

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Fāṭir*, 35.

See Introduction to the last Sūra.

This Sūra deals with the mystery of Creation and its maintenance, with various forces typified by the wings of Angels. Whether we look to outer nature or to man, Allah's Grace proclaims His Glory, and protects His votaries from Satan.

It is early Makkan Sūra.

*Summary*,—The forces which maintain Creation, were themselves created by Allah, to Whom alone all praise is due: all else is naught (xxxv. 1-26).

All good is from Allah: who then will choose Evil, and reach the doom that goes with Satan? (xxxv. 27-45).

*Fāṭir*, or The Originator of Creation;  
or *Malāika*, or The Angels.

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

1. Praise be to Allah,<sup>3869</sup>  
The Originator of<sup>3870</sup>  
The heavens and the earth,  
Who made the angels<sup>3871</sup>  
Messengers with wings,—  
Two, or three, or four (Pairs):  
He adds to Creation<sup>3872</sup>  
As He pleases: for Allah  
Has power over all things.

2. What Allah out of His Mercy  
Doth bestow on mankind  
None can withhold:  
What He doth withhold,



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَكِ  
رُسُلًا أُولَىٰ أَجْنَحَةٍ مِّثْنَىٰ وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ  
مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

مَا يَفْتَحِ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا  
وَمَا يُمْسِكْ فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ  
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

3869. See n. 3785 to xxxiv. 1. When we praise Allah, it means that we understand and bring to mind that His glory and power are exercised for the good of His Creation, and this is the subject-matter of the Sūra.

3870. As man's knowledge of the processes of nature advances, he sees how complex is the evolution of matter itself, leaving out the question of the origin of Life and the spiritual forces, which are beyond the ken of experimental science. But this knowledge itself becomes a sort of "veil of Light": man becomes so conscious of the proximate causes, that he is apt, in his pride, to forget the primal Cause, the ultimate hand of Allah in Creation. And then, creation is such a complex process: see some of the ideas involved explained by different words in n. 120 to ii. 117. The word *faṭara* here used means the creation of primeval matter, to which further creative processes have to be added by the hand of Allah, or Allah "adds to His Creation as He pleases", not only in quantity, but in qualities, functions, relations and variations in infinite ways.

3871. They are Messengers or Instruments of Allah's Will, and may have a few or numerous Errands entrusted to them. Cf. the description of the Spirit of Inspiration in xxvi. 193, and of the spirits or angels for executing the Commands of Allah in lxxix. 1-5.

3872. See n. 3870 above, where the complexities of the creative processes is referred to Allah's creation did not stop at some past time: it continues, for He has all power, and His mercies are ever poured forth without stint.

None can grant,<sup>3873</sup>  
 Apart from Him:  
 And He is the Exalted  
 In Power, Full of Wisdom.

3. O men! Remember  
 The grace of Allah unto you!  
 Is there a Creator, other<sup>3874</sup>  
 Than Allah, to give you  
 Sustenance from heaven  
 Or earth? There is  
 No god but He: how  
 Then are ye perverted?

4. And if they reject thee,  
 So were messengers rejected<sup>3875</sup>  
 Before thee: to Allah  
 All affairs are returned

5. O men! certainly  
 The promise of Allah<sup>3876</sup>

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ خَلْقٍ  
 عِندَ اللّٰهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَا اِلَهَ  
 اِلَّا هُوَ فَاَنْفِ تَوَفُّكُوتَ ﴿٢﴾

وَإِنْ يَكْذِبُواكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ  
 وَلِلّٰهِ تَرْجِعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤﴾

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ  
 الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمُ بِاللّٰهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿٥﴾

3873. As Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of all beings and things, so does His kindness extend to all Creatures. No one can intercept Allah's mercies and gifts. Whatever is His Will and Plan and Purpose He can and does carry out. And if from any creature He withholds any particular gifts, there is no other person or power that can give those gifts. But such withholding is not arbitrary. He is full of wisdom and goodness, and every act of His, whether He withholds or gives, is full of kindness and mercy to His creatures.

