

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Ibrāhīm*, 14

For the chronology and the general argument of this Sūra in the series Sūras x. to xv., see Introduction to S. x.

The special subject-matter of this Sura is a continuation of the concluding portion of the last Sūra, which explained how Allah's revelation gains ground in spite of selfish men's opposition. Here illustrations are given from the story of Moses and Abraham, and Abraham's Prayer for Makkah forms the core of the Sūra.

*Summary.*—Revelation leads man from darkness to light. It comes to each nation in its own language and for its own special circumstances. So was it with Moses and other Prophets. There was a conflict of evil with good, but evil was destroyed. Parable of the Goodly Tree (xiv. 1-27).

Why will not men receive God's grace? Why will they choose to go astray? Abraham prayed to be saved from infidelity, himself and his posterity, and he prayed for Makkah, the city of the new revelation through Arabia. Good and Evil will find their proper retribution, and Allah's Plan of Unity will prevail (xiv. 28-52).

*Ibrāhīm, or Abraham*

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

1. A. L. R.<sup>1869</sup> A Book  
Which We have revealed  
Unto thee, in order that  
Thou mightest lead mankind  
Out of the depths of darkness  
Into light—by the leave<sup>1870</sup>  
Of their Lord—to the Way  
Of (Him) the Exalted in Power,  
Worthy of all Praise!<sup>1871</sup>
2. Of Allah, to Whom do belong  
All things in the heavens  
And on earth!  
But alas for the Unbelievers<sup>1872</sup>  
For a terrible Chastisement  
(Their Unfaith will bring them)!—
3. Those who prefer the life<sup>1873</sup>



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الرَّكَّابِ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ  
مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ  
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٢﴾

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ

1869. For those Letters see Introduction Appendix I.

1870. It is insisted on that every Prophet speaks not from himself but from Allah. His leading into the light is but by the grace and mercy of Allah, not by any power of his own, or by any merit of those who hear him.

1871. In this and the next verse where the sentence is completed, three qualities of Allah are mentioned, viz., (1) His exalted position above all Creation; (2) His goodness, which entitles Him, and Him alone, to Praise; and (3) His Power in all heaven and earth. Thus He stands in no need of man's worship; His goodness is all for the good of man (and His creatures); and His control over His creatures is complete; so He can carry out His Will and Plan.

1872. See the last note. That being the case, in what a sad plight are those who reject the Faith and Grace offered to them, and draw down on themselves all the terrible consequences of that rejection,—the Wrath to come!

1873. The Unbelievers are here characterised in three ways: (1) they love this ephemeral life and its vanities more than the true Life which goes into the Hereafter; (2) they not only harm themselves but mislead others, (3) their own crooked minds search for something crooked in Allah's straight Path (Cf. vii. 45). But in doing so, they go farther and farther from the Truth.

Of this world to

The Hereafter, who hinder (men)

From the Path of Allah

And seek to make it crooked:

They are astray

By a long distance.

4. We sent not a messenger  
Except (to teach) in the language<sup>1874</sup>  
Of his (own) people, in order  
To make (things) clear to them.  
So Allah leads astray  
Those whom He pleases  
And guides whom He pleases<sup>1875</sup>  
And He is Exalted in power,  
Full of Wisdom.

5. We sent Moses with Our Signs  
(And the command). "Bring out  
Thy people from the depths  
Of darkness into light,  
And remind them of  
The Days of Allah."<sup>1876</sup> Verily  
In this there are Signs

وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَتَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا  
أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٢﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ  
لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا  
أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ  
إِلَى النُّورِ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ  
فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٥﴾

1874. If the object of a Message is to make things clear, it must be delivered in the language current among the people to whom the Messenger is sent. Through them it can reach all mankind. There is even a wider meaning for "language". It is not merely a question of alphabets, letters, or words. Each age or people—or world in a psychological sense—casts its thoughts in a certain mould or form. Allah's Message—being universal—can be expressed in all moulds and forms, and is equally valid and necessary for all grades of humanity, and must therefore be explained to each according to his or her capacity or receptivity. In this respect the Qur-ān is marvellous. It is for the simplest as well as the most advanced.

1875. "Whom He pleases"; the usual expression for *Mashiyat*, the universal Will and Plan, which is all-wise and on the highest plane of goodness and righteousness.

1876. "The Days of Allah": the days when Allah's mercy was specially shown to them. Every day and every hour and minute, Allah's grace flows to us abundantly, but there are special events in personal or national history which may be commemorated as Red-letter Days. Those to the Israelites were set out in great detail in ii. 30-61 and on other places.

