faith) and fast,—previously married or virgins. 6 O you 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 (They will say), “O you Unbelievers! Make no excuses this Day! You are being but required for all that you did!”

SECTION 2: Progress of the Faithful

8 O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance: in the hope that your Lord will remove from you your ills 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 You have power over all things.”

9 O Prophet! Strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against 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 were false to their (husbands), and they profited nothing before Allah on their account, but were told: “Enter you the Fire along with (others) that enter!” 11 And Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh: behold she said: “O my Lord! Build for me, in nearness to You, 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 daughter of ‘Imrān, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) 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). □

Chapter 67

AL-MULK (The Dominion)

Introduction

We have now done fourteen-fifteenths of the Qur'ān, and have followed step by step the development of its argument establishing the *Ummah* or Brotherhood of Islam.

There is a logical break here. The remaining fifteenth consists of short spiritual Lyrics, mostly of the Makkan 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 Qur'ānic Sūrah's have a grandeur, a beauty, a mystic meaning, 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. There is much symbolism in language and thought, in describing the spiritual in terms of the things we see and understand.

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 Sūrah of 30 verses belongs to the Middle Makkan period, just before Sūrah 69 and Sūrah 70. 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 Sūrah 19.

*** **

PART XXIX

SECTION 1: The Kingdom of Allah

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things has Power;—2 He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which

of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving;—**3** He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion will you see in the Creation of (Allah) Most Gracious. So turn your vision again: see you any flaw? **4** Again turn your vision a second time: (your) vision will come back to you dull and discomfited, in a state worn out. **5** And We have, (from of old), adorned the lowest heaven with Lamps, and We have made such (Lamps) (as) missiles to drive away the Evil Ones, and have prepared for them the Penalty of the blazing Fire.

6 For those who reject their Lord (and Cherisher) is the Penalty 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 is cast therein, its Keepers 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): you are nothing but an egregious delusion!'" **10** They will further say: "Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not (now) be among the Companions of the blazing Fire!" **11** They will then confess their sins: but far will be (Forgiveness) from the Companions of the blazing Fire!

12 As for those who fear their Lord unseen, for them is Forgiveness and a great Reward. **13** And whether you hide your word or publish it, He certainly has (full) knowledge, of the secrets of (all) hearts. **14** Should He not know—He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them).

SECTION 2: The Disbelievers' Doom

15 It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse you through its tracts and enjoy of the Sustenance which He furnishes: but unto Him is the Resurrection. **16** Do you feel secure that He Who is in Heaven will not cause you to be swallowed up by the earth when it shakes (as in an earthquake)? **17** Or do you feel secure that He Who is in Heaven will not send against you a violent tornado (with showers of stones), so that you shall know how (terrible) was My warning? **18**

But indeed men before them rejected (My warning): then how (terrible) was My rejection (of them)?

19 Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) 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 (Allah) Most Merciful? In nothing but delusion are the Unbelievers. **21** Or who is there that can provide you with Sustenance if He were to withhold His provision? Nay, they obstinately persist in insolent impiety and flight (from the Truth).

22 Is then one who walks headlong, with his face grovelling, better guided,—or one who walks evenly on a straight Way? **23** Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding: little thanks it is you give." **24** Say: "It is He Who has multiplied you through the earth, and to Him shall you be gathered together."

25 They ask: When will this promise be (fulfilled)?—if you are telling the truth. **26** Say: "As to the knowledge of the time, it is with Allah alone: I am (sent) only to warn plainly in public." **27** At length, when they see it close at hand, grieved will be the faces of the Unbelievers, and it will be said (to them): "This is (the promise fulfilled), which you were calling for!"

28 Say: "See you?—If Allah were to destroy me, and those with me, or if He bestows His Mercy on us,—yet who can deliver the Unbelievers from a grievous Penalty?" **29** Say: "He is (Allah) Most Gracious: we have believed in Him, and on Him have we put our trust: so, soon will you know which (of us) it is that is in manifest error." **30** Say: "See you?—If your stream be some morning lost (in the underground earth), who then can supply you with clear-flowing water?" □

Chapter 68

AL-QALAM or *NŪN* (The Pen)

Introduction

This is a very early Makkan revelation. The general opinion of Muslim Commentary is that a great part of it was second in order of revelation, the first being Sūrah 96 (*Iqra'*), verses 1-5: see *Iqān*, Chapter 7.

The last Sūrah 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 (68:1-33).

True Judgement comes from Allah, and not from the false standards of men (68:34-52).

*** **

SECTION 1: Not a Madman's Message

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 *Nūn*.⁴²⁸ By the Pen⁴²⁹ and by the (Record) which (men) write,—2 You are not, by the Grace of your Lord, mad or possessed. 3 Nay, verily for you is a Reward unailing: 4 And you (stand) on an exalted standard of character. 5 Soon will you see, and they will see, 6 Which of you is afflicted with madness. 7 Verily it is your Lord that knows best, which (among men) has strayed from His Path: and He knows best those who receive (true) Guidance.

8 So listen not to those who deny (the Truth). 9 Their desire is that you should be pliant: so would they be pliant.

10 Heed not the type of despicable men—ready with oaths, 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, base-born,—14 Because he possesses wealth and (numerous) sons. 15 When to him are rehearsed Our Signs, “Tales of the Ancients”, he cries! 16 Soon shall We brand (the beast) on the snout!

428. *Nūn* is an Abbreviated Letter. *Nūn* 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 Sūrah 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”, (Dhū al-Nūn, 21:87), as he was, in the story, swallowed by the Fish. The letter *N* could also symbolically represent Jonah in the Arabic form *Yūnus*, where the characteristic “Firm Letter” is *N*. [5592]

429. The mystic ‘Pen’ and the mystic ‘Record’ are the symbolical foundation 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. [5593]

17 Verily We have tried them as We tried the People of the Garden, when they resolved to gather the fruits of the (garden) in the morning. 18 But made no reservation, ("If it be Allah's Will"). 19 Then there came on the (garden) a visitation from your Lord, (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 you to your tilth (betimes) in the morning, if you would gather the fruits." 23 So they departed, conversing in secret low tones, (saying)—24 "Let not a single indigent person break in upon you into the (garden) this day." 25 And they opened the morning, strong in an (unjust) resolve. 26 But when they saw the (garden), they said: "We have surely lost our way: 27 Indeed we are shut out (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)!" 33 Such is the Punishment (in this life); but greater is the Punishment in the Hereafter—if only they knew!

SECTION 2: A Reminder for the Nations

34 Verily, for the Righteous, are Gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. 35 Shall We then treat the People of Faith like the People of Sin? 36 What is the matter with you? How judge you? 37 Or have you a Book through which you learn—38 That you shall have, through it whatever you choose? 39 Or have you Covenants with Us on oath, reaching to the Day of Judgement, (providing) that you shall have whatever you shall demand? 40 Ask you of them, which of them will stand surety for that! 41 Or have they some "Partners" (in Godhead)? Then let them produce their "partners", if they are truthful!

42 The Day that the Shin shall be laid bare, and they shall be summoned to bow in adoration, but they shall not be able,—43 Their

eyes will be cast down,—ignominy will cover them; seeing that they had been summoned aforetime to bow in adoration, while they were whole, (and had refused). **44** Then leave Me alone with such as reject this Message: by degrees shall We punish them from directions they perceive not. **45** A (long) respite will I grant them: truly powerful is My Plan. **46** Or is it that you do ask them for a reward, so that they are burdened with a load of debt?—**47** Or that the Unseen is in their hands, so that they can write it down?

48 So wait with patience for the Command of your Lord, and be not like the Companion 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 naked shore, in disgrace. **50** Thus did his Lord choose him and make him of the Company of the Righteous.

51 And the Unbelievers would almost trip you up with their eyes when they hear the Message; and they say: “Surely he is possessed!” **52** But it is nothing less than a Message to all the worlds.□

AL-HĀQQAH
(The Sure Reality)

Introduction

This Sūrah belongs to the early middle period of Makkan 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.

*** **

SECTION 1: The Doom

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 The Sure Reality! **2** What is the Sure Reality? **3** And what will make you realise what the Sure Reality is?

4 The Thamūd and the 'Ād people (branded) as false the Stunning Calamity! **5** But the Thamūd,—they were destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning! **6** And the 'Ād, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent; **7** He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that you could see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path), as if they had been roots of hollow palm trees tumbled down! **8** Then see you any of them left surviving?

9 And Pharaoh, and those before him, and the Cities Overthrown,⁴³⁰ committed habitual Sin. **10** And disobeyed (each) the messenger of their Lord; so He punished them with an abundant

430. *The Cities Overthrown*: Sodom and Gomorrah, Cities of the Plain, to whom Lot preached. See 9:70 and 7:80-84. [5644]

Penalty. **11** We, when the water (of Noah's Flood) overflowed beyond its limits, carried you (mankind), in the floating (Ark), **12** That We might make it a Message unto you, and that ears (that should hear the tale and) retain its memory should bear its (lessons) in remembrance.

13 Then, when one blast is sounded on the Trumpet, **14** And the earth is moved, and its mountains, and they are crushed to powder 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, and eight will, that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them.

18 That Day shall you be brought to Judgement: not an act of yours that you hide will be hidden. **19** Then he that will be given his Record in his right hand will say: "Ah here! Read you my Record! **20** I did really understand 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 (will hang in bunches) low and near. **24** "Eat you and drink you, with full satisfaction; because of the (good) that you sent before you, in the days that are gone!"

25 And he that will be given his Record in his left hand, will say: "Ah! Would that my Record had not been given to me! **26** And that I had never realised how my account (stood)! **27** Ah! Would that (Death) had made an end of me! **28** Of no profit to me has been my wealth! **29** My power has perished from me!"

30 (The stern command will say): "Seize you him, and bind you him, **31** And burn you him in the blazing Fire. **32** Further, make him march in a chain, whereof the length is seventy cubits! **33** This was he that would not believe in Allah Most High, **34** And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent! **35** So no friend has he here this Day. **36** Nor has he any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds, **37** Which none do eat but those in sin."

SECTION 2: False Allegations Refuted

38 So I do call to witness what you see, **39** And what you see not, **40** That this is verily the word of an honoured messenger; **41** It is not the word of a poet: little it is you believe! **42** Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little admonition it is you 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).

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 your Lord Most High. □

AL-MA'ĀRIJ
(The Ways of Ascent)

Introduction

This is another eschatological Sūrah closely connected in subject matter with the last one. Patience and the mystery of 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 Sūrah 49.

*** **

SECTION 1: Certainty of the Punishment

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 A questioner asked about a Penalty to befall—**2** The Unbelievers, the which there is none to ward off,—**3** (A Penalty) from Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent.

4 The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years: **5** Therefore do you hold Patience,—a Patience of beautiful (contentment). **6** They see the (Day) indeed as a far-off (event): **7** But We see it (quite) near.

8 The Day that the sky will be like molten brass, **9** And the mountains will be like wool, **10** And no friend will ask after a friend, **11** Though they will be put in sight of each other—the sinner's desire will be: would that he could redeem himself from the Penalty of that Day by (sacrificing) 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: **15** By no means! For it would be the Fire of Hell!—**16** Plucking out (his being) right to the skull!—**17** Inviting (all) such as turn their

backs and turn away their faces (from the Right). **18** And collect (wealth) and hide it (from use)!

19 Truly man was created very impatient;—**20** Fretful when evil touches him; **21** And niggardly when good reaches him;—**22** Not so those devoted to prayer;—**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 prevented (for some reason from asking); **26** And those who hold to the truth of the Day of Judgement; **27** And those who fear the displeasure of their Lord,—**28** For their Lord's displeasure is the opposite of Peace and Tranquillity;—**29** And those who guard their chastity, **30** Except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hands possess—for (then) they are not to be blamed, **31** But those who trespass beyond this are transgressors;—**32** And those who respect their trusts and covenants; **33** And those who stand firm in their testimonies; **34** And those who guard (the sacredness) of their worship;—**35** Such will be the honoured ones in the Gardens (of Bliss).

SECTION 2: A New Nation to be Raised Up

36 Now what is the matter with the Unbelievers that they rush madly before you—**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!

40 Now I do call to witness the Lord of all points in the East and the West that We can certainly—**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, 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 goalpost (fixed for them)—**44** Their eyes lowered in dejection, —ignominy covering them (all over)! Such is the Day the which they are promised! □

NŪH
(Noah)

Introduction

This is another early Makkan Sūrah, 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 Makkan period.

*** **

SECTION 1: Noah Preaches

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 We sent Noah to his people (with the Command): "Do you warn your people before there comes to them a grievous Penalty." **2** He said: "O my people! I am to you a Warner, clear and open: **3** That you should worship Allah, fear Him and obey me: **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: if you only knew."

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 You might 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; **11** He will send rain 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). **13** What is the matter with you, that you place not your hope for kindness and long-suffering in Allah,—**14** Seeing that it is He that has created you in diverse stages? **15** See you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another, **16** And made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp? **17** And Allah has produced you from the earth, growing (gradually), **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), **20** That you may go about therein, in spacious roads.”

