

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Yā-Sīn*, 36.

See Introduction to S. xxxiv. This particular Sūra is devoted to the holy Prophet and the Revelation which he brought. The Abbreviated Letters *Yā-Sīn* are usually construed as a title of the holy Prophet. See Appendix I after S. ii. This Sūra is considered to be “the heart of the Qur-ān”, as it concerns the central figure in the teaching of Islam and the central doctrine of Revelation and the Hereafter. As referring to the Hereafter, it is appropriately read at the death-bed.

In chronology it belongs to the middle or early Makkan period.

In S. xxxvii. 130 (a cognate Sūra) occurs the word *Il-yāsīn*: see n. 4115-A.

*Summary.*—The Qur-ān is full of wisdom, and those are unfortunate who cannot profit by it: Parable of the City that defied—all but one—the Messengers of Grace and Mercy (xxxvi. 1-32).

Various Signs of Allah in nature and Revelation (xxxvi. 33-50).

The Resurrection and the Hereafter (xxxvi. 51-83).

*Ya-Sīn (being Abbreviated Letters).*

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

1. Ya - Sīn.<sup>3943</sup>
2. By the Qur-ān,<sup>3944</sup>  
Full of Wisdom,-
3. Thou art indeed  
One of the messengers,
4. On a Straight Way.
5. (It is a Revelation)<sup>3945</sup>  
Sent down by (Him),  
The Exalted in Might,  
Most Merciful,
6. In order that thou mayest  
Warn a people,  
Whose fathers were  
Not warned,<sup>3946</sup> and who  
Therefore remain heedless  
(Of the Signs of Allah).

سُورَةُ يٰسٖنَ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يٰسٖ

وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

نَزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ

لِنُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أُنْذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غَافِلُونَ

3943. Some Commentators take *Yā* to be the vocative particle, 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. Muḥammad the Prophet of Allah. For this Sūra deals mainly with the holy Prophet and his Message. But no dogmatic assertion can be made about the Abbreviated Letters, for which see Appendix I, following S. ii. *Yā-Sīn* is usually treated as a title of the holy Prophet.

3944. The best credentials of the holy Prophet are: (1) the revelation which he brought ("the Qur-ān"), and the heroic unselfish life which he led ("on a Straight Way"). The appeal is therefore made on the testimony of these two facts.

3945. The Revelation again is characterised by two attributes which we find most helpful in contemplating about Allah. It has force and power: for Allah is Exalted in Might and able to enforce His Will. And it brings a Message of hope and mercy; for Allah is Most Merciful. By its characteristics we know that the Qur-ān is from Allah.

3946. The Quraish had received no Prophet before, and therefore one of themselves was made the vehicle for the universal Message to the whole world.

7. The Word is proved true<sup>3947</sup>  
Against the greater part of them:  
For they do not believe.

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧﴾

8. We have put yokes<sup>3948</sup>  
Round their necks  
Right up to their chins,  
So that they cannot bow  
Their heads.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْ أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ  
فَهُمْ مُّقْمَحُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9. And We have put  
A bar in front of them<sup>3949</sup>  
And a bar behind them,  
And further, We have  
Covered them up; so that  
They cannot see.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا  
فَأَعْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

10. The same is to them<sup>3950</sup>  
Whether thou admonish them  
Or thou do not admonish  
Them: they will not believe.

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ  
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

3947. Cf. vii. 30, and n. 1012; also xvii. 16, and n. 2193. If people deliberately and obstinately refuse "to believe", i.e., to receive guidance and admonition, the result must be that Allah's grace and mercy are withdrawn from them. Their own perversity inevitably blocks up all channels for their correction.

3948. Man's misdeeds inevitably call forth the operation of Allah's Law. The result of man's wilful disobedience is now described in a series of metaphors. (1) Refusal of Allah's Light means less and less freedom of action for man: the yoke of sin is fastened round man's neck, and it gets more and more tightened, right up to the chin. (2) The head is forced up and kept in a stiff position, so that the mind becomes befogged. Moral obliquity taints the intellect. According to the Sanskrit proverb, "When destruction comes near, understanding is turned upside down." According to the Latin proverb, "Whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes demented." In other words, iniquity not only is folly, but leads deeper and deeper into folly, narrowness of vision, and blindness to the finer things of life. (3) This state of deprivation of Grace leads to such a decline in spiritual vitality that the victim can neither progress nor turn back, as explained in the next verse.

3949. Their retreat is cut off and their progress is impossible. Further the Light that should come from above is cut off, so that they become totally devoid of any hope, and the last gleam of any spiritual understanding is extinguished in them.

3950. When the stage just described is reached, revelation or spiritual teaching ceases to have any value for them. Why then preach? The answer is given in the verses following.

11. Thou canst but admonish<sup>3951</sup>

Such a one as follows  
The Message and fears  
The Most Gracious, unseen;<sup>3952</sup>  
Give such a one, therefore,<sup>3953</sup>  
Good tidings, of Forgiveness  
And a Reward most generous.

إِنَّمَا نُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ  
بِالْغَيْبِ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾

12. Verily We shall give life<sup>3954</sup>

To the dead, and We record  
That which they send before  
And that which they leave<sup>3955</sup>  
Behind, and of all things  
Have We taken account.  
In a clear Book<sup>3956</sup>  
(Of evidence).

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا  
وَأَثَرَهُمْ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

3951. Cf. xxxv. 18. As far as those are concerned, who have obstinately delivered themselves to evil, the preaching of Allah's Message has no appeal, because their own will shuts them out. But there are others who are anxious to hear Allah's Message and receive Allah's grace. They love Allah and fear to offend against His holy Law, and their fear is not merely superficial but deep-seated: for while they do not yet see Allah, nor do other people see them, they have the same sense of Allah's presence as if they saw Him, and their religion is not a mere pose, "to be seen of men".