For such as are firmly patient  
And constant,—grateful and  
appreciative.<sup>1877</sup>

6. Remember! Moses said  
To his people: "Call to mind  
The favour of Allah to you  
When He delivered you<sup>1878</sup>  
From the people of Pharaoh:  
They set you hard tasks  
And punishments, slaughtered  
Your sons, and let your women-folk  
Live: therein was  
A tremendous trial from your Lord."

## SECTION 2.

7. And remember! your Lord  
Caused to be declared (publicly):  
"If ye are grateful, I will  
Add more (favours) unto you;  
But if ye show ingratitude,<sup>1879</sup>  
Truly My punishment  
Is terrible indeed."

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ  
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُدْحِثُونَ أَسْمَاءَكُمْ  
وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ  
بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ  
لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي  
لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾

1877. *Ṣabbār* is the intensive form, and includes all the ideas implied in *Ṣabr* (ii. 45 and n. 61, and ii. 153 n. 157) in an intensive degree. *Shakūr* and *Shakir* have in them the idea of appreciation, recognition, gratitude as shown in deeds of goodness and righteousness. Both terms are applied to Allah as well as to men. A slight distinction in shades of meaning may be noted. *Shakūr* implies that the appreciation is even for the smallest favours and response on the other side; it is a mental attitude independent of specific facts. *Shakir* implies bigger and more specific things.

1878. Cf. ii. 49. The reference back to Israel and Moses serves a double purpose—as an appeal to the People of the Book, and as a reminder to the Quraish of the favour now conferred on them by the coming among them of a greater Prophet than Moses.

1879. The various shades of meaning in *Shakara* are explained in n. 1877 above. *Kafara* implies: (1) to reject Faith, as in ii. 6 and n. 30; (2) to be ungrateful for mercies and favours received, as here; (3) to resist Allah or Faith, as in iii. 13; (4) to deny (the Signs of Allah), as in iii. 21, or deny the mission of Messengers, as in xiv. 9. *Kāfir* in the most general sense may be translated "Unbeliever".

8. And Moses said: "If ye  
Show ingratitude,<sup>1880</sup> ye and all  
On earth together,—yet  
Is Allah Free of all wants,<sup>1881</sup>  
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 'Ad, and Thamūd?—  
And of those who (came)  
After them? None knows them<sup>1882</sup>  
But Allah. To them came  
Messengers with Clear (Signs);  
But they put their hands<sup>1883</sup>  
Up to their mouths, and said:  
"We do deny (the mission)  
On which ye have been sent,  
And we are really  
In suspicious (disquieting) doubt<sup>1884</sup>

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ جَمِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبُؤُا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ  
وَكَادُ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ  
لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ  
فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا  
بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ، وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَنَا  
إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٩﴾

1880. Ingratitude not only in feeling or words, but in disobedience, and wilful rejection and rebellion. If the whole of you band together against Allah, you do not detract from Allah's power one atom, because, Allah does not depend upon you for anything, and His goodness and righteousness and praiseworthiness cannot be called in question by your contumacy.

1881. Cf. xxii. 64, xxix. 6, xxv. 15, lxvii. 38.

1882. Even the names of all the Prophets are not known to men, much less the details of their story. If some "news" of them (for the word translated "story" may also be translated "news") reaches us, it is to give us spiritual instruction for our own lives.

1883. That is, either that the Unbelievers metaphorically put their hands up to the mouths of the Prophets to try to prevent them from proclaiming their Message, or that the Unbelievers put up their fingers to their own mouths, as much as to say "Don't listen to them," or bite their own fingers in token of incontinent rage. Whatever construction we adopt, the meaning is that they were intolerant of their prophets even as the Quraish were intolerant of Al-Muṣṭafā and did all they could to suppress Allah's Truth.

1884. Cf. xi. 62. The distinction between *Shakk* and *raib* may be noted. *Shakk* is intellectual doubt, a doubt as to fact; is it so, or is it not? *Raib* is something more than intellectual doubt; a suspicion that there is fraud or deception; something that upsets your moral belief and causes a disquiet in your soul. In lii. 30, it is used as equivalent to "calamity" or "disaster", some punishment or evil. Both kinds of doubts and suspicions are hinted at against Prophets of Allah.

As to that to which  
Ye invite us."