SECTION 2: Destruction of Transgressors

21 Noah said: “O my Lord! They have disobeyed me, but they follow (men) whose wealth and children give them no increase but only Loss. **22** And they have devised a tremendous Plot. **23** And they have said (to each other), ‘Abandon not your gods: abandon neither Wadd nor Suwā’, neither Yaghūth nor Ya‘ūq, nor Nasr’;—**24** They have already misled many; and grant You no increase to the wrong-doers but in straying (from their mark).” **25** Because of their sins they were drowned (in the flood), and were made to enter the Fire (of Punishment): 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! **27** For, if You do leave (any of) them, they will but mislead Your 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 You no increase but in Perdition!” □

AL-JINN
(The Spirits)

Introduction

This is a late **Makkan Sūrah**, of which we can be tolerably certain of the date. It was two years before the Hijrah, when the Prophet, despised and rejected in his native city of **Makkah**, went to evangelise the lordly men of **Tā'if**. 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. **Ṭabarī** 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**, a glorious vision was revealed to him—hidden spiritual forces working for him—people not known to him accepting his mission while his own people were still rejecting him. Within two months some strangers from **Madīnah** had privately met him and laid the foundations of that *Hijrah* which was to change the fate of Arabia and the course of world history.

*** **

SECTION I: Foreign Believers

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Say: "It has been revealed to me that a company of *Jinns*⁴³¹ listened (to the Qur'ān). 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 spirit should say aught that is untrue against Allah.

431. For *Jinns*, see 6:100. [5728]

6 'True, there were persons among mankind who took shelter with persons among the *Jinns*, but they increased them in folly. 7 And they (came to) think as you thought, that Allah would not raise up anyone (to Judgement). 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 who listens now will find a flaming fire watching him in ambush. 10 And we understand not whether ill is intended to those on earth, or 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 frustrate Him by flight. 13 And as for us, since we have listened to the Guidance, we have 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. 17 That We might try them by that (means). But if any turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, He will cause him to undergo a severe Penalty. 18 And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): so invoke not anyone along with Allah; 19 Yet when the Devotee of Allah⁴³² stands forth to invoke Him, they just make round him a dense crowd."

SECTION 2: Protection of Revelation

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

432. *The Devotee of Allah*: the Holy Prophet Muhammad. [5743]

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 proclaim 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,—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 you are promised is near, or whether my Lord will appoint for it a distant term. **26** He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make anyone acquainted with His Mysteries,—**27** Except a messenger whom He has chosen: and then He makes a band of watchers march before him and behind him, **28** That He may know that they have (truly) brought and delivered the Messages of their Lord: and He surrounds (all the mysteries) that are with them, and takes account of every single thing." □

AL-MUZZAMMIL
(Folded in Garments)

Introduction

This is one of the earliest Sūrahs to have been revealed. The first was Sūrah 96:1-5 (*Iqra'*), in the fortieth year of the Prophet's life, say about 12 years before the Hijrah. Then there was an interruption (*Fatrah*), 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. The second Sūrah in chronological order was probably a great portion of Sūrah 68. (*Al Qalam*), which came after the *Fatrah* was over. About the same time came this Sūrah (say third) and Sūrah 74, which follows (say fourth), and the remainder of Sūrah 96. We may roughly put the date of this Sūrah at about 11 to 10 years before the Hijrah.

The subject matter is the significance of Prayer and Humility in spiritual life and the terrible fate of those who reject Faith and Revelation.

*** **

SECTION 1: The Prophet Enjoined to Pray

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O you folded in garments!⁴³³ 2 Stand (to prayer) by night, but not all night,⁴³⁴—3 Half of it—or a little less, 4 Or a little more; and recite the

433. *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 mystic meaning in this and the address "you wrapped up" of the next Sūrah. 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 austere, as the following verses show. [5754]

434. See next page.

Qur'ān in slow, measured rhythmic tones.

5 Soon shall We send down to you a weighty Message. **6** Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (framing) the Word (of prayer and praise). **7** True, there is for you by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties: **8** But keep in remembrance the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly. **9** (He is) Lord of the East and the West: there is no god but He: take Him therefore for (thy) Disposer of Affairs.

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, who (yet) deny the Truth; and bear with them for a little while. **12** With Us are Fetters (to bind them), and a Fire (to burn them), **13** And a Food that chokes, and a Penalty grievous. **14** One 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.

15 We have sent to you, (O men!) a messenger, to be a witness concerning you, even as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh. **16** But Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger; so We seized him with a heavy Punishment. **17** Then how shall you, if you deny (Allah), guard yourselves against a Day that will make children hoary-headed?—**18** Whereon the sky will be cleft asunder? His Promise needs must be accomplished. **19** Verily this is an Admonition; therefore, whoever will, let him take a (straight) path to his Lord!

SECTION 2: Prayer Enjoined on Muslims

20 Your Lord does know that you stand forth (to prayer) almost two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so

434. The Prophet was prone to austerities in the cave of Hīrā, 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 17:79. [5755]

do a party of those with you. But Allah does appoint night and day in due measure. He knows that you are unable to keep count thereof. So He has turned to you (in mercy): read you, therefore, of the Qur'ān as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there may be (some) among you in ill-health; others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's Cause. Read you, therefore, as much of the Qur'ān as may be easy (for you); and establish regular prayer and give regular charity; and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan. And whatever good you send forth for your souls you shall find it in Allah's Presence,—indeed, better and greater, in Reward, and seek you the Grace of Allah: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. □

AL-MUDDATHHIR
(The One Wrapped Up)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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.

*** **

SECTION 1: The Prophet is Enjoined to Warn

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 O you wrapped up⁴³⁵ (in a mantle)! **2** Arise and deliver your warning!
3 And your Lord do you magnify! **4** And your garments keep free from stain!
5 And all abomination shun! **6** Nor expect, in giving, any increase (for yourself)!
7 But, for your Lord's (Cause), be patient and constant!

8 Finally, when the Trumpet is sounded, **9** That will be—that Day—a Day of Distress,—**10** Far from easy for those without Faith.

435. In these wonderful early mystic 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. [5778]

11 Leave Me alone, (to deal) with the (creature) whom I created (bare and) alone!—12 To whom I granted resources in abundance, 13 And sons to be by his side!—14 To whom I made (life) smooth and comfortable! 15 Yet is he greedy—that I should add (yet more);—16 By no means! For to Our Signs he has been refractory! 17 Soon will I visit him with a mount of calamities!

18 For he thought and he plotted;—19 And woe to him! How he plotted!—20 Indeed, woe to him; how he plotted!—21 Then he looked round; 22 Then he frowned and he scowled; 23 Then he turned back and was haughty; 24 Then said he: “This is nothing but magic, derived from of old; 25 This is nothing but the word of a mortal!”

26 Soon will I cast him into Hell-fire! 27 And what will explain to you what Hell-fire is? 28 Naught does it permit to endure, and naught does it leave alone!—29 Darkening and changing the colour of man!

30 Over it are Nineteen.⁴³⁶ 31 And We have set none but angels as guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their number 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 symbol does Allah intend by this?” Thus does Allah leave to stray whom He pleases, and guide whom He pleases: and none can know the forces of your Lord, except He. And this is no other than a warning to mankind.

436. The figure nineteen refers to angels appointed to guard Hell. The mystic 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. [5795]

SECTION 2: The Warning

32 Nay, verily: by the Moon, 33 And by the Night as it retreats, 34 And by the Dawn as it shines forth,—35 This is but one of the mighty (Portents), 36 A warning to mankind,—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: 42 “What led you into Hell-fire?” 43 They will say: “We were not of those who prayed; 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 frightened asses, 51 Fleeing from a lion! 52 In fact, each one of them wants to be given scrolls (of revelation) spread out! 53 By no means! But they fear not the Hereafter, 54 Nay, this surely is an admonition: 55 Let any who will, keep it in remembrance! 56 But none will keep it in remembrance except as Allah wills: He is the Lord of Righteousness, and the Lord of Forgiveness. □

AL-QIYĀMAH
(The Resurrection)

Introduction

This Sūrah belongs to the early Makkan period, but comes chronologically a good deal later than the last Sūrahs.

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.

*** **

SECTION 1: The Truth of the Resurrection

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 I do call to witness the Resurrection Day; 2 And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (eschew Evil).

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?"

7 At length, when the Sight is dazed, 8 And the moon is buried in darkness. 9 And the sun and moon are joined together,—10 That Day will Man say: "Where is the refuge?" 11 By no means! No place of safety! 12 Before your Lord (alone), that Day will be the place of rest. 13 That Day will Man be told (all) that he put forward, and all that he put back. 14 Nay, man will be evidence against himself, 15 Even though he were to put up his excuses.

16 Move not your tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to make haste therewith. **17** It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it: **18** But when We have promulgated it, follow you its recital (as promulgated): **19** Nay more, it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear):

20 Nay, (you men!) but you love the fleeting life, **21** And leave alone the Hereafter. **22** Some faces, that Day, 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 backbreaking calamity was about to be inflicted on them; **26** Indeed, when (the soul) reaches to the collarbone (in its exit), **27** And there will be a cry, "Who is a magician (to restore him)?" **28** And he will conclude that it was (the Time) of Parting; **29** And one leg will be joined with another: **30** That Day the Drive will be (all) to your Lord!

SECTION 2: **The Dead Rise**

31 So he gave nothing in charity, nor did he pray!—**32** But on the contrary, he rejected Truth and turned away! **33** Then did he stalk to his family in full conceit! **34** Woe to you, (O men!), indeed, woe! **35** Again, Woe to you, (O men!), indeed, woe!

36 Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)? **37** Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)? **38** Then did he become a leech-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?□

Chapter 76

AL-INSĀN (Man)

Introduction

The revelation of this Sūrah was probably in the early Makkan period, with the possible exception of some verses, but its date has no particular significance. This Sūrah is also called *Al-Dahr* (The Time).

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 Sūrah recalls a Pagan Arab idea, which personified Time as existing spontaneously from eternity to eternity and responsible for the misery or the happiness of mankind. In 45:24 we read: "They say ... 'nothing but Time can destroy us.'" This attitude is of course wrong. Time is a created thing: it has its mysteries, 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 deification of Time (*Dahr*) as against a living personal Allah has given rise to the term *dahrīyah*, as applied to an atheist or a materialist.

The whole of the Sūrah is full of the highest symbolism, as is generally the case with Makkan Sūrahs, and this should always be remembered in their interpretation.

*** **

SECTION 1: Attainment of Perfection

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Has there not been over Man a long period of Time, when he was nothing—(not even) mentioned? 2 Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, 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 (rests on his will).

4 For the Rejecters we have prepared Chains, Yokes, and a blazing Fire. 5 As to the Righteous, they shall drink of a Cup (of Wine) mixed with *Kāfir*,⁴³⁷—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,—9 (Saying), "We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks. 10 We only fear a Day of distressful Wrath from the side of our Lord." 11 But Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day, and will shed over them a Light of Beauty and (blissful) Joy.

12 And because they were patient and constant, He will reward them with a Garden and (garments of) silk. 13 Reclining in the (Garden) on raised thrones, they will see there neither the sun's (excessive heat) nor (the moon's) excessive cold. 14 And the shades of the (Garden) will come low over them, and the bunches (of fruit), there, will hang low in humility.

15 And amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets of crystal,—16 Crystal-clear, made of silver: they will determine the measure thereof (according to their wishes). 17 And they will be given to drink thereof a Cup (of Wine) mixed with *Zanjabil*,⁴³⁸—18 A fountain there, called *Salsabil*.⁴³⁹ 19 And round about them will (serve)

437. *Kāfir* is literally Camphor. 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 (56:18-19), 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. [5835]

438. *Zanjabil* 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. [5849]

439. *Salsabil* literally means: "Seek the Way". The Way is now open to the presence of the Most High. The Banquet is spread. Get thyself ready. It is a "Realm Magnificent" (continued...)

youths of perpetual (freshness): if you see them, you would think them scattered Pearls. **20** And when you look, it is there you will 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; and their Lord will give to them to drink of a Wine Pure and Holy. **22** "Verily this is a Reward for you, and your Endeavour is accepted and recognised."

SECTION 2: Another Generation will be Raised Up

23 It is We Who have sent down the Qur'ān to you by stages. **24** Therefore be patient with constancy to the Command of your Lord, and listen not to the sinner or the ingrate among them. **25** And celebrate the name of your Lord morning and evening, **26** And part of the night, prostrate yourself to Him; and glorify Him a long night through.

27 As to these, they love the fleeting life, and put away behind them a Day (that will be) hard. **28** It is We Who created them, and We have made their joints strong; but, when We will, We can substitute the like of them by a complete change. **29** This is an admonition: whoever will, let him take a (straight) Path to his Lord. **30** But you will not, except as Allah wills; for Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom. **31** He will admit to His Mercy whom He will; but the wrong-doers—for them has He prepared a grievous Penalty. □

AL-MURSALĀT
(Those Sent Forth)

Introduction

This Sūrah belongs to the early Makkan period, somewhere near to Sūrah 75 (*Al-Qiyamah*). 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*.

*** **

SECTION I: Consequences of Rejection

*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, **5** Then spread abroad a Message, **6** Whether of Justification or of Warning;—**7** Assuredly, what you are promised must come to pass.

8 Then when the stars become dim; **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);—**12** For what Day are these (portents) deferred? **13** For the Day of Sorting Out. **14** And what will explain to you 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 (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?—**21** The which We placed in a place of rest, firmly fixed, **22** For a period (of gestation),

determined (according to need)? **23** For We do determine (according to need); 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, 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 you to that which you used to reject as false! **30** Depart you to a Shadow (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, **33** As if there were (a string of) yellow camels (marching swiftly).” **34** Ah! woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!