3952. See n. 3902 to xxxv. 18. *Unseen* is here adverbial: their reverence for Allah is unaffected by the fact that they do not see Him, or that other people do not observe them, because their attitude arises out of a genuine love for Allah.

3953. To such persons the Message of Allah comes as a gospel or good news: because it shows them the way of forgiveness for anything wrong in their past, and it gives them the promise of a full reward in the future,—generous beyond any deserts of their own, but arising out of Allah's unbounded Bounty.

3954. All this is possible, because there is the assurance of a Hereafter, in which Allah will be all-in-all, and evil will no longer bestride the world, as the term of its respite will have expired.

3955. Our deeds, good and bad, go to Allah before us. They will of course be brought to our account; but our account will also be swelled by the example we left behind us and the consequences of our deeds, that will come into play or continue to operate after our earthly life has ceased. Our moral and spiritual responsibility is therefore much wider than as affects our own person.

3956. Cf. ii. 124 and n. 124. All our account will be exactly preserved as in a book of record.

## SECTION 2.

13. Set forth to them,  
By way of a parable,  
The (story of) the Companions<sup>3957</sup>  
Of the City. Behold,  
There came messengers to it.

وَأَضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا  
الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. When We (first) sent  
To them two messengers,  
They rejected them:  
But We strengthened them<sup>3958</sup>  
With a third: they said,  
"Truly, we have been sent  
On a mission to you."

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ  
فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. The (people) said: "Ye are  
Only men like ourselves;"<sup>3959</sup>

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ  
الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

3957. Many of the classical Commentators have supposed that the City referred to was Antioch. Now Antioch was one of the most important cities in North Syria in the first century of the Christian era. It was a Greek city founded by Seleucus Nicator, one of the successors of Alexander, about 300 B.C. in memory of his father Antiochus. It was close to the sea, and had its sea-port at Seleucia. Soon after Christ his disciples successfully preached there, and they "were called Christians first in Antioch": Acts, xi. 26. It afterwards became the seat of a most important Bishopric of the Christian Church. In the story told here "by way of a parable", the City rejected the Message, and the City was destroyed: xxxvi. 29. Following Ibn Kathīr, I reject the identification with Antioch decisively. No name, or period, or place is mentioned in the text. The significance of the story is in the lessons to be derived from it as a parable, for which see the next note. That is independent of name, time, or place.

3958. Allah sends His messengers or teachers of Truth by ones and twos, and where the opposition is great and He considers it necessary, he supports them with others. Their mission is divine, but they do not claim to be more than men. This is used by the unjust and the ungodly as if it were a reproach, whereas it should commend them to men, for mankind is glorified by such commission and by Allah's Self-revelation. The Message is clearly expressed in human language, but because it exposes all evil, men think it unlucky, as it checks their selfishness. It is often the poorest and most despised of mankind, from the outskirts or "farthest parts of the City", that accept the Message and are willing to work and die for it. The stiff-necked resist and accomplish their own destruction.

3959. Cf. Acts, xiv. 15, where Paul and Barnabas say, in the city of Lystra near the modern Konia, "We also are men with like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities..."

And The Most Gracious  
Sends no sort of revelation:<sup>3960</sup>  
Ye do nothing but lie."

16. They said: "Our Lord doth  
Know that we have been sent  
On a mission to you:<sup>3961</sup>

17. "And our duty is only  
To deliver the clear Message."<sup>3962</sup>

18. The (people) said: "For us,  
We augur an evil omen<sup>3963</sup>  
From you: if ye desist not,  
We will certainly stone you,  
And a grievous punishment  
Indeed will be inflicted  
On you by us."

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَلَّمْنَا إِنْ أَنْتَ إِلَّا الْيَمِينُ لَمْرَسَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٧﴾

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِنْ لَمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ  
وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٨﴾

3960. They not only reject the mission of the particular messengers, but they deny the possibility of Allah's sending such mission. Note how they convict themselves of inconsistency by using Allah's name "Most Gracious", even though they may mean it ironically!

3961. Just as a Messenger whose credentials are doubted can refer to the authority granted by his Principal, as the highest proof of his mission, so these messengers of Allah invoke the authority of Allah in proof of their mission. In effect they say: "The knowledge of Allah is perfect, and He knows that our mission is from Him; if you do not, it is your own misfortune."

3962. Then they proceed to explain what their mission is. It is not to force them but to convince them. It is to proclaim openly and clearly Allah's Law, which they were breaking,--to denounce their sins and to show them the better path. If they were obstinate, it was their own loss. If they were rebellious against Allah, the punishment rested with Allah.

3963. *Ṭāir* means a bird. Like the Roman augurs, the Arabs had a superstition about deriving omens from birds. Cf. the English word "*auspicious*", from the Latin *avis*, a bird, and *specio*, I see. From *Ṭāir* (bird) came *ta-ṭaiyara*, or *ittaiyara*, to draw evil omens. Because the prophets of Allah denounced evil, the evil-doers thought that they brought ill-luck to them. As a matter of fact any evil that happened to them was the result of their own ill-deeds. Cf. vii. 131, where the Egyptians ascribed their calamities to the ill-luck brought by Moses: and xxvii. 47, where the Thamūd ascribed ill-luck to the preaching of Ṣāliḥ.