10. Their messengers said: "Is there  
A doubt about Allah,  
The Creator of the heavens  
And the earth? It is He<sup>1885</sup>  
Who invites you, in order  
That He may forgive you  
Your sins and give you  
Respite for a term appointed!"  
They said: "Ah! ye are  
No more than human,  
Like ourselves! Ye wish  
To turn us away from  
What our fathers  
Used to worship; then  
Bring us some clear authority.<sup>1886</sup>

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ  
مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ  
مُسَمًّى قَالُوا إِنْ أَنَسْنَا إِلَّا بِبَشَرٍ مِثْلَنَا تُرِيدُونَ  
أَنْ تَصُدُّوَنَا عَمَّا كَانَتْ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأْتُونَا  
بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Their messengers said to them:  
"True, we are human  
Like yourselves, but Allah  
Doth grant His grace  
To such of His servants  
As He pleases. It is not  
For us to bring you  
An authority except as Allah  
Permits. And on Allah  
Let all men of faith  
Put their trust.

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ  
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ  
وَمَا كُنَّا لَنَا أَنْ نَأْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ  
اللَّهِ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

1885. The Prophets (generally) clear both kinds of doubt. "You cannot doubt the existence of Allah! Behold His works! We are not speaking for ourselves or deceiving you. We speak according to the Message of inspiration from Allah." Notice that the doubters had said to the Prophets, "Ye invite us." The Prophets say: "It is Allah Who invites you, and He does it to save you by His grace, and give you plenty of time (but not indefinite time) for penitence and amendment."

1886. Infidelity is illogical and argues in a circle. If the Prophet speaks of Allah, the Unbeliever says, "You are only a man!" "But I speak from Allah!" "Oh well! our ancestral ways of worship are good enough for us!" "What if they are wrong?" "What authority have you for saying so?" "The highest authority, that from Allah!" And so we come back full circle! Then the wicked rely on violence, but it recoils on them, and they perish.

12. Why we should not put our trust  
On Allah. Indeed He  
Has guided us to the Ways  
We (follow). We shall certainly  
Bear with patience all  
The hurt you caused us.  
For those who put their trust  
Should put their trust on Allah.”

### SECTION 3.

13. And the Unbelievers said  
To their messengers: “Be sure  
We shall drive you out  
Of our land, or ye shall  
Return to our religion.”<sup>1887</sup>  
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<sup>1888</sup>  
The Time when they shall stand  
Before My tribunal,—such  
As fear My Punishment.”

وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا تَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَيْنَا  
سُبُلَنَا وَلَنَصِيرَنَّكَ عَلَى مَاءٍ آذِيَتُمُونَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ  
فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلرُّسُلِ هُمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ  
مِنْ أَرْضِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُوذُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ  
رَبُّهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ لَا تَهْلِكُنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

وَلَنَسُكِّنَنَّكُمْ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ  
ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾

1887. The arguments in a circle were explained in the last note. But Infidelity looks upon argument merely as an amusement. Its chief weapon is physical force. As its only belief is in materialism, it thinks that threats of force will put down the righteous. It offers the choice between exile and violence against conformity to its own standards of evil, which it thinks to be good. But Faith is not to be cowed down by Force. Its source of strength is Allah, and it receives the assurance that violence will perish ultimately by violence, and that Faith and Good must stand and be established. In fact the good must inherit the earth and the evil ones be blotted out.

1888. “Fear” means here “have present before their minds something which should cause fear, so that they should shape their conduct in order to avoid the ill consequences of wickedness.”

15. But they sought victory and  
decision<sup>1889</sup>

(There and then), and frustration  
Was the lot of every  
Powerful obstinate transgressor.<sup>1890</sup>

وَأَسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

16. In front of such a one  
Is Hell, and he is given,  
For drink, boiling fetid water.

مِنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَتُسْقَى مِنْ مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾

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.<sup>1891</sup>

يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَاذُ يُسِغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ  
الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ  
وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ ﴿١٧﴾

18. The parable of those who  
Reject their Lord is that  
Their works are as ashes,<sup>1892</sup>

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ  
أَسْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ

1889. Cf. viii. 19. I have assumed that "they" in this verse is the same as "them" in the preceding verse, i.e., the ungodly. Hoping for victory they forced a decision, and they got it—against themselves. Or they challenged a punishment, and it came in good time. Some Commentators construe "they" here to mean "the Prophets": in that case the verse would mean: "The Prophets prayed for a victory and decision, and the ungodly were frustrated in their efforts to suppress the Truth."

1890. Cf. xi. 59.

1891. A graphic and deterrent picture, from the preaching of the earlier Prophets, of unrelieved horror of the torments of Hell. The door of escape by annihilation is also closed to them.

1892. Note the fulness of the parable. The works of the ungodly are in themselves light and unsubstantial like ashes; they are the useless rubbish that remains out of the faculties and opportunities which they have misused by burning them up. Further, the ashes are blown about hither and thither by the wind: the ungodly have no compass, direction, or purpose that can stand. The wind, too, which blows on them is no ordinary wind, nor the day on which they seek to enjoy the fruits of their labours an ordinary tranquil day: a furious gale is blowing, for such is the Wrath of Allah. They have neither internal peace nor external gain. In the scattering of the ashes they lose control even of such things as they might have earned but for their misdeeds. Their whole nature is contaminated. All their wishes go astray. They are carried so far, far away from what was in their minds. What did they aim at, and what did they achieve?