35 That will be a Day when they shall not be able to speak. **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)! **39** Now, if you have a trick (or plot), use it against Me! **40** Ah! woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!

SECTION 2: Consequences of Rejection

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 you and drink you to your heart’s content: for that you worked (Righteousness). **44** Thus do We certainly reward the Doers of Good. **45** Ah! woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!

46 (O you Unjust!) Eat you and enjoy yourselves (but) a little while, for that you are Sinners. **47** Ah! woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!

48 And when it is said to them, “Prostrate yourselves!” they do not so. **49** Ah! woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth! **50** Then what Message, after that, will they believe in? □

Chapter 78

AL-NABA' (The Great News)

Introduction

This beautiful Makkah Sūrah is not quite so early as the last (Sūrah 77) nor quite so late as Sūrah 76, but nearer in time to the latter.

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.

*** **

PART XXX

SECTION 1: The Day of Decision

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Concerning what are they disputing? 2 Concerning the Great News,
3 About which they cannot agree. 4 Verily, they shall soon (come to)
know! 5 Verily, verily they shall soon (come to) know!⁴⁴⁰

440. *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—if 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 38:67. In that case it would refer to the Qur'ān, or the Message of Revelation, or the Message of the Holy Prophet, about which there was great contention
(continued...)

6 Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse, 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, 11 And made the day as a means of subsistence? 12 And (have We not) built over you the seven firmaments, 13 And placed (therein) a Light of Splendour? 14 And do We not send down from the clouds water in abundance, 15 That We may produce therewith corn 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 you 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. 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 fear 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 you (the fruits of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, except in Punishment."

SECTION 2: The Day of Decision

31 Verily for the Righteous there will be a fulfilment of (the Heart's) desires; 32 Gardens enclosed, and Grapevines; 33 Companions of Equal Age; 34 And a Cup full (to the Brim). 35 No Vanity shall they hear therein, nor Untruth—36 Recompense from your Lord, a Gift, (amply) sufficient—37 (From) the Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all between—(Allah) Most Gracious: none shall have power to argue with Him.

440. (...continued)

in those days. As this Message also lays great stress on the Day of Judgement and the Resurrection, the practical result by either mode of interpretation amounts to the same. [5889]

38 The Day that the Spirit and the angels will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (Allah) Most Gracious, and He will say what is right. **39** That Day will be the sure Reality: therefore, whoever will, let him take a (straight) Return to his Lord! **40** Verily, We have warned you of a Penalty near—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!" □

AL-NĀZĪ'ĀT
(Those Who Tear Out)

Introduction

This is also an early Makkan Sūrah, of about the same date as the last, and deals with the theme of Judgement 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.

*** **

SECTION 1: The Great Commotion

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the (angels) who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence; **2** By those who gently draw out (the souls of the blessed); **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** One 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.

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 in the (full) awakening (to Judgement).

15 Has the story of Moses reached you? **16** Behold, your Lord did call to him in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā—**17** "Go you to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds. **18** And say to him, 'Would you

that you should be purified (from sin)?—**19** And that I guide you to your Lord, so you should fear Him?" **20** Then did (Moses) show him the Great Sign. **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." **25** But Allah did punish him, (and made an) example of him—in the Hereafter, as in this life. **26** Verily in this is an instructive warning for whoever fears (Allah).

SECTION 2: The Great Calamity

27 What! Are you the more difficult to create or the heaven (above)? (Allah) has constructed it: **28** On high has He raised its canopy, and He has given it order and perfection. **29** Its night does He endow with darkness, and its splendour does He bring out (with light). **30** And the earth, moreover, has He extended (to a wide expanse); **31** He draws out therefrom its moisture and its pasture; **32** And the mountains has He firmly fixed;—**33** For use and convenience to you and your cattle.

34 Therefore, when there comes the great, overwhelming (Event),—**35** The Day when man shall remember (all) that he strove for, **36** And Hell-Fire shall be placed in full view for (all) to see,—**37** Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds, **38** And had preferred the life of this world, **39** The Abode will be Hell-Fire; **40** And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower desires, **41** Their Abode will be the Garden.

42 They ask you about the Hour,—'When will be its appointed time? **43** Wherein are you (concerned) with the declaration thereof? **44** With your Lord is the Limit fixed therefor. **45** You are but a Warner for such as fear it. **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!□

'ABASA
(He Frowned)

Introduction

This is an early Makkan Sūrah, 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'ān to Pagan Quraysh leaders, when he was interrupted by a blind man, 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm, one who was also poor, so that no one took any notice of him. He wanted to learn the Qur'ān. The Holy Prophet naturally disliked the interruption and showed impatience. 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 Sūrah recapitulates the Mercies of Allah to man, and the consequences of a good or a wicked life here, as seen in the spiritual world to come, in the Hereafter.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 (The Prophet) frowned and turned away, 2 Because there came to him the blind man (interrupting). 3 But what could tell you but that perchance he might grow (in spiritual understanding)?—4 Or that he might receive admonition, and the teaching might profit him? 5 As to one who regards himself as self-sufficient, 6 To him do you attend; 7 Though it is no blame to you if he grow not (in spiritual

understanding). 8 But as to him who came to you striving earnestly, 9 And with fear (in his heart), 10 Of him were you unmindful.

11 By no means (should it be so)! For it is indeed a Message of instruction: 12 Therefore let whoever 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.

17 Woe to man! What has made him reject Allah; 18 From what stuff has He created him? 19 From a sperm-drop: He has created him, and then moulded him in due proportions; 20 Then does He make his path smooth for him; 21 Then He causes him to die, and puts him in his Grave; 22 Then, when it is His Will, He will raise him up (again). 23 By no means has he fulfilled what Allah has commanded him.

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 Corn, 28 And Grapes and nutritious Plants, 29 And Olives and Dates, 30 And enclosed Gardens, dense with lofty trees, 31 And Fruits and Fodder,—32 For use and convenience to you and your cattle.

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. 40 And other faces that Day will be dust-stained; 41 Blackness will cover them: 42 Such will be the Rejecters of Allah, the Doers of Iniquity. □

Chapter 81

AL-TAKWĪR (The Folding Up)

Introduction

This is quite an early Makkan Sūrah, 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 Qur'ānic 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 Sūrah are Sūrahs 82 and 84 which may be read with this.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When the sun (with its spacious light) is folded up; **2** When the stars fall, losing their lustre; **3** When the mountains vanish (like a mirage); **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—**9** For what crime she was killed; **10** When the Scrolls are laid open; **11** When the World on High is unveiled; **12** When the blazing Fire is kindled to fierce heat; **13** And when the Garden is brought near;—**14** (Then) shall each soul know what it has put forward.

15 So verily I call to witness the Planets—that recede, **16** Go straight, or hide; **17** And the Night as it dissipates; **18** And the Dawn as it breathes away the darkness;—**19** Verily this is the word of a most

honourable Messenger, **20** Endued with Power, with rank before the Lord of the Throne, **21** With authority there, (and) faithful to his trust.

22 And (O people!) Your Companion is not one possessed; **23** And without doubt he saw him in the clear horizon. **24** Neither does he withhold grudgingly a knowledge of the Unseen. **25** Nor is it the word of an evil spirit accursed.

26 When whither go you? **27** Verily this is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds: **28** (With profit) to whoever among you wills to go straight: **29** But you shall not will except as Allah wills—the Cherisher of the Worlds. □

AL-*INFITĀR*
(The Cleaving Asunder)

Introduction

In subject matter this Sūrah is cognate to the last, though the best authorities consider it a good deal later in chronology in the early Makkan Period.

Its argument is subject to the threefold interpretation mentioned in 81:13, viz., as referring (1) to the final Day of Judgement, (2) to the Lesser Judgement, 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 Rebirth to the true spiritual Reality.

*** **

*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; **4** And when the Graves are turned upside down;—**5** (Then) shall each soul know what it has sent forward and (what it has) kept back.

6 O man! What has seduced you from your Lord Most Beneficent?—**7** Him Who created you, fashioned you in due proportion, and gave you a just bias; **8** In whatever Form He wills, does He put you together.

9 Nay! But you do reject Right and Judgement! **10** But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you,—**11** Kind and honourable—writing down (your deeds): **12** They know (and understand) all that you 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

Judgement, **16** And they will not be able to keep away therefrom.

17 And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is? **18** Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is? **19** (It will be) the Day when no soul shall have power (to do) aught for another: for the Command, that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah.□

AL-MUTAFFIFĪN
(The Dealers in Fraud)

Introduction

This Sūrah 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 higher spiritual Life.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Woe to those that deal in fraud.—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 called to account?—5 On a Mighty Day, 6 A Day when (all) mankind will stand before the Lord of the Worlds?

7 Nay! Surely the Record of the Wicked is (preserved) in *Sijjīn*.⁴¹ 8 And what will explain to you what *Sijjīn* is? 9 (There is) a Register (fully) inscribed. 10 Woe, that Day, to those that deny—11 Those that deny the Day of Judgement. 12 And none can deny it but the Transgressor beyond bounds, the Sinner! 13 When Our Signs are rehearsed to him, he says, "Tales of the Ancients!"

41. This is a word from the same root as *Sijn*, a Prison. It rhymes with *and* and is contrasted with *'Illiyīn* 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 Judgement Seat. The mention of the Inscribed register in verse 9 below may imply that *Sijjīn* 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. [6013]

14 By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do! 15 Verily, from (the Light of) their Lord, that Day, will they be veiled. 16 Further, they will enter the Fire of Hell. 17 Further, it will be said to them: "This is the (reality) which you rejected as false!"

18 Nay, verily the record of the Righteous is (preserved) in *'Illiyin*.⁴⁴² 19 And what will explain to you what *'Illiyān* is? 20 (There is) a Register (fully) inscribed, 21 To which bear witness those Nearest (to Allah).

22 Truly the Righteous will be in Bliss: 23 On Thrones (of Dignity) will they command a sight (of all things): 24 You will recognise in their faces the beaming brightness of Bliss. 25 Their thirst will be slaked with Pure Wine sealed: 26 The seal thereof will be Musk: and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations: 27 With it will be (given) a mixture of *Tasnim*: 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: 35 On Thrones (of Dignity) they will command (a sight) (of all things). 36 Will not the Unbelievers have been paid back for what they did? □

442. *'Illiyin*: the oblique form of the nominative *'illiyān*, which occurs in the next verse. It is in contrast to the *Sijjīn* which occurs in verse 7 above, where see note above. Literally it means the 'High Places', but it is probably not the same as the 'Heights' (*A'rāf*) mentioned in 7:46. Nor need we necessarily identify it with the "dwellings on high" (*ghurufāt*) mentioned in 34:37. Applying the reasoning parallel to that which we applied to *Sijjīn*, we may interpret it as the Place where is kept the Register of the Righteous. [6019]

AL-INSHIQĀQ
(The Rending Asunder)

Introduction

Chronologically this Sūrah is closely connected with the last one. In subject matter it resembles more Sūrahs 82 and 81, with which it may be compared.

The Sūrah, which opens with a mention of some cataclysmic events, shows that the present phenomenal order will not last, and Allah's full Judgement will certainly be established: man should therefore strive for that World of Eternity and True Values.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When the Sky is rent asunder, **2** And listens to (the Command of) its Lord,—and it must needs (do so);—**3** And when the earth is flattened out, **4** And casts forth what is within it, and becomes (clean) empty, **5** And listens to (the Command of) its Lord,—and it must needs (do so);—(then will come home the full Reality).

6 O you man! Verily you are ever toiling on towards your Lord—painfully toiling,—but you shall meet Him. **7** Then he who is given his Record in his right hand, **8** Soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning, **9** And he will turn to his people, rejoicing! **10** But he who is given his Record behind his back,—**11** Soon will he cry for Perdition, **12** And he will enter a blazing Fire. **13** Truly, did he go about among his people, rejoicing! **14** Truly, did he think that he would not have to return (to Us)! **15** Nay, nay! For his Lord was (ever) watchful of him!

16 So I do call to witness the ruddy glow of Sunset; **17** The Night and

its Homing; **18** And the Moon in her Fullness: **19** Allah 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,⁴⁴³ **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 Penalty grievous, **25** Except to those who believe and work righteous deeds: for them is a Reward that will never fail. □

443. *Prostrate*: out of respect and humble gratitude to Allah. [6049]

AL-BURŪJ
(The Zodiacal Signs)

Introduction

This is one of the earlier Makkan Sūrahs, chronologically cognate with Sūrah 91. 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, (displaying) the Zodiacal Signs; 2 By the promised Day (of Judgement); 3 By one that witnesses, and the subject of the witness;—4 Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire),⁴⁴⁴ 5 Fire supplied (abundantly) with Fuel: 6 Behold! They sat 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.