19. They said: "Your evil omens  
Are with yourselves;<sup>3964</sup>  
(Deem ye this an evil omen).  
If ye are admonished?  
Nay, but ye are a people  
Transgressing all bounds!"<sup>3965</sup>

قَالُوا طَائِفُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ ذُكِّرْتُمْ  
بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. Then there came running,  
From the farthest part  
Of the City, a man,<sup>3966</sup>  
Saying, "O my People!  
Obey the messengers:

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ  
يَسْعَى قَالَ يَنْفَوْرُ اتَّبِعُوا أَمْرَ رَسُولِي ﴿٢٠﴾

21. "Obey those who ask  
No reward of you  
(For themselves), and who are  
Themselves guided."<sup>3967</sup>

اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْئَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. "Why should not I  
Serve Him Who created me,<sup>3968</sup>  
And to Whom ye shall  
(All) be brought back.

وَمَا لِيَ لَا أَعْبُدَ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَالَّذِي تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

3964. 'What ye call omens arise from your own ill-deeds. Do you suppose that a man who comes to warn you and teach you the better way brings you ill-luck? Fie upon you!'

3965. To call Good evil and accuse of falsehood men of truth who come unselfishly to bring the message of the beneficent Mercy of Allah, is the very height of extravagance and transgression.

3966. While the wealthy, influential, and fashionable men in the City were doubtful of Allah's providence and superstitiously believed in Chance and evil omens, the Truth was seen by a man in the outskirts of the City, a man held in low esteem by the arrogant. He had believed, and he wanted his City to believe. So, in Arabia, when the arrogant chiefs of the Quraish exiled the holy Prophet, it was men from Madinah and from the outskirts, who welcomed him, believed in him, and supported his mission in every way.

3967. Prophets do not seek their own advantage. They serve Allah and humanity. Their hope lies in the good pleasure of Allah, to Whose service they are devoted. Cf. x. 72; xii. 104; etc.

3968. The argument throughout is that of intense personal conviction for the individual himself, coupled with an appeal to his people to follow that conviction and get the benefit of the spiritual satisfaction which he has himself achieved. He says in effect: 'how is it possible for me to do otherwise than to serve and adore my Maker? I shall return to Him, and so will you, and all this applies to you as much as to me.' Note how effective is the transition from the personal experience to the collective appeal.

23. "Shall I take (other) gods  
Besides Him? If The  
Most Gracious should  
Intend some adversity for me,<sup>3969</sup>  
Of no use whatever  
Will be their intercession  
For me, nor can they  
Deliver me.

ءَاتَخِذْ مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً إِن يُرِدْنَ  
الرَّحْمَنُ بَضْرًا لَّا تَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ  
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَنْقُذُونِ ﴿٣٦﴾

24. "I would indeed, then  
Be in manifest Error.

إِنِّي إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

25. "For me, I have faith  
In the Lord of you (all):<sup>3970</sup>  
Listen, then, to me!"

إِنِّي ءَامَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ ﴿٣٨﴾

26. It was said: "Enter thou<sup>3971</sup>  
The Garden." He said:  
"Ah me! Would that  
My People knew (what I know)!—

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَلَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

27. "From That my Lord<sup>3972</sup>  
Has granted me Forgiveness

بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

3969. The next plea is that for exclusive service to Allah. 'Suppose it were proper to worship other gods—Mammon, Self, or imaginary deities set up as idols,—yet of what benefit would that be? All power is in Allah. In His universal Plan, He may think fit to give me some sorrow or punishment: would these subordinate deities be able to help me or intercede for me with Him? Not at all. What use would they be? In fact I should obviously be going astray,—wandering from the true Path.'

3970. Again a transition from the assured personal conviction to the appeal to all to profit by the speaker's experience. 'I have found the fullest satisfaction for my soul in Allah. He is my God, but He is your God also. My experience can be yours also. Will you not follow my advice, and prove for yourselves that the Lord is indeed good?'

3971. This godly and righteous man entered into the Garden. Perhaps it is implied that he suffered martyrdom. But even then his thoughts were always with his People. He regretted their obstinacy and want of understanding, and wished even then that they might repent and obtain salvation, but they were obdurate and suffered for their sins as we learn from verses 28-29 below.

3972. This man was just a simple honest soul, but he heard and obeyed the call of the prophets and obtained his spiritual desire for himself and did best to obtain salvation for his people. For he loved his people and respected his ancestral traditions as far as they were good, but had no hesitation in accepting the new Light when it came to him. All his past was forgiven him and he was raised to dignity and honour in the Kingdom of Heaven.



And has enrolled me  
Among those held in honour!"

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,<sup>3973</sup>  
And behold! they were  
(like ashes)<sup>3974</sup>  
Quenched and silent.

30. Ah! alas for the servants!  
There comes not a messenger  
To them but they mock him!<sup>3975</sup>

31. See they not how many  
Generations before them  
We destroyed? Not to them<sup>3976</sup>  
Will they return:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ جُنْدٍ  
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُزِلِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا الصَّيْحَةُ وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ خَمِيدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

يَحْسِرَةٌ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ  
مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

الَّذِينَ رَأَوْا كَمَا هَلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ  
أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

3973. Allah's Justice or Punishment does not necessarily come with pomp and circumstance, nor have the forces of human evil or wickedness the power to require the exertion of mighty spiritual forces to subdue them. A single mighty Blast—either the rumbling of an earthquake, or a great and violent wind—was sufficient in this case. Cf. xi. 67 and n. 1561 (which describes the fate of the Thamūd; also. n. 3463 to xxix. 40).