On which the wind blows  
Furiously on a tempestuous day:  
No power have they over  
Aught that they have earned:  
That is the straying  
Far, far (from the goal).

19. Seest thou not that Allah  
Created the heavens and the earth  
In Truth?<sup>1893</sup> If He so will,  
He can remove you  
And put (in your place)  
A new Creation?

20. Nor is that for Allah  
Any great matter.<sup>1894</sup>

21. They will all be marshalled  
Before Allah together: then  
Will the weak say to those<sup>1895</sup>  
Who were arrogant, "For us,  
We but followed you; can ye  
Then avail us at all  
Against the Wrath of Allah?"  
They will reply, "If we  
Had received the guidance<sup>1896</sup>  
Of Allah, we should have

مَتَا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ عَزِيزًا  
هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٨﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ  
بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ يَشَاءُ يَذْهَبَكُمْ وَيَأْتِي بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٩﴾

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ  
اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ  
مُعْتَدُونَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قَالُوا  
لَوْ هَدَّيْنَاهُ اللَّهَ لَهْدَيْتُمْ سُوءًا عَلَىٰ سُوءٍ  
أَجْرِنَا أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٢١﴾

1893. *Haqq*: Truth, Right, Righteousness, True proportions, Reality. Allah's creation is not to be trifled with. It is built on righteousness, and those who do not obey its laws must give place to others who do. This warning is repeated again and again in history and in revelation. Cf. vi. 73.

1894. 'Aziz: great, mighty, excellent, powerful, rare, precious.

1895. When the time for judgment comes, there are two kinds of disillusionment waiting for the ungodly: (1) Those who were misled and failed to see that each soul bears its own personal responsibility (ii. 134) and cannot shift it on to others, will turn to those who misled them, in the hope that they might intercede for them or do something to help them. They receive a plain answer as in the latter part of this verse. (2) Those who relied on Satan, His answer (in xiv. 22 below) is frank, cynical and brutal.

1896. Those whose power or specious intelligence or influence misled them—such as false priests or leaders—will find themselves in a parlous state. How can they help others? They themselves failed to profit from Allah's guidance, and they can with some justice retort that they put them in the wrong path as they followed it themselves!

Given it to you; to us  
It makes no difference (now)  
Whether we rage, or bear  
(These torments) with patience:  
For ourselves there is no way  
Of escape."

## SECTION 4.

22. And Satan will say  
When the matter is decided:<sup>1897</sup>  
"It was Allah Who gave you  
A promise of Truth: I too  
Promised, but I failed  
In my promise to you.  
I had no authority over you  
Except to call you, but ye  
Listened to me; then  
Reproach not me, but reproach  
Your own souls. I cannot listen  
To your cries, nor can ye  
Listen to mine. I reject<sup>1898</sup>  
Your former act in associating  
Me with Allah.  
For wrong-doers there must be  
A grievous Chastisement."

23. But those who believe  
And work righteousness  
Will be admitted to Gardens  
Beneath which rivers flow,-  
To dwell therein for aye  
With the leave of their Lord.

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ  
وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ  
فَأَسْتَجِبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلَوْلَا  
أَنْفُسُكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ  
بِمُصْرِخِي إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ  
مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَأُدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ  
فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ يَحْيَاهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

1897. After the Judgment, Evil declares itself in its true colours. Frankly it says: 'I deceived you. The promise of Allah was true, but you believed me rather than Allah. I had no power to force you. I had but to call you, and you came running after me. You must blame yourselves. Did you think I was equal with Allah? I know too well that I was not and never could be. If you did wrong, you must suffer the Penalty.'

1898. See the last note. An alternative interpretation of this sentence may be: "I had already beforehand rebelled against Allah with Whom ye associated me."

Their greeting therein  
Will be: "Peace!"<sup>1899</sup>

24. Seest thou not how  
Allah sets forth a parable?—  
A goodly Word<sup>1900</sup>  
Like a goodly tree,  
Whose root is firmly fixed,  
And its branches (reach)  
To the heavens,—

25. It brings forth its fruit<sup>1901</sup>  
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:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً  
كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا  
فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾

تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ  
اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ  
مِنَ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِن قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾

1899. How this contrasts with the misery and the mutual self-recriminations of the ungodly!

1900. "Goodly word" is usually interpreted as the Divine Word, the Divine Message, the True Religion. It may also be interpreted in a more general sense as a word of truth, a word of goodness or kindness, which follows from a true appreciation of Religion. For Religion includes our duty to Allah and our duty to man. The "evil word" is opposite to this: false religion, blasphemy, false speech, or preaching or teaching unkindness and wrong-doing.