3874. As the primal Cause of all things is Allah, an appeal is made to man to turn to Allah instead of running after false fancies. Allah is not only the source, but the centre of all life and activity, and all affairs return to Him. The world is sustained, and human life is sustained, by Allah's grace and providence. "Sustenance" is to be taken, in Quranic language, for all that helps to maintain and develop every aspect of life, physical and spiritual. It would be the height of folly, then, for man to ignore Allah's gracious Message, as explained in His Revelation.

3875. And yet there will be human perversity which will reject the True and accept the False. The prophet of Allah is not discouraged by this, as everything ultimately returns to Allah, and we must trust to His Wisdom in His Universal Plan.

3876. In verse 3 above the appeal was on the basis of the Past and the Present: now the appeal is on the basis of the Future. Allah's grace has promised us the Garden of Bliss; His justice has promised us the Fire of Suffering. Both promises are certain to be fulfilled. On which side shall we range ourselves?

Is true, let not then  
This present life deceive you,<sup>3877</sup>  
Nor let the Chief Deceiver  
Deceive you about Allah.

6. Verily Satan is an enemy  
To you: so treat him<sup>3878</sup>  
As an enemy. He only  
Invites his adherents,  
That they may become  
Companions of the Blazing Fire.

7. For those who reject Allah,<sup>3879</sup>  
Is a terrible Chastisement but  
For those who believe  
And work righteous deeds,  
Is Forgiveness, and  
A magnificent Reward.

## SECTION 2.

8. Is he, then, to whom  
The evil of his conduct  
Is made alluring, so  
That he looks upon it<sup>3880</sup>

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو  
حَزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَصِفُ  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ

3877. Cf. xxxi. 33 and n. 3624. The deception of Evil takes two forms. (1) The seductive temptations of this world may deceive us into forgetting the Hereafter. (2) The Arch-Enemy himself may so blind our vision that we may say with him, "Evil! be thou my good!" We may be misled by easy stages. Are we on our guard?

3878. Evil is our enemy and should be treated as such. It is really foreign to our nature, however much it may disguise itself to deceive us as our friend, or a part of our own nature. Personifying the Spirit of Evil, we may say that he wants us to share in his own damnation. Shall we allow ourselves to fall into his snare?

3879. To reject Allah is to reject all the good which He has implanted in our nature. Are we going to be false to the true Pattern according to which He created us, and suffer the consequences? Or are we going to be true to that Pattern and achieve the high and noble Destiny intended for us?

3880. Cf. n. 3877 above. When a stage is reached at which a man accepts Evil as his Good, his case is hopeless. Can such a man profit by preaching or guidance? He has himself deliberately rejected all guidance. Such a man is best left to stray. Perhaps, even in the paths in which he is straying, some sudden flash of light may come to him! That =

As good, (equal to one  
Who is rightly guided)?  
For Allah leaves to stray  
Whom He wills, and guides  
Whom He wills. So  
Let not thy soul be vested  
In regret for them  
For Allah knows well  
All that they do!

9. It is Allah Who sends  
Forth the Winds, so that  
They raise up the Clouds,<sup>3881</sup>  
And We drive them  
To a land that is dead,  
And revive the earth therewith  
After its death: even so  
(Will be) the Resurrection!

10. If any do seek  
For glory and power,<sup>-3882</sup>

عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٨﴾

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَاُسْقِنَهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ  
مَّيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذَلِكَ  
النُّشُورُ ﴿٩﴾

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْيِدُ الْغَزَا فَلِلَّهِ الْغَزَا جَمِيعًا إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ

= may be as Allah wills in His holy and wise Purpose and Plan. But the prophet of Allah is not to worry or feel disheartened by such men's attitude. He must go on tilling the soil that is open to him. For Allah's Plan may work in all sorts of unexpected ways, as in the allegory in the next verse.

3881. The allegory here is double. (1) Dry, unpromising soil may seem to all intents and purposes dead; there is no source of water near; moisture is sucked up by the sun's heat in a far-off ocean, and clouds are formed; winds arise; it seems as if the wind "bloweth as it listeth", but it is really Allah's Providence that drives it to the dead land; the rain falls, and behold! there is life and motion and beauty everywhere! So in the spiritual world, Allah's Revelation is His Mercy and His Rain; there may be the individual resurrection (*Nushūr*) or unfolding of a soul. (2) So again, may be the general Resurrection (*Nushūr*), the unfolding of a new World in the Hereafter, out of an old World that is folded up and dead (*Takwīr*, S. lxxx).