3974. Cf. xxi. 15. They had made a great deal of noise in their time, but they were reduced to silence, like spent ashes.

3975. Cf. vi. 10 and many other passages of similar import. Ignorant men mock at Allah's prophets, or any one who takes Religion seriously. But they do not reflect that such levity reacts on themselves. Their own lives are ruined and they cease to count. If they study history, they will see that countless generations were destroyed before them because they did not take Truth seriously and undermined the very basis of their individual and collective existence.

*The servants* is here equivalent to "men". Allah regrets the folly of men, especially as He cherishes them as His own servants.

3976. *Not to them will they return*. What do the two pronouns *them* and *they* refer to? Commentators and translators have construed them differently, and some of them evade the question. To my mind the best construction seems to be: the generations which we have destroyed before the people addressed ('do *they* not see?') will not be restored =

32. But each one of them  
All-will be brought  
Before Us (for judgment).

وَأَن كُلًّا لَّمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

### SECTION 3.

33. A Sign for them  
Is the earth that is dead:<sup>3977</sup>  
We do give it life,  
And produce grain therefrom,  
Of which ye do eat.
34. And We produce therein  
Orchards with date-palms<sup>3978</sup>  
And vines, and We cause  
Springs to gush forth therein:
35. That they may enjoy<sup>3979</sup>  
The fruits of this (artistry):  
It was not their hands<sup>3980</sup>  
That made this:  
Will they not then give thanks?

وَأَيُّ آيَةٍ لَّهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا  
وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ  
وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجْرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٣٤﴾

لِيَأْكُلُوا مِن ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ  
أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

= to the people addressed: *generations* (*qurūn*) standing for the periods of prosperity and good fortune enjoyed by the ancestors. They have all been wiped out: they will never be restored, but all people will be brought before the Judgment-seat for giving an account of their deeds.

3977. Lest any one should say, 'if they are destroyed, how can they be brought before the Judgment-seat' a symbol is pointed to. The earth is to all intents and purposes dead in the winter, but Allah revives it in the spring. Cf. ii. 164, xxx. 19, and many other passages to that effect.

3978. Date-palms and vines stand as symbols for fruit-trees of all kinds, these being the characteristic fruits of Arabia. Grain was mentioned in the last verse; fruit is mentioned now. All that is necessary for food and the satisfaction of the choicest palate is produced from what looks like inert soil, fertilised by rain and springs. Here is wonderful evidence of the artistry and providence of Allah.

3979. Literally, *eat* (*akala*). Cf. vii. 19, n. 1004 and v. 69, n. 776. The same wide meaning of profit, satisfaction, and enjoyment may be attached to the word "eat" in verse 33 above.

3980. Man may till the soil and sow the seed, but the productive forces of nature were not made by man's hands. They are the handiwork and artistry of Allah, and are evidence of Allah's providence for His creatures. See n. 3978 above.

36. Glory to Allah, Who created  
In pairs all things that<sup>3981</sup>  
The earth produces, as well as  
Their own (human) kind  
And (other) things of which  
They have no knowledge.

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ  
الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. And a Sign for them  
Is the Night: We withdraw<sup>3982</sup>  
Therefrom the Day, and behold  
They are plunged in darkness;

وَعَايَةُ لَهُمْ اللَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ  
فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. And the Sun  
Runs unto a resting place,<sup>3983</sup>  
For him: that is  
The decree of (Him),  
The Exalted in Might,  
The All-Knowing.

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا  
ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. And the Moon,-  
We have measured for her<sup>3984</sup>

وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرَتْهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ  
الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾

3981. The mystery of sex runs through all creation,-in man, in animal life, in vegetable life, and possibly in other things of which we have no knowledge. Then there are pairs of opposite forces in nature, e.g., positive and negative electricity, etc. The atom itself consists of a positively charged nucleus or proton, surrounded by negatively charged electrons. The constitution of matter itself is thus referred to pairs of opposite energies.

3982. "Withdrawing the Day from the Night" is a striking phrase and very apt. The Day or the Light is the positive thing. The Night or Darkness is merely negative. We cannot withdraw the negative. But if we withdraw the real thing, the positive, which filled the void, nothing is left but the void. The whole of this section deals with Signs or Symbols,-things in the physical world around us, from which we can learn the deepest spiritual truths if we earnestly apply ourselves to them.

3983. *Mustaqarr* may mean: (1) a limit of time, a period determined, as in vi. 67, or (2) a place of rest or quiescence; or (3) a dwelling place, as in ii. 36. I think the first meaning is best applicable here; but some Commentators take the second meaning. In that case the simile would be that of the sun running a race while he is visible to us, and taking a rest during the night to prepare himself to renew his race the following day. His stay with the antipodes appears to us as his period of rest.

3984. The lunar stations are the 28 divisions of the Zodiac, which are supposed to mark the daily course of the moon in the heavens from the time of the new moon to the time when the moon fades away in her "inter-lunar swoon", an expressive phrase coined by the poet Shelley.

Stations (to traverse)  
Till she returns  
Like the old (and withered)  
Lower part of a date-stalk.<sup>3985</sup>

40. It is not permitted  
To the Sun to catch up<sup>3986</sup>  
The Moon, nor can  
The Night outstrip the Day:  
Each (just) swims along<sup>3987</sup>  
In (its own) orbit  
(According to Law).