1901. The goodly tree is known for: (1) its beauty; it gives pleasure to all who see it; (2) its stability; it remains firm and unshaken in storms, because its roots are firmly fixed in the earth; (3) its wide compass; its branches reach high, and it catches all the sunshine from heaven, and gives shade to countless birds in its branches and men and animals beneath it, and (4) its abundant fruit, which it yields at all times. So is the Good Word. It is as beautiful as it is true. It abides in all the changes and chances of this life, and even beyond (see verse 27 below); it is never shaken by sorrow or what seems to us calamity; its roots are deep down in the bed-rock facts of life. Its reach is universal, above, around, below; it is illuminated by the divine light from heaven, and its consolation reaches countless beings of all grades of life. Its fruit—the enjoyment of its blessings—is not confined to one season or one set of circumstances; furthermore the fortunate man who is the vehicle of that word has no self-pride; he attributes all its goodness, and his act in spreading it, to the Will and Leave of Allah. Cf. the New Testament Parable of the Sower (Matt. iv. 14-20) or of the Mustard-seed (Matt. iv. 30-32). In this Parable of the Qur-ān there are fewer words and more spiritual meaning, and the emphasis is on more essential things.

It is torn up by the root  
From the surface of the earth:  
It has no stability.<sup>1902</sup>

27. Allah will establish in strength  
Those who believe, with the Word  
That stands firm, in this world  
And in the Hereafter; but Allah  
Will leave, to stray, those  
Who do wrong: Allah doeth  
What He willeth.<sup>1903</sup>

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ  
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ  
الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾

### SECTION 5.

28. Hast thou not turned  
Thy thought to those who<sup>1904</sup>  
Exchanged the favour of Allah.  
With ingratitude and caused  
Their people to descend  
To the House of Perdition?—  
29. Into Hell? They will burn  
Therein,—an evil place  
To stay in!

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا  
وَأَحْلَوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿٢٨﴾

جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا وَيَنسَوْنَ الْفَرَارِ ﴿٢٩﴾

1902. The evil tree is the opposite of the goodly tree. The parallelism of contrast can be followed out in all the details of the last note.

1903. His Will and Plan may be above comprehension, but will prevail over all things. It is not like the will of man, who may plan good things but is not necessarily able to carry them out.

1904. There is a particular and a general meaning. The particular meaning is understood to be a reference to the Makkan Pagans who turned the House of Allah into a place for the worship of horrible idols and the practice of unseemly rites and cults. There is no real difficulty in accepting this as part of a late Makkan Sūra even without supposing it to be a prophecy. The Makkan Pagans had turned Religion into a blasphemous superstition, and were misguiding their people, persecuting the true Messenger of Allah and all who followed his teaching. Their cup of iniquity seemed about full, and they seemed to be heading to perdition, as later events indeed showed to be the case.

The general meaning is also clear. Selfish men, when they seize power, want worship for themselves or their Phantasies, in derogation of the true God. Power, which should have been an instrument of good, becomes in their hands an instrument of evil. They and their people rush headlong to perdition. "These be thy gods, O Israel!" has been a cry repeated again and again in history, in the face, or at the back, of men of God!

30. And they set up (idols)  
As equal to Allah, to mislead  
(Men) from His Path! Say:  
"Enjoy (your brief power)!  
But verily ye are making  
Straightway for Hell!"

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ قُلْ  
تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِن مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. Speak to my servants  
Who have believed,<sup>1905</sup>  
That they may establish  
Regular prayers, and spend  
(In charity) out of the Sustenance<sup>1906</sup>  
We have given them,  
Secretly and openly, before  
The coming of a Day  
In which there will be  
Neither mutual bargaining<sup>1907</sup>  
Nor befriending.

قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا  
مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ  
لَّا بَتَّعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ ﴿٣١﴾

32. It is Allah Who hath created  
The heavens and the earth  
And sendeth down rain

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ  
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ

1905. Putting ourselves back in the position in which the Muslim community found themselves in Makkah just before the Hijrat, we can imagine how much encouragement and consolation they needed from the preaching, the Faith, and the steadfast character of Al-Muṣṭafā. Intolerant persecution was the order of the day; neither the life nor the property or reputation of the Muslims was safe. They are asked to find strength and tranquillity in prayer and in helping each other according to their needs and resources.