444. Who were the makers of the pit of fire in which they burnt 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 Medieval 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: Nimrūd tries to burn him to death, but on account of Abraham's Faith, the fire became "a means of safety for Abraham": 21:69. Another case cited is that of Dhu Nuwās, the last Himyarite King of Yemen, by religion a Jew, who persecuted the Christians of Najrān 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 A.D. 570. While the words are perfectly general, a reference is suggested to the persecution to which the early Muslims were subjected by the Pagan Quraysh. Among other cruelties, they were stripped, and their skins were exposed to the burning rays of the Arabian summer sun. [6055]

10 Those who persecute (or draw into temptation) the Believers, men and women, and do not turn in repentance, will have the Penalty of Hell: they will have the Penalty of the burning Fire. **11** For those who believe and do righteous deeds, will be Gardens; beneath which Rivers flow: that is the great Salvation, (the fulfilment of all desires),

12 Truly strong is the Grip (and Power) of your Lord. **13** It is He Who creates from the very beginning, and He can restore (life). **14** And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Full of loving-kindness, **15** Lord of the Throne of Glory, **16** Doer (without let) of all that He intends.

17 Has the story reached you, of the Forces—**18** Of Pharaoh and the Thamūd? **19** And yet the Unbelievers (persist) in rejecting (the Truth)! **20** But Allah does encompass them from behind!

21 Nay, this is a Glorious Qur'ān, **22** (Inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved! □

AL-TĀRIQ
(The Night-Visitant)

Introduction

This Sūrah also belongs to the early Makkan period, perhaps not far removed from the last Sūrah.

Its subject matter is the protection afforded to every soul in the darkest period of its spiritual history. The physical nature of man may be insignificant, but the soul given to him by Allah must win a glorious Future in the end.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Sky and the Night-Visitant (therein);—**2** And what will explain to you what the Night-Visitant is?—**3** (It is) the Star of piercing brightness;—**4** There is no soul but has a protector over it.

5 Now let man but think from what he is created! **6** He is created from a drop emitted—**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 returns (in its round), **12** And by the Earth which opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation),—**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). □

Chapter 87

AL-A'LĀ (The Most High)

Introduction

This is one of the earliest of the Makkan Sūrahs, being usually placed eighth in chronological order, and immediately after Sūrah 81.

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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Glorify the name of your Guardian-Lord Most High, **2** Who has created, and further, given order and proportion; **3** Who has ordained laws. And granted guidance; **4** And Who brings out the (green and luscious) pasture, **5** And then does make it (but) swarthy stubble.

6 By degrees shall We teach you to declare (the Message), so you shall not forget,⁴⁴⁵ **7** Except as Allah wills: for He knows what is manifest and what is hidden.

8 And We will make it easy for you (to follow) the simple (Path).⁴⁴⁶

445. 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. [6085]

446. 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 (30:30). On the other hand, spiritual perfection may be most difficult, for it involves complete surrender on our part to Allah in all our
(continued...)

9 Therefore give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer). **10** The admonition will be received by those who fear (Allah): **11** But it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones, **12** Who will enter the Great Fire, **13** In which they will then neither die nor live.

14 But those will prosper who purify themselves, **15** And glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer.

16 Nay (behold), you 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. □

446. (...continued)

affairs, thoughts, and desires: but after that surrender Allah's Grace will make our path easy. [6087]

AL-GHĀSHIYAH
(The Overwhelming Event)

Introduction

This is a late Sūrah of the early Makkan period, perhaps close in date to Sūrah 52. 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 you 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 *Dart*, **7** Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.

8 (Other) faces that Day will be joyful, **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 Thrones (of dignity), raised on high, **14** Goblets placed (ready), **15** And Cushions set in rows, **16** And rich carpets (all) spread out.

17 Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made?—**18** And at the Sky, how it is raised high?—**19** And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm?—**20** And at the Earth, how it is spread out?

21 Therefore do you give admonition, for you are one to admonish. **22** You are not one to manage (men's) affairs. **23** But if any turn away and reject Allah,—**24** Allah will punish him with a mighty Punishment, **25** For to Us will be their return; **26** Then it will be for Us to call them to account. □

AL-FAJR
(The Break of Day)

Introduction

This is one of the earliest of the Sūrahs to be revealed—probably within the first ten in chronological order.

Its mystic 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Break of Day; 2 By the Nights twice five; 3 By the Even and Odd (contrasted); 4 And by the Night when it passes away;—5 Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?

6 See you not how your Lord dealt with the 'Ād (people),—7 Of the (city of) Iram, with lofty pillars, 8 The like of which were not produced in (all) the land? 9 And with the Thamūd (people), who cut out (huge) rocks in the valley?—10 And with Pharaoh, Lord of Stakes?⁴⁴⁷ 11 (All)

447. For "Lord of Stakes", see 38:12. For Pharaoh's arrogance and his fall, see 20:43, 78-79. The three examples given, the 'Ād, the Thamūd, and Pharaoh, show that neither
(continued...)

these transgressed beyond bounds in the lands, **12** And heaped therein mischief (on mischief). **13** Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisements: **14** For your Lord is (as a Guardian) on a watchtower.

15 Now, as for man, when his Lord tries him, giving him honour and gifts, then says he, (puffed up), "My Lord has honoured me." **16** But when He tries him, restricting his subsistence for him, then says he (in despair), "My Lord has humiliated me!"

17 Nay, nay! But you honour not the orphans! **18** Nor do you encourage one another to feed the poor!—**19** And you devour Inheritance—all with greed, **20** And you love wealth with inordinate love!

21 Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder, **22** And your Lord comes, and His angels, rank upon rank, **23** And Hell, that Day, 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, **26** And His bonds will be such as none (other) can bind.

27 (To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (you) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! **28** Come back you to your Lord,—well pleased (yourself), and well-pleasing unto Him! **29** Enter you, then, among My devotees! **30** Indeed, enter you My Heaven!"⁴⁴⁸ □

447. (...continued)

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. [6117]

448. The climax of the whole is: "Enter My Heaven!" Men may have imagined all kinds of heaven before, and many types and symbols 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! [6129]

Chapter 90

AL-BALAD (The City)

Introduction

This is an early Makkan revelation, and refers to the mystic 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 *Madīnah al-Nabī*, the City of the Prophet, and it has ever since been called Madīnah. We can speak of Madīnah as the Prophet's child. But the Prophet ever cherished in his heart the love of his parent City of Makkah, and in the fullness of time was received in triumph there. He purified it from all idols and abominations, re-established the worship of the One True Allah, 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 I do call to witness this City;—2 And you are a freeman of this City;—3 And (the mystic ties of) Parent and Child;—4 Verily We have created man into toil and struggle.

5 Thinks he, that none has power over him? 6 He may say (boastfully): "Wealth have I squandered in abundance!" 7 Thinks he that none beholds 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?⁴⁴⁹ **11** But he has made no haste on the path that is steep. **12** And what will explain to you the path that is steep?—**13** (It is:) freeing the bondman; **14** Or the giving of food in a day of privation, **15** To the orphan with claims of relationship, **16** Or to the indigent (down) in the dust.

17 Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. **18** Such are the Companions of the Right Hand.

19 But those who reject Our Signs, they are the (unhappy) Companions of the Left Hand. **20** On them will be Fire vaulted over (all round). □

449. 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 also given us the judgement 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. [6138]

AL-SHAMS
(The Sun)

Introduction

This is one of the early Makkan 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Sun and his (glorious) splendour; **2** By the Moon as she follows him; **3** By the Day as it shows up (the Sun's) glory; **4** By the Night as it conceals it; **5** By the Firmament and its (wonderful) structure; **6** By the Earth and its (wide) expanse: **7** By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; **8** And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;—**9** Truly he succeeds that purifies it, **10** And he fails that corrupts it!⁴⁵⁰

11 The Thamūd (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong-doing, **12** Behold, the most wicked man among them was deputed (for impiety).⁴⁵¹ **13** But the Messenger of Allah said to them: "It is a She-camel of Allah! And (bar her not from) having her

450. This is the core of the Sūrah, and it is illustrated by a reference to the story of the Thamūd in the following verses. [6153]

451. The Prophet Sālih made a certain she-camel a Sign or Symbol, a test case. "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 you shall be seized with grievous punishment" (7:73). 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 hamstringed and killed. See 26:155, and 54:27. [6155]

drink!" **14** Then they rejected him (as a false prophet), and they hamstrung her. So their Lord, on account of their crime, obliterated their traces and made them equal (in destruction, high and low)! **15** And for Him is no fear of its consequences. □

Chapter 92

AL-LAYL (The Night)

Introduction

This was one of the first Sūrahs to be revealed—within the first ten; and may be placed in date close to Sūrah 89 and Sūrah 93. Note that in all these three Sūrahs the mystery 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); **2** By the Day as it appears in glory; **3** By (the mystery of) the creation of male and female;—**4** Verily, (the ends) you strive for are diverse.

5 So he who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah), **6** And (in all sincerity) testifies to the best,—**7** We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss. **8** But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, **9** And gives the lie to the Best,—**10** We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Misery; **11** Nor will his wealth profit him when he falls headlong (into the Pit).

12 Verily We take upon Ourselves to guide, **13** And verily unto Us (belong) the End and the Beginning.

14 Therefore do I warn you of a Fire blazing fiercely; **15** None shall reach it but those most unfortunate ones, **16** Who give the lie to Truth and turn their backs.

17 But those most devoted to Allah shall be⁴⁵² removed far from it,—**18** Those who spend their wealth for increase in self-purification, **19** And have in their minds no favour from anyone for which a reward is expected in return, **20** But only the desire to seek for the Countenance of their Lord Most High;⁴⁵³ **21** And soon will they attain (complete) satisfaction. □

452. "Those most devoted to Allah": (Arabic *Atqā*) the God-fearing men who live lives of purity, and seek only for the "Face of their Lord Most High". See the verses following. [6170]

453. The definition of Righteousness, Charity, or Self-sacrifice, becomes thus highly spiritualised. The *Atqā* (those most devoted to Allah) 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—the "heaven" of the enlightened man. 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. [6174]

AL DUHĀ
(The Glorious Morning Light)

Introduction

This Sūrah is close in date to Sūrahs 89 and 92, and the imagery drawn from the contrast of Night and Day is common to all three. In this Sūrah 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 Sūrah seems to have been revealed in a dark 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 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 has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased. **4** And verily the Hereafter will be better for you than the present. **5** And soon will your Guardian-Lord give you (that with which) you shall be well-pleased.

6 Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care)? **7** And He found you wandering, and He gave you guidance. **8** And He found you in need, and made you independent. **9** Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness, **10** Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard); **11** But the Bounty of your Lord—rehearse and proclaim! □

AL-SHARH
(The Expansion)

Introduction

This short Sūrah gives a message of hope and encouragement in a time of darkness and difficulty. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet soon after the last Sūrah (*Al-Duḥā*), whose argument it supplements.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Have We not expanded you your breast?—**2** And removed from you your burden, **3** The which did gall your back?—**4** And raised high the esteem (in which) you (are held)?

5 So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief: **6** Verily, with every difficulty there is relief. **7** Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task), still labour hard, **8** And to your Lord turn (all) your attention. □

AL-TĪN
(The Fig)

Introduction

This is also a very early Sūrah. 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 Sūrah closely resembles Sūrah 103.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the Fig and the Olive, 2 And the Mount of Sinai, 3 And this City of security,—4 We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, 5 Then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low,—6 Except such as believe and do righteous deeds: for they shall have a reward unailing. 7 Then what can, after this, contradict you, as to the Judgement (to come)? 8 Is not Allah the wisest of Judges?□

AL-'ALAQ
(The Clinging Clot)

Introduction

Verses 1-5 of this Sūrah were the first direct Revelation to the Holy Prophet. The circumstances, material and psychical, in which they came, are described in the notes which should be referred to.

After that there was an interval or break (*Fatrah*), extending over some months or perhaps over a year. Sūrah 68 is usually considered to have been the next revelation in point of time. But the remainder of this Sūrah (96:6-19) 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.

This Sūrah is also called *Iqra'* (Read!).

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Proclaim! (or Read!)⁴⁵⁴ in the name of your Lord and Cherisher,
Who created—2 Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood:
3 Proclaim! And your Lord is Most Bountiful,—4 He Who taught (the
use of) the Pen,⁴⁵⁵—5 Taught man that which he knew not.

454. *Iqra'* (the Arabic word translated here "Proclaim" or "Read") may mean "read", or "proclaim aloud", the object understood as being Allah's Message. For an account of the circumstances in which this first revelation—the divine commission to preach and proclaim Allah's Message—came to the Holy Prophet, in the cave of Hirā (see the Translator's Introduction to the Book: C. 27-31). 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. [6203]

455. The symbol of a permanent revelation is the mystic Pen and the mystic Record. See note to Sūrah 68:1. [6206]

6 Nay, but man does transgress all bounds, **7** In that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient. **8** Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all).

9 See you one who forbids—**10** A votary when he (turns) to pray? **11** See you if he is on (the road of) Guidance?—**12** Or enjoins Righteousness? **13** See you if he denies (Truth) and turns away?

14 Knows he not that Allah does see? **15** Let him beware! If he desist not, We will drag him by the forelock,—**16** A lying, sinful forelock! **17** Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades): **18** We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!

19 Nay, heed him not: but bow down in adoration, and bring yourself the closer (to Allah)! □

AL-QADR
(The Night of Power or Honour)

Introduction

The chronology of this Sūrah has no significance. It is probably Makkan, though some hold that it was revealed in Madīnah.