41. And a Sign for them  
Is that We bore<sup>3988</sup>  
Their race (through the Flood)  
In the loaded Ark;

لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الْبَيْتُ  
سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَأَيُّ لَئِمَّةٍ أَنَا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ  
الْمَسْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

3985. 'Urjūn: a raceme of dates or of a date-palm; or the base or lower part of the raceme. When it becomes old, it becomes yellow, dry, and withered, and curves up like a sickle. Hence the comparison with the sickle-like appearance of the new moon. The moon runs through all her phases, increasing and decreasing, until she disappears, and then reappears as a little thin curve.

3986. Though the sun and the moon both traverse the belt of the Zodiac, and their motions are different, they never catch up each other. When the sun and the moon are on the same side and on a line with the earth there is a solar eclipse, and when on opposite side in a line, there is a lunar eclipse, but there is no clash. Their Laws are fixed by Allah, and form the subject of study in astronomy. Similarly Night and Day follow each other, but being opposites cannot coincide, a fit emblem of the opposition of Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood: see also n. 3982 above.

3987. Cf. xxi. 33, and n. 2695. How beautifully the rounded courses of the planets and heavenly bodies are described, "swimming" through space, with perfectly smooth motion! As Shakespeare expresses it, each "in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims!"

3988. Besides the beauty of the Night, with the stars and the planets "swimming" in their rounded courses according to perfect Law, suggesting both symmetry and harmony, there are other Signs touching closely the life of man himself, projected through Time, in the past history of his race and in his own personal experience. The past history of his race takes us to the story of the Flood, which is symbolical of Allah's justice and mercy. Noah's Ark was a "Sign to all People": xxix. 15. Man's own personal experience is appealed to in every ship afloat: see next note.

42. And We have created  
For them similar (vessels)<sup>3989</sup>  
On which they ride.

وَحَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. If it were Our Will,<sup>3990</sup>  
We could drown them:  
Then would there be  
No helper (to hear  
Their cry), nor could  
They be delivered,

وَلِنْ نَّسَأِفْهُمْ فَلَأَصْرَحْهُمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يُنْقَذُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. Except by way of Mercy  
From Us, and by way  
Of (worldly) convenience  
(To serve them) for a time.<sup>3991</sup>

إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. When they are told,  
"Fear ye that which is"<sup>3992</sup>  
Before you and that which  
Will be after you, in order  
That ye may receive Mercy,"  
(They turn back).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

3989. The stately ships sailing through the seas, heavier than air, yet carrying man and his goods safely and smoothly across the waters, are another Sign for man. Ships are not mentioned, but (vessels) like the Ark: they would cover all kinds of sea-craft, but also the modern aircraft, which "swims" through air instead of through water.

3990. Were it not that Allah gives man the intelligence and ingenuity to construct and manage sea-craft and air-craft, the natural laws of gravity would lead to the destruction of any who attempted to pass through sea or air. It is the gift (mercy) of Allah that saves him.

3991. Cf. xvi. 80. Allah has given man all these wonderful things in nature and utilities produced by the skill and intelligence which Allah has given to man. Had it not been for these gifts, man's life would have been precarious on sea or land or in the air. It is only Allah's Mercy that saves man from destruction for man's own follies, and that saving or the enjoyment of these utilities and conveniences he should not consider as eternal: they are only given for a time, in this life of probation.

3992. Man should consider and beware of the consequences of his past, and guard against the consequences in his future. The present is only a fleeting moment poised between the past and the future, and gone even while it is being mentioned or thought about. Man should review his whole life and prepare for the Hereafter. If he does so, Allah is Merciful: He will forgive, and give strength for a better and higher life in the future. But this kind of teaching does not suit those steeped in this ephemeral life. They are bored, and turn away from it, to their own loss.

46. Not a Sign comes to them  
From among the Signs<sup>3993</sup>  
Of their Lord, but they  
Turn away therefrom.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ  
رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. And when they are told,  
"Spend ye of (the bounties)"<sup>3994</sup>  
With which Allah  
Has provided you," the Unbelievers  
Say to those who believe:  
"Shall we then feed those  
Whom, if Allah had so willed,<sup>3995</sup>  
He would have fed, (Himself)?-  
Ye are in nothing  
But manifest error."

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُكُمْ مِنْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ  
أَطْعَمَهُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. Further, they say, "When  
Will this promise (come to pass),<sup>3996</sup>  
If what ye say is true?"

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

3993. The Signs of Allah are many, in His great world,-in nature, in the heart of man, and in the Revelation sent through His messengers. They turn away from all of them, as a man who has ruined his eyesight turns away from the light.

3994. To selfish men, the good may make an appeal, and say: "Look! Allah has given you wealth, or influence, or knowledge, or talent. Why not spend some of it in charity, i.e., for the good of your fellow-creatures?" But the selfish only think of themselves and laugh such teaching to scorn.

3995. They are too full of themselves to have a corner in their hearts for others. "If" they say, "Allah gave them nothing, why should we?" There is arrogance in this as well as blasphemy: arrogance in thinking that they are favoured because of their merits, and blasphemy in laying the blame of other people's misfortunes on Allah. They further try to turn the tables on the Believers by pretending that the Believers are entirely on a wrong track. They forget that all men are on probation and trial: they hold their gifts on trust: those apparently less favoured, in that they have fewer of this world's goods, may be really more fortunate, because they are learning patience, self-reliance, and the true value of things ephemeral which is apt to be very much exaggerated in men's eyes.

3996. In addition to the arrogance and blasphemy referred to in the last note, they not only refuse Faith, but they taunt the men of Faith as if the men of Faith were dealing in falsehood: "If there is a Hereafter, tell us when it will be!" The answer is: "It will come sooner than you expect: you will yet be disputing about things of Faith and neglecting your opportunities in Life, when the Hour will sound, and you will have no time even to make your dispositions in this life: you will be cut off from everyone whom you thought to be near and dear to you, or able to help you!"