1906. Here, as elsewhere, "Sustenance" is to be taken in the literal as well as the metaphorical sense. There were many among the Muslims who were poor, or slaves, or depressed, because they were deprived of the means of livelihood on account of their Faith. They were to be fed, clothed, and sheltered, by those who had means. Charity was to be ordinarily secret, so as to cut out all show or parade, and perhaps also lest the enemy should dry up those sources by unprincipled violence; but there must be much that had to be open and organised, so that all the needy could know where to go to be relieved.

1907. The great Day of Reckoning would be one on which all values would be changed. Wealth, as understood in this world, would no longer count. Should we not therefore use any wealth we have in this life, to give here and receive there? *Bai* includes all bargaining, -barter, purchase and sale, etc. In this world, where wealth has some value, let us spend it and get for ourselves "treasures in heaven." In the next life each man will stand on his merits and personal responsibility. One man cannot help another. Let us here help each other to become true and righteous, so that our personal account may be favourable there.

From the skies, and with it  
Bringeth our fruits wherewith  
To feed you; it is He  
Who hath made the ships subject  
To you, that they may sail  
Through the sea by His Command;  
And the rivers (also)  
Hath He made subject to you.<sup>1908</sup>

رَزَقًا لَّكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ  
فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. And He hath made subject  
To you the sun and the moon,<sup>1909</sup>  
Both diligently pursuing  
Their courses; and the Night  
And the Day hath He (also)  
Made subject to you.

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَآبِّينَ  
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And He giveth you  
Of all that ye ask for,<sup>1910</sup>  
But if ye count the favours  
Of Allah, never will ye  
Be able to number them.

وَمَا آتَاكُم مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعُدُّوا  
نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصَوْهَا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ  
كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

1908. We must realise that behind all our strength, skill, and intelligence there is the power and goodness of Allah, Who gave us all these things. Man can understand and control the forces of nature so as to bring them to his own service: he can only do so, because (1) he has got these gifts from Allah, and (2) Allah has fixed definite laws in nature, of which he can take advantage by Allah's command and permission. He has been made Vicegerent on earth (ii. 30); Allah commanded the highest creatures to bow down to Adam (ii. 34). Man, by Allah's command, can use rain to produce food for himself; make ships to sail the seas; use rivers as highways, and cut canals for traffic and irrigation. Not only this, but even the heavenly bodies can (by Allah's command) contribute to his needs (see next verse).

1909. The sun gives out heat, which is the source of all life and energy on this planet, and produces the seasons of the year, by utilising which man can supply his needs, not only material, but immaterial in the shape of light, health, and other blessings. The sun and the moon together produce tides, and are responsible for atmospheric changes which are of the highest importance in the life of man. The succession of Day and Night is due to the apparent daily course of the sun through the skies; and the cool light of the moon performs other services different from those of warm day-light. Because there are laws here, which man can understand and calculate, he can use all such things for his own service, and in that sense the heavenly bodies are themselves made subject to him by Allah's command.

1910. Sincere and true prayer in faith is answered by Allah. Thus He gives us everything which a wise and benevolent Providence can give.

Verily, man is given up  
To injustice and ingratitude.<sup>1911</sup>

#### SECTION 6.

35. Remember Abraham said:<sup>1912</sup>

"O my Lord! make this city  
One of peace and security;  
And preserve me and my sons  
From worshipping idols.<sup>1913</sup>

36. "O my Lord! they have indeed  
Led astray many among mankind;  
He then who follows my (ways)  
Is of me, and he that  
Disobeys me,—but Thou  
Art indeed Oft-Forgiving,  
Most Merciful.

37. "O our Lord! I have made  
Some of my offspring to dwell

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا  
وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ ﴿٣٥﴾

رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا مِنْ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ يَبْعَثْنِي فَإِنَّهُ  
مِنْنِي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَصْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بُوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ

1911. I have tried to render the intensive forms of the Arabic by what I consider their near equivalent here: the phrase "given up to injustice and ingratitude" suggests habitual ignoring of just values and ingratitude for the innumerable gifts and favours which Allah has showered on mankind.