The subject matter is the mystic Night of Power (or Honour), in which Revelation comes down to a benighted world—it may be to the wonderful Cosmos of an individual—and transforms the conflict of wrong-doing into Peace and Harmony—through the agency of the angelic host, representing the spiritual powers of the Mercy of Allah.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power:⁴⁵⁶ 2 And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? 3 The Night of Power is better than a thousand Months. 4 Therein come down the angels and the Spirit⁴⁵⁷ by Allah's permission, on every errand: 5 Peace! . . . This until the rise of Morn!□

456. Cf. 44:3. The 23rd, 25th or 27th night of Ramadān, as well as other nights, have been suggested as the Night of Power. See, however, the Introduction to this Sūrah. It is best to take this in the mystic sense, which also accords 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. [6217]

457. *The Spirit*: usually understood to be the Angel Gabriel, the Spirit of Inspiration. [6219]

AL-BAYYINAH
(The Clear Evidence)

Introduction

This Sūrah was probably an early Madīnan Sūrah, or possibly a late Makkān Sūrah.

In subject matter it carries forward the argument of the last Sūrah. The mystic 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Those who reject (Truth), among the People of the Book⁴⁵⁸ and among the Polytheists, were not going to depart (from their ways) until there should come to them Clear Evidence,—2 A messenger from Allah, rehearsing scriptures kept pure and Holy: 3 Wherein are laws (or decrees) right and straight.

4 Nor did the People of the Book make schisms, until after there came

458. The People of the Book immediately referred to are the Jews and 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, 7; see 61:6) 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 Muḥammad, they rejected him, because they really did not seek for Truth but only followed their own fancies and desires. [6221]

to them Clear Evidence.⁴⁵⁹ **5** 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 practise regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight.

6 Those who reject (Truth), among the People of the Book and among the Polytheists, will be in Hell-Fire, to dwell therein (for ever). They are the worst of creatures. **7** Those who have faith and do righteous deeds,—they are the best of creatures. **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: all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher. □

459. The Clear Evidence was the Holy Prophet himself, his life, his personality, and his teaching. [6223]

Chapter 99

AL-ZILZĀL **(The Convulsion)**

Introduction

This Sūrah is close in date to the last: it is generally referred to the early Madīnan period, though it may possibly be of the late Makkan 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 spiritual world of Justice and Truth takes its place. The symbol used is that of an earthquake which will shake our present material and phenomenal world to its very foundations. The mystic words in which the earthquake is described are remarkable for both power and graphic aptness. With that shaking all hidden mysteries will be brought to light.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When the Earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion, 2 And the Earth throws up her burdens (from within), 3 And man cries (distressed): 'What is the matter with her?'—4 On that Day will she declare her tidings: 5 For that your Lord will have given her inspiration. 6 On that Day will men proceed in companies sorted out, to be shown the Deeds that they (had done). 7 Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! 8 And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it. □

Chapter 100

AL-'ĀDIYĀT (Those That Run)

Introduction

This is one of the earlier Makkan Sūrahs. In the depth of its mystery and the rhythm and sublimity of its language and symbolism, it may be compared with Sūrah 79. Its subject matter is the irresistible nature of spiritual power and knowledge, contrasted with unregenerate man's ingratitude, pettiness, helplessness, and ignorance.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By the (Steeds) that run, with panting (breath), 2 And strike sparks of fire, 3 And push home the charge in the morning, 4 And raise the dust in clouds the while, 5 And penetrate forthwith into the midst (of the foe) *en masse*;—6 Truly Man is, to his Lord, ungrateful; 7 And to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds); 8 And violent is he in his love of wealth.

9 Does he not know,—when that which is in the graves is scattered abroad, 10 And that which is (locked up) in (human) breasts is made manifest—11 That their Lord had been well-acquainted with them, (even to) that Day? □

AL-QĀRI'AH
(The Day of Noise and Clamour)

Introduction

This Makkān Sūrah describes the Judgement 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 The (Day) of Noise and Clamour: **2** What is the (Day) of Noise and Clamour? **3** And what will explain to you what the (Day) of Noise and Clamour is? **4** (It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about, **5** And the mountains will be like carded wool. **6** Then, he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, **7** Will be in a Life of good pleasure and satisfaction. **8** But he whose balance (of good deeds) will be (found) light,—**9** Will have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. **10** And what will explain to you what this is? **11** (It is) a Fire blazing fiercely! □

AL-TAKĀTHUR
(The Piling Up)

Introduction

This probably early Makkan Sūrah 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 manpower or in other forms of megalomania, which leave no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things of life.

*** **

*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 you visit the graves. **3** But no, you soon shall know (the reality). **4** Again, you soon shall know! **5** Nay, were you to know with certainty of mind, (you would beware!) **6** You shall certainly see Hell-Fire! **7** Again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! **8** Then, shall you be questioned that Day about the joy (you indulged in!). □

Chapter 103

AL-'AŞR **(The Time)**

Introduction

This early Makkan Sūrah refers to the testimony of Time through the Ages. All history shows 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 Sūrah 95.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 By (the Token of) Time (through the Ages), 2 Verily Man is in loss,
3 Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy. □

AL-HUMAZAH
(The Scandalmonger)

Introduction

This Makkan Sūrah condemns all sorts of scandal, backbiting, and selfish hoarding of wealth, as destroying the hearts and affections of men.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Woe to every (kind of) scandalmonger and backbiter,⁴⁶⁰ **2** Who piles up wealth and lays 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, **5** And what will explain to you That which Breaks to Pieces? **6** (It is) the Fire of (the Wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze), **7** The which does mount (Right) to the Hearts: **8** It shall be made into a vault over them, **9** In columns outstretched. □

460. Three vices are here condemned in the strongest terms: (1) scandalmongering, 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. [6266]

AL-FĪL
(The Elephant)

Introduction

This early Makkan Sūrah refers to an event that happened in the year of the birth of our Holy Prophet, say about A.D. 570. Yemen was then under the rule of the Abyssinians (Christians), who had driven out the Jewish Himyarite rulers. Abrahah 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'bah. 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'bah 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. The stones produced sores and pustules on the skin, which spread like a pestilence.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 See you not how your Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant?⁴⁶¹ 2 Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? 3 And He sent against them Flights of Birds,⁴⁶² 4 Striking them with stones⁴⁶³ of baked clay. 5 Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up. □

461. These were the troops of Abrahah the Abyssinian, who invaded Makkah with a large army, in which were some elephants. See Introduction to this Sūrah. [6271]

462. The miracle consisted in the birds coming in large flights and flinging stones at the army which caused a great pestilence to arise and destroy the whole of Abrahah's army. [6272]

463. *Sijft*: see 11:82. The word also occurs at 15:74. Stones of baked clay, or hard as baked clay, are part of the miracle in the story. [6273]

QURAYSH
(The Tribe of Quraysh)

Introduction

This Makkan Sūrah may well be considered as a pendant to the last. If the Quraysh were fond of Makkah and proud of it, if they profited, by its central position and its guaranteed security, from their caravans of trade and commerce, let them be grateful, adore the One True God, and accept His Message.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraysh,⁴⁶⁴
2 Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer, —**3** Let them
adore the Lord of this House,⁴⁶⁵ **4** Who provides them with food against
hunger, and with security against fear (of danger). □

464. The Quraysh were the noblest tribe of Arabia, the tribe to which belonged the Holy Prophet himself. They had the custody of the Ka'bah, 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'bah. They owed it to God. 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, Yemen, and Abyssinia—protecting their trade journeys in all seasons. [6276]

465. The Ka'bah. [6278]

AL-MĀ'ŪN
(The Neighbourly Needs)

Introduction

This Sūrah—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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 See you one who denies the Judgement (to come)? **2** Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness), **3** And encourages not the feeding of the indigent.

4 So woe to the worshippers, **5** Who are neglectful of their prayers, **6** Those who (want but) to be seen (of men), **7** But refuse (to supply) (even) neighbourly needs. □

Chapter 108

AL-KAWTHAR (The Abundance)

Introduction

This very brief early Makkan Sūrah sums up in the single mystic word *Kawthar* (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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 To you have We granted the Fount (of Abundance). **2** Therefore to your Lord turn in prayer and sacrifice. **3** For he who hates you, *he* will be cut off (from Future Hope). □

AL-KĀFIRŪN
(Those Who Reject Faith)

Introduction

This is another early Makkan Sūrah. 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Say: O you that reject Faith! 2 I worship not that which you worship,
3 Nor will you worship that which I worship. 4 And I will not worship
that which you have been wont to worship, 5 Nor will you worship that
which I worship. 6 To you be your Way, and to me mine. □

AL-NASR
(The Help)

Introduction

This beautiful Sūrah was the last of the Sūrahs to be revealed *as a whole*, though the portion of the verse 5:3, "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 Sūrah was only a few months before the passing away of the Holy Prophet from this world, Rabi' al-Awwal, A.H. 11. The place was either the precincts of Makkah at his Farewell Pilgrimage, Dhū al-Hijjah, A.H. 10, or Madīnah 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory, **2** And you do see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds,⁴⁶⁶ **3** Celebrate the Praises of your Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: for He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy). □

466. The Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madīnah, a hunted and persecuted man. In Madīnah 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 allegiance to him collectively, and before his earthly ministry was finished, the soil was prepared for the conquest of the wide world of Islam. What was the lesson to be learnt from this little epitome of the world's history? Not man's self-glory, but humility; not 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. [6292]

AL-LAHAB
(The Flame)**Introduction**

This very early Makkan Sūrah, though it 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. The women, who are made for nobler emotions, may, if they go wrong, feed unholy rage with fiercer fuel—to their own loss. For they may twist the torturing rope round their own neck. It is a common experience that people perish by the very means by which they seek to destroy others.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Perish the hands of the Father of Flame!⁴⁶⁷ 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!—**5** A twisted rope of palm-leaf fibre round her (own) neck!□

467. Abū Lahab: "Father of Flame", was the nickname 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 Quraysh 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!" 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. [6294]

AL-IKHLĀS
(The Purity of Faith)

Introduction

This early Makkan Sūrah 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Say: He is Allah,⁴⁶⁸ the One and Only;⁴⁶⁹ 2 Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;⁴⁷⁰ 3 He begets not, nor is He begotten;⁴⁷¹ 4 And there is none like unto Him.⁴⁷²□

468. 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 59:22-24, 62:1, and 2:255. 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 before which all other things or places are mere shadows or reflections. 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. [6296]

469. This is to negate 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. [6297]

470. *Ṣamad* is difficult to translate by one word. I have used two, "Eternal" and "Absolute". The latter implies: (1) that absolute existence can only be predicted 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. [6298]

471. This is to negate the Christian idea of the godhead, "the Father", "the only-begotten Son" etc. [6299]

472. 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. [6300]

Chapter 113

AL-FALAQ (The Dawn)

Introduction

This early Makkan Sūrah 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 practise Secret Arts; **5** And from the mischief of the envious one as he practises envy. □

AL-NĀS
(Mankind)

Introduction

This early Makkan Sūrah is a pendant to the last Sūrah, 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.

*** **

*In the name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

1 Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, 2 The King (or Ruler) of Mankind, 3 The God (or judge) of Mankind,—4 From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper),—5 (The same) who whispers into the hearts of Mankind,—6 Among *Jinns* and among Men. □

INDEX

- Aaron, 6:84; 20:29-36, 90-94.
'Abasa, Sūrah 80.
 Ablutions, 4:43; 5:6.
 Abraham, fulfilled Allah's
 Commands, 2:124; and Ka'bah,
 2:125-127; 3:96, 97; religion of,
 2:130, 135; not Jew nor
 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; his
 example in dealing with
 Unbelievers, 60:4-6.
 Abū Lahab (Father of Flame),
 111:1-5.
 'Ād people, 7:65-72; 11:50-60; 25:38;
 26:123-140; 29:38; 41:15-16;
 46:21-26; 51:41-42; 54:18-21;
 69:4-8; 89:6-14.
 Adam, creation, 2:30-34; fall,
 2:35-39; 7:19-25; two sons (Abel
 and Cain), 5:27-31; tempted by
 Satan, 20:120-121.
 'Ādiyāt, Sūrah 100.
 Admonition, 87:9-13; 88:21-26.
 Adultery, 17:32; 24:2-3, 4-10.
 Ahmad, coming prophesied, 61:6.
Ahqāf, Sūrah 46.
Ahzāb, Sūrah 33.
Akala, 13:35.
A'ā, Sūrah 87.
'Alaq, Sūrah 96.
Āl Imrān, Sūrah 3.
 Allah, Cherisher, 1:2; 6:164;
 Guardian Lord, 2:21-22; as a
 Guardian on a Watchtower,
 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,
 110:1-3; refuge to Him from all
 ills and mischiefs, 113:1-5;
 114:1-6; Creator of all, 2:29,
 117; 6:73; 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; 15:23; 19:40;
 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; Forgiving, 4:25, 26; 5:74;
 15:49; 16:119; 39:53; 85:14;
 guides, 6:71, 88; 92:12; ordains
 laws and grants guidance, 87:3;
 calls to Home of Peace, 10:25.
 Allah, 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; 22:6; 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 you 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; subjection of earth and sea, 22:65; 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; 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;
- Allah 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; made 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; pearls and coral, 55:22; 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; expanded your breast, 94:1; removed your burden, 94:2; raised high your esteem, 94:4; 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;
- Allah, to Him go back all questions for decision, 3:109, 128; to Him tend all affairs, 42:53; to Him is the Goal, 53:42; to Him is the return of all, 96:8;
- Allah, His Unity, 2:163; 6:19; 16:22; 23:91-92; 37:1-5; 38:65-68; 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;
- Allah, 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; Most Forbearing, 2:225, 235, 263; 3:155; 5:101; 22:59; 64:17; Wisest of Judges, 95:8; Justice, 21:47; never 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; 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; 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;
- Allah, 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 mystery of heaven and earth, 16:77; Lord of Power, 51:58; Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests, 55:17; 70:40; 73:9; Lord of the Dawn, 113:1; Lord of the Ways of Ascent, 70:3; in heaven and 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; 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;
- Allah, 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; does provide without measure, 24:38; witnesses all things, 10:61; understands the finest mysteries, 67:14; nature of, 2:255; 3:2-3, 6, 18; 6:95-101; 25:2-3, 6; 32:2-9; 40:2-3; 43:84-85; 57:1-6; 59:22-24;