49. They will not (have  
To) wait for aught  
But a single Blast:  
It will seize them while  
They are yet disputing  
Among themselves!

مَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا الصَّيْحَةَ وَجِدَةً تَأْخُذُهُمْ  
وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50. No (chance) will they then  
Have, by will, to dispose  
(Of their affairs), nor  
To return to their own people!

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ  
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

#### SECTION 4.

51. The trumpet shall be<sup>3997</sup>  
Sounded, when behold!  
From the sepulchres (men)  
Will rush forth  
To their Lord!

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ  
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52. They will say: "Ah!  
Woe unto us! Who  
Hath raised us up  
From our beds of repose?"...<sup>3998</sup>  
(A voice will say):  
"This is what The  
Most Gracious had promised.  
And true was the word  
Of the messengers!"

قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ بَعْثِنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدٍ نَاهُذَا مَا وَعَدَ  
الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

3997. Traditionally, the angel who will sound the Trumpet is Isrāfīl, but the name does not occur in the Qur-ān. The Trumpet is mentioned in many places: e.g., vi. 73; lxxviii. 18, etc.

3998. The dead will rise as in a stupor, and they will be confused in the new conditions! They will gradually regain their memory and their personality. They will be reminded that Allah in His grace and mercy had already announced the Hereafter in their probationary lives, and the word of Allah's messengers, which then seemed so strange and remote, was true and was now being fulfilled!

53. It will be no more  
Than a single Blast,<sup>3999</sup>  
When lo! they will all  
Be brought up before Us!

إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ  
جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. Then, on that Day,  
Not a soul will be  
Wronged in the least,<sup>4000</sup>  
And ye shall but  
Be repaid the meeds  
Of your past Deeds.

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا تَظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ  
إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. Verily the Companions<sup>4001</sup>  
Of the Garden shall  
That Day have joy  
In all that they do;

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَكِهِونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. They and their associates<sup>4002</sup>  
Will be in pleasant  
Shade, reclining  
On raised couches;

هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَالٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكِئُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. (Every) fruit<sup>4003</sup>  
Will be there for them;

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُمْ مَا يَدَّعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

3999. Time and Space, as we know them here, will be no more. The whole gathering will be as in the twinkling of an eye. Cf. xxxvi. 49 above.

4000. The Judgment will be on the highest standard of Justice and Grace. Not the least merit will go unrewarded, though the reward will be for the righteous far more than their deserts. No penalty will be exacted but that which the doer himself by his past deeds brought on himself. Cf. xxviii. 84.

4001. Notice the subtle gradation in the description. First, in this verse, we have the nature of the *mise en scene* and the nature of the joy therein. It will be a Garden i.e., everything agreeable to see and hear and feel and taste and smell; delightfully green lawns and meadows, trees and shrubs; the murmur of streams and the songs of birds: the delicate texture of flowers and leaves and the shapes of beauty in clouds and mist; the flavours of fruits; and the perfumes of flowers and scents. The joy in the Garden will be an active joy, without fatigue: whatever we do in it, every employment in which we engage there, will be a source of joy without alloy.

4002. Secondly, the joy or happiness is figured to be, not solitary, but shared by associates.

4003. Thirdly, besides any external conditions of Bliss, the Bliss in the Hereafter has an inner quality.



They shall have whatever  
They call for;

58. "Peace!"—a Word<sup>4004</sup>  
(Of salutation) from a Lord  
Most Merciful!

سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِنْ رَبِّ رَحِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. "And O ye in sin!"<sup>4005</sup>  
Get ye apart this Day!

وَأَمْسِرُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. "Did I not enjoin"<sup>4006</sup>  
On you, O ye children  
Of Adam, that ye  
Should not worship Satan;  
For that he was to you  
An enemy avowed?—.

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا  
الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. "And that ye should"<sup>4007</sup>  
Worship Me, (for that) this  
Was the Straight Way?

وَأَنْ أَعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

4004. Fourthly, we reach the highest grade of bliss, the salutation "Peace!" from Allah Most Merciful. Cf. x. 10. That Word sums up the attainment of the final Goal. For it explains the nature of the Most High;—He is not only a Lord and Cherisher, but a Lord Whose supreme glory is Mercy, Peace, and Harmony!.

4005. Notice how this finely balanced passage, after reaching the summit of sublimity in describing the state of the Blessed, in the word Salām, gradually takes us down to contemplate the state of the Sinners in a graduated descent.

In the first place, it refers to their negative state, their state of isolation. From this Day of Judgment, they will no longer have the chance of being with the Blessed and perhaps of profiting spiritually by that proximity. The first feature of the Day of Judgment is that it is a Day of Separation—of sorting out. Each soul now finds its own true level, as the period of probation is over.

4006. Secondly, there is a gentle reproach to the wrong-doers, more in sorrow than in anger. They are addressed as "children of Adam", to emphasise two facts, (1) that they have disgraced their ancestry, for Adam after his Fall repented and was forgiven, and the high Destiny of mankind has been the prize open to all his descendants, and (2) that Allah Most Merciful has throughout the ages continued to warn mankind against the snares laid by Satan, the avowed enemy of man, and that Allah's Grace was ever on the watch to help all to freedom from those snares.

4007. Thirdly, besides the negative warning, a positive Way was shown to them—the Straight Way, the Way of those who receive Allah's Grace and attain to Bliss, the Rope which would save them from shipwreck, the Shield which would save them from assault, the key to the door of proximity to Allah.