1912. This Prayer of Abraham, the True in Faith, the progenitor of the Semitic peoples and the Prototype of their Religion, is introduced in this place, to illustrate the points referred to in the preceding section, xiv. 31-34, viz., how the new Revelation through the Ka'ba bears out the universal Revelation of Prayer and Charity, Love of Allah and man, Recognition of Allah's handiwork in nature, and Insistence on man's turning away from false worship and ingratitude to Allah. Notice the four divisions into which it falls: (1) verses 35-36 are spoken by Abraham as on his own behalf ("O my Lord!"); (2) verses 37-38 are spoken on behalf of his progeny ("O our Lord!") but with special reference to the elder branch, the children of Ismā'il; (3) verses 39-40 are again a personal appeal, but both branches of his family, viz., the sons of Ismā'il and Isaac, are expressly mentioned; (4) verse 41 is a Prayer for himself, his parents, and all Believers, typifying that in the universality of Islam all nations are to be blessed. Jerusalem, for the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Jesus, was the centre and symbol for the Jewish race, though of course all Allah's Truth is universal; Makkah, the centre of the Arab race, was to throw off its tribal character and become universal, in spite of the Makkans themselves.

1913. Cf. ii. 125-129. Abraham (with Ismā'il) built the Ka'ba, and Abraham asks a blessing on his handiwork and forgiveness for such lapses into idolatry as both branches of his family might fall into.

In a valley without cultivation,<sup>1914</sup>

By Thy Sacred House;

In order, O our Lord! that they

May establish regular Prayer:

So fill the hearts of some

Among men with love towards

them,

And feed them with Fruits:<sup>1915</sup>

So that they may give thanks.

38. "O our Lord! truly Thou

Dost know what we conceal

And what we reveal:

For nothing whatever is hidden

From Allah, whether on earth

Or in heaven.<sup>1916</sup>

39. "Praise be to Allah, Who hath

Granted unto me in old age

Ismā'il and Isaac: for truly

My Lord is He, the Hearer

Of Prayer!<sup>1917</sup>

40. "O my Lord! make me

One who establishes regular Prayer,

And also (raise such)

عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

فَأَجْعَلْ أَفْعِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ

وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِّنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ

مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ

وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي

رَبَّنَا وَقَبَلْ دُعَاءَ ﴿٤٠﴾

1914. The Makkan valley is enclosed by hills on all sides, unlike Madinah, which has level cultivated plains. But just because of its natural isolation, it is fitted to be a centre for Prayer and Praise.

1915. Cf. ii. 126, and n. 128. (The "Fruits" are there explained). The righteous, though they have to have sustenance, both in a literal and figurative sense, require also the love and sympathy of their fellow-men.

1916. In Abraham's prophetic mind was the secret and open enmity or contempt which the Children of Israel were to have for the Children of Ismā'il (Arabs). He prays to Allah that they may be united in Islam, as indeed they were, except a small remnant.

1917. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen. 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.



Among my offspring<sup>1918</sup>

O our Lord!

And accept Thou my Prayer.

41. "O our Lord!<sup>1919</sup> cover (us)<sup>1920</sup>  
With Thy Forgiveness—me,  
My parents,<sup>1921</sup> and (all) Believers,  
On the Day that the Reckoning  
Will be established!<sup>1922</sup>

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ  
الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤١﴾

#### SECTION 7.

42. Think not that Allah  
Doth not heed the deeds  
Of those who do wrong.  
He but giveth them respite  
Against a Day when  
The eyes will fixedly stare  
In horror,—
43. They running forward  
With necks outstretched,  
Their heads uplifted, their gaze

وَلَا تَحْسَبِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ  
الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ  
فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٤٢﴾

مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِبِينَ رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ  
وَأَفْتَدَتْهُمْ أَسْوَادُ أَعْيُنِهِمْ ﴿٤٣﴾

1918. Abraham prays for both branches of his family, having a wider vision than some of the later Children of Israel.

1919. Read again n. 1912 above. Having prayed for his progeny, Abraham now prays for Allah's grace on himself, his parents, and the whole Brotherhood of Faith, irrespective of family or race or time, to be perfected in the ideal of Islam.

1920. For the shades of meaning in the different words for Forgiveness, see n. 110 to ii. 109.

1921. *My parents.* Abraham's father was an idolater (xliii. 26; vi. 74). Not only that, but he persecuted the Faith of Unity and threatened Abraham with stoning and exile (xix. 46); and he and his people cast him into the Fire to be burned (xxi. 52, 68). Yet Abraham's heart was tender, and he prayed for forgiveness for his father because of a promise which he had made (ix. 114), though he renounced the land of his fathers (Chaldea).

1922. At the final Reckoning, all that may seem inequality or injustice in this world will be redressed. But the merits of the best of us will need Allah's Grace to establish us in that lasting Felicity which is promised to the righteous. And Abraham, as the father of Prophecy, prayed for all,—for the Universal Faith perfected in Islam.

Returning not towards them,  
And their hearts a (gaping) void!<sup>1923</sup>

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 Thy Call, and follow  
The messengers!"