- 112:1-4; 114:1-3; close to man, 2:186; ever near, 34:50; near to man, 50:16; 56:85; compasses mankind round about, 17:60; with you wherever you 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;
- Allah, 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 Allah, turn your attention, 94:8; 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 Allah; His Command must come to pass, 16:1; His command is but a single Act, 54:50; 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 Allah, 47:32; rejecter of, described, 50:24-26; who are His servants, 25:63-76; those most devoted to Allah, 92:17-21; claim to exclusive friendship of, condemned, 62:6; "so please Allah", 18:23-24.
- An'ām*, Sūrah 6.
- Anbiyā'*, Sūrah 21.
- Anfal*, Sūrah 8.
- Angels, plea to Allah 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 Judgement, 25:25; as messengers with wings, 35:1; pray for forgiveness for all on earth, 42:5; unbelievers give female names to, 53:27; and the Spirit ascend to Allah, 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.
- Ankabūt*, Sūrah 29.
- Apes, transgressors become as, 2:65; 7:166.
- Apostates, 47:25.
- A'raf*, Sūrah 7.
- Asr*, Sūrah 103.
- Āyāt*, see Signs of Allah.
- Badr (battle of), 3:13; lessons of, 8:5-19, 42-48.
- Bakkah (Makkah), 3:96.
- Balad*, Sūrah 90.
- Balance, 42:17; 55:7-9; 57:25; 101:6-9.
- Banī Isrā'īl*, see *Isrā'*, Sūrah 17.
- Banū Nadīr, 59:2-6.
- Baptism of Allah, 2:138.
- Baqarah*, Sūrah 2.
- Barā'ah*, see *Tawbah*, Sūrah 9.
- Barzakh*, 23:100; 25:53; 55:20.
- Bayyinah*, Sūrah 98.

- Beast (of the Last Days), 27:82.
- Believers, fear Allah, 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; 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 sit where Allah'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 Allah, 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; 23:1-11, 57-61; 28:53-55; 32:15-17; 42:36-39; 49:7, 15; to be firm, 8:45; to obey and not lose heart, 8:46; not to be weary and fainthearted, 47:35; affection between their hearts, 8:63; to conquer against odds, 8:65-66; adopt exile, fight for Allah (*Muhajir*), 8:72, 74-75; help and give asylum (*Ansār*), 8:72; ask for no exemption from danger, 9:43-45; protect each other, 9:71; rejoice in their (spiritual) 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 around Throne of Allah, 40:7-9; not to despair or exult, 57:23; to make peace, 49:9; to avoid suspicion and spying, 49:12; to remember Allah in humility, 57:16; 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 Allah's work, 61:14; trust in Allah, 64:13; persecuted, but will reach Salvation, 85:6-11.
- Bequests, 2:180.
- Birds, 67:19.
- Blasphemy, monstrous, to attribute begotten son to Allah, 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; 13:39; 43:4; for each period, 13:38; on a blessed Night, 44:3-4; from Allah, 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.
- Burāj*, Sūrah 85.
- Cave of Thawr, 9:40.
- Cave, Companions of the, 18:9-22; 25-26.
- Certainty, 56:95.
- Charity, 2:110, 177, 195, 215, 219, 254, 261-274; 3:134; 30:39; 57:18; 63:10; 64:16-17; objects of, 2:273; 9:60.
- Children, 2:233; 42:49-50.
- Christ, *see* Jesus.
- Christians, 2:138-140; 5:14; nearest in love to Islam, 5:82-85.
- Cities overthrown, 69:9.
- Cleanliness, 4:43; 5:6.
- Commerce that will never fail, 35:29.
- Confederates, 33:9-20, 22-27.
- Consultation, mutual, 42:38.
- Courtesy, 4:86.
- Covetousness, 3:180; 4:32; 57:24.
- Cowardice, 3:122.
- Creation, begins and repeated, 10:4, 27:64; 29:19-20; a new, 13:5; 14:48; 17:49, 98; 21:104, 35:16; for just ends, 15:85; 16:3; 44:39; 45:22; 46:3; does obeisance to Allah, 16:48-50; not for sport, 21:16-17; of man, 23:12-14; in six Days, 7:54; 32:4; 57:4; variety in, 35:27-28; Allah commands 'Be' and it is, 2:117; 16:40, 36:82; 40:68; in true proportions, 39:5; of heaven and earth greater than creation of man, 40:57; 79:27; purpose of, 51:56-58.
- Criterion, 2:53; 8:29; 21:48-50; 25:1, 76:1.
- Ḍarī'*, 88:6.
- David, 6:84; 21:78-80; 34:10-11; 38:17-26; fights Goliath, 2:251.
- Day, 7:54; 22:47; 32:4-5; 41:12, 70:4.
- Dead will be raised to life, 6:36.
- Death, by Allah'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, 21:35; 29:57; 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 Allah, 39:53.
- Desert Arabs, 9:90-99, 101-106; 48:11-12, 16; 49:14.
- Desertion in fight, 4:89-91.
- Dhāariyāt*, Sūrah 51.
- Dhū al-Kifl, 21:85; 38:48.
- Dhū al-Nūn, 21:87-88; 68:48-50; *see also* Jonah.
- Dhū al-Qarnayn, 18:83-98.
- Differences, decision with Allah, 42:10.
- Difficulty, there is relief with every, 94:5-8.
- Discipline, 3:152; 61:4.
- 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; 47:20, 29; 74:31.
- Disputations deprecated, 29:46.
- Distribution of Charity, 2:177.
- Dahr*, *see* *Insān*, Sūrah 76; Time,

- Distribution of property taken from the enemy; *anfāl*, if after fighting, 8:41; *fay*, if without fighting, 59:7-8.
- Divorce, 2:228-232, 236-237, 241; 65:1-7; see also *Zihār*.
- Dower, 2:229, 236-237; 4:4, 19-21, 25.
- Duhā*, Sūrah 93.
- Dukhān*, Sūrah 44.
- Earth, will be changed to a different Earth, 14:48; prepared for Allah's creatures, 15:19-20; 26:7; 77:25-28; spacious is Allah's Earth, 29:56; manageable for man, 67:15; convulsion of, a symbol, 99:1-6.
- Eating (*akala*) or enjoyment, 5:66; 77:43, 46.
- Elephant, Companions of the, 105:1-5.
- Elias (Elijah), 6:85; 37:123-132.
- Elisha, 6:86; 38:48.
- Evidence, *re* transactions, 2:282-283; *re* bequests, 5:106-108; *re* charges against chaste women, 24:4-10.
- Evil, 4:51-55, 123; 10:27-30; 26:221-226; 42:36-39; comes from ourselves, but good from Allah, 4:79; makes fools of men, 6:71; recompensed justly, 6:160; 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.
- 'Face' of Allah, 2:112, 272; 6:52; 13:22; 18:28; 28:88; 30:39; 55:27.
- 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; 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; and charity, 57:7-11.
- Fajr*, Sūrah 89.
- Falaq*, Sūrah 113.
- False gods, 7:194-198, 16:20-21; 21:22, 24; 34:22-27; 41:47-48; 46:5-6; 53:19-24; 71:23-24.
- Falshood perishes, 21:18; deludes, 51:8-11.
- Famines in Makkah, 23:75, 44:10.
- Fasting, 2:184-185, 187.
- Fate, man's fate on his own neck, 17:13.
- Fath*, Sūrah 48.
- Fātihah*, Sūrah 1.
- Fatir*, Sūrah 35.
- Fear of Allah, what is, 2:2; as He should be feared, 3:102; command to People of the Book and Muslims, 4:131; piety and restraint (*Taqwā*), 47:17; unseen, 67:12; of His displeasure, 70:27; righteousness, 74:56.

- Fear as motive for reclamation, 2:74;
in signs of Allah, 17:59.
- Fear no evil, 3:175.
- Fear, none for the Righteous, 2:38; or
for Believers, 2:62; or those who
submit to Allah, 2:112; or who
spend for Allah, 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
Allah, 10:62; or for Allah's
devotees, 43:68; or for those who
remain firm in Allah, 46:13.
- Fear of men, 4:77.
- Fig, as a symbol, 95:1.
- Fighting, in cause of Allah,
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
Allah 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
fainthearted, 47:20; exemptions
from, 48:17.
- Fīl*, Sūrah 105.
- Fire, parable, 2:17-18; mystic Fire of
Moses, 20:10; Allah'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.
- Forgiveness, 2:109; 4:48, 110, 116;
7:199; 39:53; 42:5; 45:14; 53:32;
57:21; duty of Believers, 42:37,
40; 45:14; Forgiveness, by
Believers, for people of the
Book, 2:109; by Allah, for sins
other than joining gods with
Allah, 4:48, 110, 116; hold to,
and command the right, 7:199;
Allah forgives all sins, 39:53;
angels pray for forgiveness of all
beings on earth, 42:5; forgive,
even when angry, 42:37; and
reconciliation, 42:40; Believers to
forgive those who do not look
forward to the days of Allah,
45:14; Allah forgives those who
avoid great sins and shameful
deeds, 53:32; be foremost in
seeking, 57:21.
- Fraud, 83:1-6.
- Free will; no compulsion to believe,
10:99; Truth offered, to be
accepted or rejected, 18:29;
limited by Allah's Will, 74:56;
76:29-31; 81:28-29; just bias,
82:7.
- Friday Prayers, 62:9-11.
- Friends, 3:28.
- Fruits and eating; metaphorical
meaning of, 43:73; 47:15;
77:42-43.
- Furqān*, Sūrah 25.
- Gabriel, 2:97, 98; 66:4.
- Gambling, 2:219; 5:90.
- Game, not to be killed in Sacred
Precincts, 5:94-96.
- Ghāshiyah*, Sūrah 88.
- Glad Tidings to men, 2:25; 5:19;
16:89; 48:8.
- God, *see* Allah.
- 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.
Gospel, 5:47.

Haddā, Sūrah 57.

Hajj, see Pilgrimage.

Hajj, Sūrah 22.

Hāmān, 28:6, 38; 29:39; 40:36-37.

Hā Mīm, Sūrah 41.

Hands and feet will bear witness
against sinners, 36:65.

Haqqah, Sūrah 69.

Hārūt, 2:102.

Haṣhr, Sūrah 59.

Heaven, as gardens, in nearness to
Allah, rivers flowing, eternal
home, 3:15, 198; Companions
pure and holy, cool shades, 4:57;
for righteous deeds, 4:124;
truthful to profit from truth;
gardens with flowing rivers;
eternal home; Allah well pleased
with them, and they with Allah;
the great Salvation, 5:119; no
lurking sense of injury in hearts,
7:43; mercy from Allah, Good
Pleasure, Gardens, eternity,
9:21-22; Gardens, mansions,
Good Pleasure of Allah, 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; thrones; all they call for;
Peace, 36:55-58; fruits; honour
and dignity; gardens; thrones;
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
Allah, 47:15; Garden; peace and
security; more than all they wish;
in Our Presence, 50:31-35;
Garden, happiness, food and
drink; thrones of dignity;
companions; families; service,
52:17-24; Gardens and Rivers;
Assembly of Truth; Presence of
Sovereign Omnipotent, 54:54-55;
Gardens, Springs, Fruits, Carpets,
Chaste Companions, 55:46-77;
nearest to Allah; Gardens;
Thrones; Service; Fruits and
Meat; Companions; no frivolity
nor taint of Ill; Peace, 56:11-38;
nearest to Allah; Rest and
Satisfaction; Garden of Delights;
Companions; Salutation of Peace,
56:88-91; 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; Thrones;
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; in their faces the Beaming Brightness of Bliss, Pure Wine; Spring, 83:22-28; Joy; Striving; Garden; no Vanity; Spring; Throne; Cushions; Carpets, 88:8, 16; Rest and Satisfaction; coming back to Allah; well-pleased and well-pleasing to Him; among Allah's Devotees; Allah's Heaven, 89:27-30; Gardens of Eternity; Rivers; Allah well pleased with them, and they with Him, 98:8; salutation in, 10:10; 15:46; 56:91; "Indeed, enter you My Heaven!" 89:30.
- Heavens in poetic imagery, 37:5-6; 39:67; 41:12; 67:3.
- 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 *jinn*s 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; Unbelievers led in crowds; previously warned; abode of the arrogant; 39:71-72; dispute and self-recrimination, 40:47-50; to dwell for ever; punishment not lightened; overwhelming despair, 43:74; Allah 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 does it permit to endure, and naught does 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 hellfire shall be placed in full view, 79:35-39; stain on sinners' hearts; Light of Allah veiled from them; enter the Fire, 83:14-16; faces humiliated, enter the Fire; drink boiling water; food bitter, *Darf*, 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 Allah, 104:4-9; they will neither die nor live, 20:74; 87:13; to it are seven Gates, 15:44, is it eternal? 11:107; who will pass over it? 19:71; 102:6.
- Hereafter, not a falsehood, 6:31; man must meet Allah, 6:31; Home in the, 6:32; Wrath of Allah, 6:40-41; 12:107; Home of Peace, 6:127; wrong-doers will not prosper, 6:135; 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 Allah wills, 11:107-108; the arrogant and the weak in the, 14:21; wrongdoers 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, Sūrah 15.
- Houses, manners about entering, 24:27-29.
- Hūd, 7:65-72; 11:50-60; 26:123-140; 46:21-26.
- Hūd, Sūrah 11.
- Hujūrāt, Sūrah 49.
- Humazah, Sūrah 104.
- Humility, 6:42-43; 7:161; 57:16; shadows show humility to Allah, 13:15; 76:14.
- Hunayn, 9:25-26.
- Hūr, companions in heaven, 44:54; 52:20.
- Hypocrites, do not believe in Allah 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; thrown out of the way; reject Faith; renegades; to be seized and slain, 4:88-89; wait events; think of overreaching Allah; 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 Allah, 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.
- Iblīs*, (*see also* Satan), 2:34; 7:11-18; 15:31-44; 17:61-65; 18:50; 20:116-123; 38:71-85.
- Ibrāhīm, *see* Abraham.
- Ibrāhīm, Sūrah 14.
- 'Iddah, 2:228, 231-232, 234-235; 33:49; 65:4, 6-7.
- Idris, 19:56-57; 21:85.
- Ikkhlās, Sūrah 112.
- 'Illiyūn, 83:18-21.
- Immorality, 4:15-18.
- 'Imrān, family of, 3:35.
- Infidār, Sūrah 82.