62. "But he did lead astray  
A great multitude of you.  
Did ye not, then, understand?"<sup>4008</sup>

وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِيلًا كَثِيرًا  
أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

63. "This is the Hell"<sup>4009</sup>  
Of which ye were promised

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

64. "Embrace ye the (Fire)"<sup>4010</sup>  
This Day, for that ye  
(Persistently) rejected (Truth)."

أَصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

65. That Day shall We set  
A seal on their mouths.<sup>4011</sup>  
But their hands will speak  
To Us, and their feet  
Bear witness, to all  
That they did.

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ  
وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

66. If it had been Our Will,<sup>4012</sup>  
We could surely have

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَى أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا

4008. Fourthly, it is pointed out that they were given Understanding ('*aqil*'), so that by their own faculties they could have judged their own best interests, and yet they betrayed or misused those faculties, and deliberately threw away their chance! And not only a few, but so many! They went gregariously to ruin in spite of the individual care which their Lord and Cherisher bestowed on them!

4009. Fifthly, the naked fact is now placed before them,—the Hell,—the state of damnation, which they could so easily have avoided!

4010. As they deliberately and persistently rejected all teaching, guidance, and warnings, they are now told to experience the Fire of Punishment, for it is but the consequence of their own acts.

4011. The ungodly will now be dumbfounded. They will be unable to speak or offer any defence. (The consequences of all acts, which follow according to Allah's Law, are, in Quranic language, attributed to Allah). But their silence will not matter. Their own hands and feet will speak against them. "Hands and feet" in this connection are symbolical of all the instruments for action which they were given in this life. The same extended meaning is to be understood for "eyes" in the following verse. Cf. also xli. 20-21, where eyes, ears, and skins are all mentioned as bearing witness against such as misused them.

4012. "If it had been Our Will": i.e., if such had been the Will and Plan of Allah. If Allah had not intended to give man his limited free-will, or power of choice, the case would have been different: there would have been no moral responsibility which could have been enforced. They could have had no sight or intelligence, and they could not have been blamed for not seeing or understanding. But such is not the case.

Blotted out their eyes;  
Then they should have  
Raced to the Path,  
But how could they have seen?

67. And if it had been  
Our Will, We could  
Have transformed them  
In their places;<sup>4013</sup>  
Then should they have been  
Unable to move about,  
Nor could they have returned  
(After error).

#### SECTION 5.

68. If We grant long life  
To any, We cause him  
To be reversed in nature:<sup>4014</sup>  
Will they not then understand?

الْصِّرَاطَ فَإِنَّ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَى مَكَانَتِهِمْ  
فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ  
فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

4013. If Allah's Plan had been to grant no limited freedom of choice or will to men. He could have created them quite different, or could have transformed them into stationary creatures, either in physical form as in the case of trees, or in moral or spiritual qualities, where there was no possibility either of progress or deterioration. Man would then have been unable to reach the heights of grandeur which are now open to him, or, if he goes wrong, to return through the door of repentance and mercy, and still pursue his path of ascent. But it was Allah's Plan to give man all these privileges, and man must shoulder all the responsibilities that go with them.

4014. This connects on with the last verse. Everything is possible with Allah. If you doubt how man can be transformed from his present nature, contemplate the transformations he already undergoes in his present nature at different ages. As a child powers of mind and body are still undeveloped. As he grows, they grow, and certain moral qualities, such as courage, daring, the will to conquer, unfold themselves. In extreme old age these are again obscured, and a second childhood supervenes. The back of the man who walked proudly straight and erect is now bent. If these transformations take place even in his present nature and constitution, how much easier was it for Allah to cast him in an immobile mould? But Allah granted him instead the high possibilities and responsibilities referred to in the last note.

69. We have not instructed  
The (Prophet) in Poetry,<sup>4015</sup>  
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,<sup>4016</sup>  
And that the word<sup>4017</sup>  
May be proved true against those  
Who reject (Truth).
71. See they not that it is  
We Who have created  
For them—among the things  
Which our hands have fashioned—  
Cattle, which are under<sup>4018</sup>  
Their dominion?—
72. And that We have  
Subjected them to their (use)?  
Of them some do carry them  
And some they eat:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي  
لَهُ إِن هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٩﴾

لِيُنذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحْيِيَ الْقَوْلَ  
عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَمًا  
فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

4015. Cf. xxvi. 224 and n. 3237. Here "Poetry" is used as connoting fairy tales, imaginary descriptions, things futile, false, or obscure, such as decadent Poetry is, whereas the Qur-ān is a practical guide, true and clear.

4016. "Alive", both in English and Arabic, means not only "having physical life", but having all the active qualities which we associate with life. In religious language, those who are not responsive to the realities of the spiritual world are no better than those who are dead. The Message of Allah penetrates the hearts of those who are alive in the spiritual sense.

4017. Cf. xxviii. 63. If people reject Truth and Faith after they have been admonished and warned, the charge against them, of wilful rebellion, is proved. They cannot then plead either ignorance or inadvertence.

4018. If they are blind to other Signs of Allah, they can at least see the simple homely things of life in which they receive so many benefits from Allah's mercy. How is it that wild animals can be domesticated, and in domestication can be so useful to man? Man can use them for riding or for draught; he can use their flesh for food and drink their milk; he can use their hair or wool. Cf. xvi. 66, 80: and xxiii. 21-22.

73. And they have (other) profits<sup>4019</sup>  
From them (besides), and they  
Get (milk) to drink.  
Will they not then  
Be grateful?<sup>4020</sup>

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبٌ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Yet they take (for worship)  
Gods other than Allah,  
(Hoping) that they might  
Be helped!