"What! were ye not wont  
To swear aforetime that ye  
Should suffer no decline?"<sup>1924</sup>

45. "And ye dwelt in the dwellings  
Of men who wronged themselves  
Ye were clearly shown  
How We dealt with them;  
And We put forth (many) Parables  
In your behoof!"

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.

وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ  
ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا آخِرْنَا إِلَىٰ آجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ نَحْبُ دَعْوَتِكَ  
وَنَسْتَعِيزُ الرُّسُلَ أَوْلَمَ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ  
مِنْ قَبْلِ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ زَوَالٍ ﴿١١﴾

وَسَكَنتُمْ فِي مَسْكَانٍ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا  
أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَبَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ  
وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ  
وَإِنْ كَانَتْ مَكْرُهُمْ

لِيَرْزُلَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالَ ﴿١٣﴾

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِيفَ وَعْدِهِ ۚ رُسُلُهُ ۖ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿١٤﴾

1923. A picture of horror. The evil ones, when they realise the situation, will be dazed; their eyes will stare without expression, and never move back; their necks will be outstretched; their heads uplifted in terror of the Judgment from on High; and their hearts become empty of all hope or intelligence as the physical heart might become empty of blood when the circulation stops. In this state they will press forward to Judgment.

1924. *Zawāl* = decline from the zenith, as that of the sun, decline from the highest point reached by a heavenly body in its course through the sky. The ungodly are apt to think that their power will remain in the ascendant, on account of some material advantages given them temporarily by Allah, but they are constantly receiving warnings in history and revelation and from the example of others before them. There is a warning to the contemporary Pagan Makkans here; but the warning is perfectly general, and for all time.

48. One day the Earth will be  
Changed to a different Earth,  
And so will be the Heavens,<sup>1925</sup>  
And (men) will be marshalled  
Forth, before Allah, the One,  
The Irresistible;

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ  
وَيَرْزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٨﴾

49. And thou wilt see  
The Sinners that day  
Bound together in fetters:-<sup>1926</sup>

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ  
مُقَرَّبِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿١٩﴾

50. Their garments<sup>1927</sup> of liquid pitch,<sup>1928</sup>  
And their faces covered with Fire;

سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِنْ قَطَرَانٍ وَتَغْشَى  
وُجُوهُهُمْ النَّارُ ﴿٢٠﴾

51. That Allah may requite  
Each soul according  
To its deserts;<sup>1929</sup>  
And verily Allah is Swift  
In calling to account.<sup>1930</sup>

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾

1925. "A new earth and a new heaven" refers to the entirely changed conditions at the end of things as we know them. Cf. xx. 105-107, xxxix. 67, 69, lxxiii. 14, lxxxii. 1, lxxxiv. 3.

1926. Cf. xxxvi. 8, lx. 71, lxi. 30.

1927. *Sirbal*; plural, *Sarābil*; a garment or coat of mail, breast plate; something covering the most vital parts of the body; like the shirt or the Indian *kurtā*.

1928. *Qatīrān*: black pitch, a resinous substance exuding from certain kinds of trees like the terebinth or the pines, or distilled from wood or coal. It catches fire readily. Issuing from the upper garments (*Sarābil*) the flames soon cover the face, the most expressive part of man's essence or being. The metaphor of fetters (n. 1926) is now changed to that of pitch, which darkens and sets on fire the soul of man.

1929. *Its deserts*: i.e., according to what it earned by its own acts, good or evil, in its life of probation.

1930. *Swift in calling to account*: We can understand this in two significations. (1) Let not the wicked think that because Allah, out of His infinite grace and mercy, grants respite, therefore the retribution will be slow in coming. When the time comes in accordance with Allah's Plan and Wisdom, the retribution will come so swiftly that the ungodly will be surprised and they will wish they could get more respite (xiv. 44). (2) On the great Day of Reckoning, let it not be supposed that, because there will be millions of souls to be judged, there will be any delay in judgment as in a human tribunal. It will be a new world and beyond the flight of Time. Or if a metaphor from time as we conceive it in this world can be taken, it will all be as it were in the twinkling of an eye (xvi. 77).

52. Here is a Message for mankind:  
That they may take warning  
therefrom,  
And may know that He  
Is One Allah.<sup>1931</sup>  
Let men of understanding  
Take heed.

هَذَا بَلَّغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَيَعْلَمُوا  
أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرُوا أَلَّا يَكُنُ لَهُ آلَافُ  
مُشَبِّهَاتٍ

1931. Here is another aspect of the Truth of Unity. Allah being One, all justice is of one standard, for Truth is one, and we see it as one as soon as the scales of phenomenal diversity fall from our eyes. The one true Reality then emerges. Blessed are those who treasured this Truth in their souls already in their life of probation.