- Inheritance, 2:180, 240; 4:7-9, 11-12, 19, 33, 176; 5:105-108.
- Injury, forgiveness or self-defence, 42:39-43.
- Insān*, see *Dahr*, Sūrah 76.
- Inshiqāq*, Sūrah 84.
- Inshirāh*, see *Sharh*, Sūrah 94.
- Inspiration, 17:85-87; 40:15; 42:3, 7, 51-53.
- Intercession, 6:51, 70; 10:3; 19:87; 39:44; 43:86; 53:26.
- Intoxicants, see Wine.
- Iqra'*, see *'Alaq*, Sūrah 96.
- Iram, 89:7.
- Isaac, 6:84; 21:72; 37:112-113.
- Islam, 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.
- Isma'īl, 2:125-129; 6:86; 19:54-55; 21:85.
- Isvā'*, Sūrah 17.
- 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; delivered from enemy, 20:80-82; given Book and Leaders, 32:23-25; 40:53-54; the learned among them knew the Qur'ān to be true, 26:197.
- Jacob, 2:132-133; 6:84; 19:49; 21:72.
- Jāthiyah*, Sūrah 45.
- Jesus, a righteous prophet, 6:85; birth, 3:45-47; 19:22-23; messenger 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 messenger, 4:171; 5:75; 43:59, 63-64; not Allah, 5:17, 72; sent with Gospel, 5:46; not son of Allah, 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; followers have compassion and mercy, 57:27; disciples as Allah's helpers, 61:14; as a Sign, 23:50; 43:61; prophesied Ahmad, 61:6.
- Jews, will listen to falsehood, 5:41-42; utter blasphemy, 5:64; enmity to Islam, 5:82; and Christians, 2:140; 4:153-161, 171; 5:18; See also Israel, Children of.
- Jihād*, see Fighting; Striving.
- Jinn*, Sūrah 72.
- Jinns*, 6:100; 15:27; 34:41; 46:29-32; 55:15; 72:1-15.
- Job, 6:84; 21:83-84; 38:41-44.
- John (the Baptist), see *Yahyā*.
- Jonah (or Jonas, or Yūnus), 4:163; 6:86; 10:98; 37:139-148; (Dhū al Nūn) 21:87; 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 'Azfz of Egypt, 12:21; tempted by 'Azfz'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.
- Judgement, 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 Allah alone, 33:63; 67:26; 79:42-46; is near, 54:1-5; men will be sorted out into three classes, 56:7-56; Foremost in Faith, nearest to Allah, 56:11-26; Companions of Right Hand, 56:27-40; Companions of Left Hand, 56:41-56; Lesser Judgement, 75:22-30; the Great News, 78:1-5; deniers of, 107:1-7.
- Judgement Day, full recompense only then, 3:185; earth changed, and men gathered; Book of Deeds, 18:47-49; men surge 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; trumpet will sound; sinful in terror; interval will seem short, 20:102-104; they will follow the Caller; tramp 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 Allah, 22:1-2; Trumpet is blown; Balance of Good Deeds, heavy or light, 23:101-104; Voice of Judgement, 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 Allah, 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; Wrong-doers' arrogances, 37:33-36; retribution for evil, 37:37-39; felicity for servants of Allah, 37:40-61; Tree of *Zaqqûm*, 37:62-68; wrong-doers rushed in their fathers' footsteps, 37:69-74; trumpet; all in heaven and earth will swoon; second trumpet, renewed Earth will shine with Allah'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 Allah'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; messengers 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; 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.

Jūdī, Mount, 11:44.

Jumu'ah, Sūrah 62.

Justice, 4:58, 65, 105, 135, 7:29; 16:90; 57:25.

Ka'bah, built by Abraham, 2:125-127; no killing of game, 5:94-96; asylum of security for men, 5:97.

Kāfirān, Sūrah 109.

Kāfir, Cup mixed with, 76:5.

Kahf, Sūrah 18.

Kawthar (Fount of Abundance), 108:1-2;

Kawthar, Sūrah 108.

Keys of heavens and earth, 39:63; 42:12.

Khandaq, battle, 33:9-20

Kindred, rights of, 2:83, 177 4:7-9, 36; 8:41; 16:90; 17:26; 24:22; 42:23.

Knowledge (Certainty), 102:5-7; of five things, with Allah alone, 31:34.

Lahab, see Masad, Sūrah 111.

Languages, variations in man's—and colours, 30:22.

Lāī, 53:19.

Layl, Sūrah 92.

"Leaves to stray", 14:4; 16:93; 39:23.

Life of this world, 6:32; 57:20.

Life sacred, 17:33.

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 Allah, that Believers may walk straight, 57:28; of Allah, veiled from unbelievers, 83:15.

Loan, beautiful, to Allah, 2:245; 57:11, 18; 64:17; 73:20.

Loss (spiritual), 39:15.

Lote tree, 34:16; 53:14-18; 56:28.

Luqmān, 31:12; his teaching, 31:12-19.

Luqmān, Sūrah 31.

Lūt (Lot), 6:86; 7:80-84; 11:77-83; 15:57-77; 21:74-75; 26:160-175; 27:54-58; 29:26, 28-35; 37:133-138; 51:31-37; 54:33-39; his wife disobedient, 11:81; 15:60; 66:10.

Ma'ārij, Sūrah 70.

Madīnah, 33:9-27.

Madyan, 7:85-93; 11:84-95; 29:36-37.

Magians (*Majūs*), 22:17.

Mā'idah, Sūrah 5.

Makkah, Bakkah, 3:96; mystic relation to Prophet, 90:1-4; city of security, 95:3.

Man, vicegerent on earth, 2:30; 6:165; tested by Allah, 2:155; 3:186; 47:31; 57:25; things men covet, 3:14; duty, 4:1-36; 17:23-39; 29:8-9; 30:38; 31:33; 46:15; 70:22-35; created from clay, for a term, 6:2; 15:26; called to account, 6:44; will return to Allah, 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; warned against Satan, 7:27; knows of Allah, but misled by Evil, 7:172-175; and family life, 7:189-190; limited Free Will, 10:99; behaviour in and out of trouble, 10:12; 11:9-11; 16:53-55; 17:67-70; 29:10, 65-66; 30:33-34; 31:32; 39:8, 49; 41:49-51; 42:48; 89:15-16; Allah'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; made from water, 25:54; relationships of lineage and marriage, 25:54; should submit Self to Allah, 31:22; not two hearts in one breast, 33:4; to worship Allah, 39:64-66; misfortunes, due to his deeds, 42:30; angels note his doings, 50:17-18, 23; his growth and activity depend on Allah, 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 Allah, 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; his arrogance, 75:31-40; 90:5-7; loves the fleeting world, 76:27; seduced from Allah, 82:6-12; painfully toiling on to Allah, 84:6; travels from stage to stage, 84:16-19; guilty of sins, 89:17-20; 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 Allah 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, 5:6; of adulterers, 24:3; to those who are poor, 24:32; those who cannot afford marriage, to keep themselves chaste until Allah gives them means, 24:33; Prophet's Consorts, 33:28-29, 50-52; without cohabitation, no 'iddah on divorce, 33:49; conditions for the Prophet, 33:50-52.
- Martyrs**, not dead, 2:154; 3:169; rejoice in glory, 3:170-171; receive forgiveness and mercy, 3:157-158; will receive best Provision, 22:58-59.
- Mārtūt**, 2:102.
- Mary** (mother of Jesus), birth, 3:35-37; annunciation of Jesus, 3:42-51; 4:156; 19:16-21; in childbirth, 19:23-26; brought the baby to her people, 19:27-33; guarded her chastity, 21:91; 66:12.
- Maryam**, Sūrah 19.
- Masad**, Sūrah 111.
- Mā'ūn**, Sūrah 107.
- Measure and weight**, give full, 17:35; 83:1-3.
- Miracles**, see Signs of Allah.
- Mi'rāj**, 17:1.
- Mischief on land and sea**, 30:41; of created things, 113:1-5; 114:4-6.
- Monasticism** disapproved, 57:27.
- Months**, number of, 9:35-37.
- Moses**, and his people, 2:51-61; advises Israelites, 5:23-29; guided by Allah, 6:84; and Pharaoh, 7:103-137; 10:75-92; 11:96-99; 17:101-103; 20:42-53, 56-79;

- 23:45-49; 25:35-36; 26:10-69; 28:4-21, 31-42; 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; 17:101; to the junction of the two Seas, 18:60-82; his call, 19:51-53; 20:9-56; 28:29-35; 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 mystic 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; vexed by his people, 61:5.
- Mosque (of Qubā'), 9:107-108.
- Mosques, 9:17-19, 28.
- Mountains, 20:105-107; 21:31; 31:10; 59:21; 73:14; 101:5.
- Muddaththir*, Sūrah 74.
- Muhājirs*, 59:8-9.
- Muhammad, the Holy Prophet, his mission, 7:158; 48:8-9; respect due to messenger, 2:104; 4:46; no more than a messenger, 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 Allah, 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; Allah 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; 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), 33:28-34, 50-53, 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 Allah, 48:10, 18; Messenger of Allah, 48:29; resist him not, 58:20-22; foretold by Jesus, 61:6; foretold by Moses, 46:10; his Religion to prevail over all religion, 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; 81:22-25; to adore Allah and bring himself closer to him, 96:19; rehearsing scriptures, 98:2.
- Muhammad*, Sūrah 47.