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً

لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

75. They have not the power  
To help them: and  
They are a host  
Brought up before them.<sup>4021</sup>

لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ

مُخَضَّرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. Let not their speech, then,<sup>4022</sup>  
Grieve thee. Verily We know  
What they hide as well as  
What they disclose.

فَلَا يَحْزِنُكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسْرُونَ

وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. Doth not man see  
That it is We Who

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ

4019. Such as skins for leather, furs for warmth, sheep's wool or camel's hair for blankets or textiles, musk for perfume, and so on.

4020. The whole argument turns on this. 'Our teaching is for your own benefit. We confer all these blessings on you, and yet ye turn away from the Giver of all, and run after your own vain imaginations!

4021. There is some difference of opinion among Commentators as to the exact meaning to be attached to this clause. As I understand it, the meaning seems to be this. Man is apt to forget or turn away from the true God, the source of all the good which he enjoys, and to go after imaginary powers in the shape of gods, heroes, men, or abstract things like Science or Nature or Philosophy, or superstitious things like Magic, or Good-Fortune or Ill-Fortune, or embodiments of his own selfish desires. He thinks that they might help him in this Life or in the Hereafter (if he believes in a Hereafter). But they cannot help him: on the contrary all things that are false will be brought up and condemned before Allah's Judgment-seat, and the worshippers of the Falsehoods will also be treated as a troop favouring the Falsehoods and therefore worthy of condemnation. The Falsehoods, therefore, instead of helping them, will contribute to their condemnation.

4022. If men are so foolish as to reject Allah, let not the men of Allah grieve over it. They should do their duty, and leave the rest to Allah. Allah knows all the open and secret motives that sway the wicked, and His Plan must ultimately prevail, however much appearances may be against it at any given time.

Created him from sperm?<sup>4023</sup>  
Yet behold! he (stands forth)  
As an open adversary!

78. And he makes comparisons<sup>4024</sup>  
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!<sup>4025</sup>  
For He fully knows  
All creation.

- 80 "The same Who produces  
For you fire out of<sup>4026</sup>  
The green tree, when behold!  
Ye kindle therewith  
(Your own fires)!

فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

وَصَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي  
الْعِظَمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ  
خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا  
فَإِذَا أَشْتَبَ مِنْهُ تُوْقِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

4023. Man's disobedience and folly are all the more surprising, seeing that—apart from Allah's greatness and mercy—man is himself such a puny creature, created out of something that is less than a drop in the vast ocean of Existence. Yet man has the hardihood to stand out and dispute with his Maker, and institute idle comparisons as in the next verse!

4024. That is, man thinks that Allah is like His creatures, who at best have very limited powers, or man draws idle parallels like that mentioned at the end of this verse. 'Who can give life to dry bones, and decomposed ones at that?' Man certainly cannot, and no power in nature can do that. But why compare the powers and capacities of Allah's creatures with the powers and capacities of the Creator? The first creation—out of nothing—is far more difficult for us to imagine than a second or subsequent process for which there is already a basis. And Allah has power over all things.

4025. Allah's creative artistry is evident in every phase of nature, and it works every minute or second. The more man understands himself and the things within his reach, the more he realises this. How foolish, then, for any one to set imaginary limits to Allah's powers? There are more ways of creation than are dreamt of in man's imagination!

4026. Even older and more primitive than the method of striking fire against steel and flint is the method of using twigs of trees for the purpose. In the *E.B.*, 14th edition. ix. 262, will be found a picture of British Guiana boys making a fire by rotating a stick =

81. "Is not He Who created  
The heavens and the earth  
Able to create the like<sup>4027</sup>  
Thereof?"—Yea, indeed!  
For He is the Creator Supreme,  
Of skill and knowledge (infinite)!

82. Verily, when He intends<sup>4028</sup>  
A thing, His Command is,  
"Be", and it is!

83. So glory to Him  
In Whose Hands is  
The dominion of all things:  
And to Him will ye<sup>4029</sup>  
Be all brought back.

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَدِيرٍ  
عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨١﴾

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ  
فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي يَدِيهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
وَالِيهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

= in a round hole in a piece of wood lying on the ground. The Arab method was to use a wooden instrument called the *Zinād*. It consisted of two pieces to be rubbed together. The upper one was called the '*Afār or Zand*, and the lower the *Markh*. The *markh* is a twig from a kind of spreading tree, the *Cynanchuin viminale*, of which the branches are bare, without leaves or thorns. When they are tangled together, and a wind blows, they get ignited and strike fire (Lane's Arabic Lexicon). In modern Arabic *Zand* is by analogy applied to the flint piece used for striking fire with steel.

4027. Cf. lxxix. 27. Which is the more difficult to create,—man, or the heavens and the earth, with all creatures? Allah created the heavens and the earth, with all creatures, and He can create worlds and worlds like these in infinity. To Him it is small matter to raise you up for the Hereafter.

4028. And His creation is not dependent on time, or instruments or means, or any conditions whatsoever. Existence waits on His Will, or Plan, or Intention. The moment He wills a thing, it becomes His Word or Command, and the thing forthwith comes into existence. Cf. ii. 117; xvi. 40, n. 2066; etc.

4029. All things were created by Allah; are maintained by Him; and will go back to Him. But the point of special interest to man is that man will also be brought back to Allah and is answerable to Him, and to Him alone. This Message is the core of Revelation; it explains the meaning of the Hereafter; and it fitly closes a Sūra specially connected with the name (*Yā-Sīn*) of the Holy Prophet.