- Mujādalah*, Sūrah 58.
Mulk, Sūrah 67.
Mu'min, see Ghāfir, Sūrah 40.
Mu'minūn, Sūrah 23.
Mumtahanah, Sūrah 60.
Munafiqūn, Sūrah 63.
 Murder, 2:178-179; 5:32.
Mursalāt, Sūrah 77.
 Muslim men and women, befitting conduct, 33:35-36.
Muzzammil, Sūrah 73.
- Naba'*, Sūrah 78.
Nahl, Sūrah 16.
Najm, Sūrah 53.
 Names, most beautiful, of Allah, 7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24.
Naml, Sūrah 27.
Nās, Sūrah 114.
Nasr, Sūrah 110.
 Nature declares Allah's praises, 24:41-44; 50:6-11; shows Allah's goodness, and that His Promise is true, 78:6-16
Nāzi'āt, Sūrah 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.
Nisā', Sūrah 4.
 Noah, 6:84; 7:59-64; 10:71-73; 11:25-49; 21:76-77; 23:23-30; 25:37; 26:105-122; 29:14-15; 37:75-82; 51:46; 54:9-15; 69:11-12; 71:1-28; unrighteous son not saved, 11:45-47; wife unrighteous, 66:10.
Nūh, Sūrah 71.
Nūr, Sūrah 24.
- Oaths, 2:224-227; 5:89; 16:94; 24:22, 53; 66:2; 68:10.
 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.
 Obligations to be fulfilled, 5:1.
 Olive, as a symbol, 23:20; 24:35; 95:1;
 Orphans, 2:220; 4:2, 6, 10, 127; 17:34; guardians of, 4:6.
- Pairs, in all creatures, 13:3; 31:10; 36:36; 42:11; 43:12; 51:49; 53:45.
- Parables, man who kindled a fire, 2:17-18; rain-laden cloud, 2:19-20; goatherd, 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; 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; women 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 Allah, 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; 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; donkey, 62:5; if stream of water be lost, 67:30; People of the Garden, 68:17-33.
- Parents, kindness to, 17:23; 29:8; 31:14; 46:15-18.
- 'Partners' of Allah, a falsehood, 10:34-35, 66; 16:86; 28:62-64, 71-75; 30:40; 42:21.
- Passion or Impulse, worship of, 25:43.
- Path, *see* Way.
- Patience and perseverance, 2:45, 153; 3:186, 200; 10:109; 11:115; 16:126-127; 20:130-132; 40:55, 77; 46:35; 50:39; 70:5; 73:10-11.
- "Peace," the greeting of the Righteous, 7:46; 10:10; 14:23; 36:58.
- Peace, incline towards, 8:61.
- Peace, *Salām*, meaning, 19:62.
- Peace, *Sakīnah*, Tranquillity, 9:26, 40; 47:4, 18, 26.
- Pearls, well-guarded, 52:24; 56:23.
- Pen, 68:1; 96:4-5.
- Penalty for sin, 3:188; 6:15-16; 10:50-53; 11:101-104; 13:34; 16:88; 46:20; 70:1-3.
- Persecution with Fire, 85:1-11.
- 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 Allah, 28:38; 79:24; a man from his People confesses Faith, 40:28-44; arrogant to the Israelites, 44:17-33; wife righteous, 66:11; sin and disobedience, 69:9; 73:16; 85:17-20; 89:10-14.
- Pilgrimage, 2:158, 196-203; 3:97; 5:2; 22:26-33.
- Piling up (the good things of this world), 102:1-4.
- Pledge, everyone in pledge for his deeds, 52:21; 74:38.
- Plotters, 16:45-47.
- Poets, 26:224-227, 36:69; 69:41.
- Prayer, 1:1-7; 2:238-239; 3:8, 26-27, 147, 191-194; 4:43; 5:6; 11:114; 17:78-81; 23:118; 50:39-40; 52:48-49; 73:1-8, 20; be steadfast in, 2:110; during travel, or in danger, 4:101-104; for Unbelievers, 9:113-114; due to Allah alone, 13:14-15.
- Prayers, the five canonical, 11:144; 17:78-79; 20:130; 30:17-18; why all prayers not answered, 42:27.
- Precautions in danger, 4:71.
- Priests and anchorites, 9:31, 34.
- Prisoners of War, 8:67-71.
- Prohibited Degrees in marriage, 4:22-24.
- Property, 2:188; 4:5, 29; to be distributed equitably, 59:7-9.
- Prophets, 2:253; continuous line, 3:33-34; 4:163-165; 5:19; 6:84-90; 23:23-50; 57:26-27; covenants from, 3:81; 33:7-8; never 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; mocked, 6:10; 13:32; 15:11; 21:41; why sent, 6:48, 131; 14:4-6; had

- enemies, 6:112; 25:31; rehearse Allah's Signs, 7:35-36; sent to every people, 10:47; 16:36; had families, 13:38; 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 Messengers, meaning, 19:51 one brotherhood, 23:52-54; some named, some not, 40:78.
- Prophet's Consorts, extra responsibilities and duties, 33:28-34; who are to be, 33:50-52; respect due to them, 33:53-55; respect due to Prophet's Consorts and believing men and women, 33:56-58; Prophet's wives and daughters and all believing women to be modest, 33:59-62;
- 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 sins, 79:37-39.
- Qadr*, Sūrah 97.
- Qāf*, Sūrah 50.
- Qalam*, Sūrah 68.
- Qamar*, Sūrah 54.
- Qārī'ah*, Sūrah 101.
- Qārūn*, 28:76-82; 29:39.
- Qaṣaṣ*, Sūrah 28.
- Qiblah*, 2:142-145, 149-150.
- Qiyāmah*, Sūrah 75.
- Qubā' (Mosque), 9:107-108.
- Qur'ān, Message, 4:82; 6:19; cannot be produced by other than divine agency, 2:23; 10:38; 11:13; 17:89; verses, fundamental and allegorical, 3:7; 11:1; Allah is witness, 6:19; Allah'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; 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 Allah, 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 Allah, 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.
- Quraysh*, Sūrah 106.
- Quraysh, unbelieving, 54:43-46, 51;
appeal to, 106:1-4.
- Ra'd*, Sūrah 13.
- Rahmān*, Sūrah 55.
- Raiment of righteousness is best,
7:26.
- Rain, Allah's gift, 56:68-70.
- Ramadān, 2:185.
- Ransom, sought in vain by sinners,
3:91; 10:54; 13:18.
- Rass, Companions of the, 25:38;
50:12.
- Reality, the sure, 69:1-3.
- Record, 50:4; 69:19, 25; 83:7-9,
18-21; 84:7-15.
- 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; no
difficulties imposed in, 22:78;
standard religion is to establish
pattern according to which Allah
has made man, 30:30; same for
all prophets, 42:13-15; ancestral,
43:22-24; right way of, 45:18.
- Repentance, with amendment,
accepted, 4:54; 42:25.
- Respite for Evil, 3:178; 10:11;
12:110; 14:42-43, 44; 29:53-55;
86:15-17.
- Resurrection, 16:38-40; 17:49-52;
19:66-72; 22:5; 46:33-34; 50:3,
20-29, 41-44; 75:1-15; 79:10-12;
86:5-8.
- 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; 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'ān.
- Revile not false gods, 6:108.
- Reward, without measure, 3:27;
39:10; 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.
- Roman Empire, 30:2-5.
- Rūm*, Sūrah 30.
- Saba'*, Sūrah 34.
- Saba'*, 27:22; 34:15-21.
- Sabbath, transgressors of, 7:163-166;
made strict, 16:124.
- Sabians, 2:26, 5:69; 22:17.
- Sacrifice, 22:34-37.
- Sād*, Sūrah 38.
- Safā* and *Marwah*, 2:158.

- Saff*, Sūrah 61.
Sāffāt, Sūrah 37.
Sajdah, Sūrah 32.
 Ṣāliḥ, 7:73-79; 11:61-68; 26:141-159; 27:45-53.
Salsabīl, 76:18.
 Sāmīr, 20:85, 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, 45:17, 28.
 Seed, grows by Allah's providence, 56:63-67.
 Seven Tracts or Firmaments, 2:29; 23:17; 65:12; 67:3; 71:15.
 Shadow, allegory, 25:45.
 Shameful things to be shunned, 7:28.
Shams, Sūrah 91.
 She-camel as a Symbol to Thamūd, 7:73; 17:59; 26:155-158.
 Ship, sailing of, as a Sign, 2:164; 14:32; 16:14; 17:66; 22:65; 31:31; 5:12; 42:32-33; 45:12; 55:24.
Shu'arā', Sūrah 26.
 Shu'ayb, 7:85-93; 11:84-95; 29:36-37.
Shūrā, Sūrah 42.
 Siege of Madīnah, 33:9-27.
 Signs of Allah, 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; 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; 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; 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; 21:5-6.

- Sijjin*, 88:7-9.
- Sin, 4:30-32, 36-39, 107-112, 116;
7:100-102; 10:54; 74:43-48;
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;
Allah forgives all sins, 39:53.
- Sinai, 19:52; 95:2.
- Sinners, 23:63-77; 26:200-209;
83:29-36; their hearing, sight,
and skins will bear witness,
41:20-23.
- Slander, 9:79; 24:23; 68:11-12.
- 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 Saba', 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; enters heaven, not body,
89:27-30.
- Spendthrifts condemned, 17:26-29;
25:67.
- Spirit, the, 70:4; 78:38; 97:4; the
Holy, Allah strengthened Jesus
with, 2:87, 253; Allah's, breathed
into man, 15:29; of inspiration,
17:85-86; Allah strengthens
Believers with, 58:22.
- Spoils of war, 8:1, 41.
- Star, adjuration by, 53:1; 86:1-4.
- Stars, 7:54; 16:12, 16; 22:18;
37:6-10; 67:5; 77:8; 81:2; 82:2.
- Straight Way, 1:6; 6:153; etc.
- Striving, 9:20, 81; 22:78; 25:52;
29:69; 61:11.
- Suffering, adversity, and prosperity,
7:94-96.
- Sun, 91:1.
- Superstitions, 5:103; 6:138-140,
143-144.
- Sūrah, revelation increases faith,
9:124-127.
- Sustenance, literal and figurative,
10:59; 16:73; 19:62; 42:12;
51:57-58; 67:21.
- Suwā', 71:23.
- Tabūk, 9:40-42, 43-59, 81-99,
120-122.
- Taghābun*, Sūrah 64.
- Tā Hā*, Sūrah 20.
- Tahrīm*, Sūrah 66 .
- Takāthur*, Sūrah 102.
- Takwīn*, Sūrah 81.
- Talāq*, Sūrah 65.
- Talh* (tree), 56:29.
- Tālūt*, 2:247-249.
- Taqwā*, meaning, 2:2; 59:18-19.
- Tāriq*, Sūrah 86.
- Tasīm*, 83:27-28.
- Tatfīf*, see *Mutaffifīn*, Sūrah 83.
- Tawbah*, Sūrah 9.
- Term appointed, for every people,
7:34; 10:49; 15:4-5; 16:61;
20:129.
- Testing, by Allah, 3:154, 34:21.
- Thamūd, 7:73-79; 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.
- Theft, punishment, 5:38-39.
- Time, 103:1-3.
- Tīm*, Sūrah 95.
- Traffic and Trade, 4:29.
- Travel through the earth, 6:11; 22:46;
27:69; 29:20-22; 30:9, 42; 35:44;
40:21, 82; 47:10.
- Treasures of Allah, 6:50; 6:59; 11:31;

- 15:21.
 Treaties, 9:1-4, 7-10.
 Trials, 2:214-218.
 Trumpet, on Day of Judgement, 6:73;
 23:101; 39:68; 69:13.
 Trust offered to Heavens, Earth, and
 Mountains, undertaken by Man,
 33:72-73.
 Trusts, 4:58; 8:27.
 Truth, 23:70-71, 90; Rejecters of,
 77:1-50; 98:1-6.
 Tubba', 44:37.
Tūr, 5:52.
- Uhud, lessons of, 3:121-128,
 140-180.
Ummah, 2:143-144.
'Umrah, 2:196.
 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 Judgement,
 34:31-33; self-glory and
 separatism, 38:2-14; dispute
 about the Signs of Allah, 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.
 Unity, 2:163; 6:19; 112:1-4.
 Usury, 2:275-276; 2:278-280; 3:130.
'Uzayr, 9:30.
'Uzzā, 53:19.
- Vain discourse to be avoided, 6:68.
 Vicegerent, Allah's, on earth, 2:30.
 Victory, uses of, 48:1-3; 110:1-3;
 through help of Allah, 61:13.
 Virtues, *see* Righteousness, *and*
 Believers.
- Wadd, 71:23.
 "Wait you, we too shall wait," 9:52;
 10:102; 11:122; 20:135; 44:59;
 52:31.
Wāqī'ah, *Sūrah* 56.
 War against Allah, 5:33-34.
 Warning before destruction, 17:16.
 Waste not, 6:141; 7:31.
 Water, animals created from, 21:30;
 24:45; 25:54; two bodies of
 flowing water, 25:53; 18:60;
 35:12; 55:19-20; Allah's Throne
 over the waters, 11:7; circulation
 of, 23:18.
 Way, the, 1:6; 42:52-53; 90:10-18;
 etc.
 Wealth, hoarding condemned,
 104:2-3.
 "We" and "Me": transition between
 the first person plural and
 singular in reference to Allah:
 2:38; 2:150-151; 31:10, 11;
 68:44; 70:40.
 Wicked, their faces headlong in the
 fire, 27:90; 67:22.
 Widows, 2:234-235, 240.

- Will of Allah, 10:99-100; 81:29; 82:8.
- Winds, like heralds of glad tidings, 7:57-58; 15:22; 30:46, 48, 51.
- Wine, 2:219; 5:90; heavenly wine, 47:15; 76:21; 83:25.
- Witnesses, among men, 2:143; 22:78.
- Woman, wronged, plea accepted, 58:1-2.
- Women, 2:222-223; 4:15, 19-22, 34, 127; to be revered, 4:1; false charges against, 24:4-5, 11-20; 24:23-26; modesty, 24:30-31; believing, refugees, 60:10-12.
- Wood, Companions of the, 15:78; 26:176-191.
- 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.
- Writing, for contracts, 2:282.
- Wrong-doers, 11:18-22, 101-104, 116-117; 39:47; *See also* Unbelievers.
- Yaghūth, 71:23.
- Yahyā (John the Baptist), birth, 3:39; 6:85; his character and position, 19:12-15; revered Allah, 21:90.
- Ya Sūn, Sūrah 36.
- Ya'ūq, 71:23.
- Yūnus, Sūrah 10; *see also* Jonah.
- Yūsuf, Sūrah 12; *see also* Joseph.
- Zayd the freedman, 33:37-38.
- Zakariya, 3:37-41; 6:85; 19:2-11; 21:90.
- Zakāh (Regular Charity), 2:43, 110, 177, 277; 4:162; 5:55.
- Zanjablī, 76:17.
- Zaqqūm, 37:62-66; 44:43-46; 56:52.
- Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh, 33:37-38.
- Zihār, 33:4; 58:2-4.
- Zalzalah, Sūrah 99.
- Zodiacal Signs, 15:16.
- Zukhruf, Sūrah 43.
- Zumar, Sūrah 39.