3882. Good and Evil are to be distinguished sharply. No good is ever lost: it goes up to Allah. The humblest Good, in word or deed, is exalted to high rank. If man seeks for mere glory and power, there is no such thing apart from Allah. But seeking Allah, we attain to the highest glory and power.

To Allah belong  
All glory and power.  
To Him mount up  
(All) Words of Purity:  
It is He Who exalts  
Each Deed of Righteousness.  
Those that lay Plots<sup>3883</sup>  
Of Evil,—for them  
Is a Chastisement terrible;  
And the plotting of such  
Will be void (of result).

11. And Allah did create<sup>3884</sup>

You from dust;  
Then<sup>3885</sup> from a sperm-drop;  
Then He made you  
In pairs. And no female  
Conceives, or lays down  
(Her load), but with His  
Knowledge. Nor is a man  
Long-lived granted length  
Of days, nor is a part  
Cut off from his life,  
But is in a Book<sup>3886</sup>

الْكَلِمَ الطَّيِّبَ وَالْعَمَلَ الصَّالِحَ يَرْفَعُهُ وَالَّذِينَ  
يَمْكُرُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ  
وَمَكْرُؤُهُمْ هُوَ يَبُورُ ﴿١١﴾

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ  
أَزْوَاجًا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَى وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ  
وَمَا يُعْمَرُ مِنْ مُعَمَّرٍ وَلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرٍ  
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

3883. It is the nature of Evil to work underground, to hide from the Light, to plot against Righteousness; but Evil inevitably carries its own punishment. Its plots must fail miserably. And eventually Evil itself is to be blotted out.

3884. Cf. xviii. 37 and n. 2379; xxii. 5 and n. 2773; and xxx. 20, and n. 3524. Here the argument is that man's physical origin is lowly: his physical body is but dust; his life-sperm issues from a part of his body which he hides and considers as a place of shame; and the mystery of sex shows that no one individual among mankind is sufficient in himself. Glory and power and knowledge are not in him, but in Allah, from Whom alone he derives any glory, or power, or knowledge that he possesses.

3885. "Then" in this and the following clause refers, not to stages of time, but to stages in the argument. It is almost equivalent to "further", "also", and "in addition".

3886. Things that appear most secret and mysterious to man are all known and ordained by Allah. They are all subject to Allah's Laws and Decrees. The mystery of human birth (see n. 3625 to xxxi. 34), the mystery of sex, the mystery of Life and Death and many other things, seem to man inexplicable. But they are all ordained by Allah, and their reasons are fully known to Him.

(Ordned). All this  
Is easy to Allah.<sup>3887</sup>

12. Nor are the two seas alike,<sup>3888</sup>  
The one palatable, sweet,  
And pleasant to drink,  
And the other, salt  
And bitter. Yet from each  
(Kind of water) do ye  
Eat flesh fresh and tender,<sup>3889</sup>  
And ye extract ornaments<sup>3890</sup>  
To wear; and thou seest  
The ships therein that plough  
The waves, that ye may  
Seek (thus) of the Bounty  
Of Allah that ye  
May be grateful.

13. He merges Night into Day,<sup>3891</sup>  
And He merges Day

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرَانِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَائِغٌ  
شَرَابُهُ، وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَمِنْ كُلِّ تَاكُلُونَ لَحْمًا  
طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُونَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى  
الْفُلَّكَ فِيهِ مَوَازِرَ لَبَنَ غَوَا مِنْ فُضْلِهِ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ

3887. Man's knowledge may be acquired laboriously and may be a burden to him. Allah's knowledge is different; it is not task or burden to Him. Cf. xxxiii. 19 and 30.

3888. See xxv. 53 and notes 3111 and 3112. The great salt Ocean with its seas and gulfs is all one: and the great masses of sweet water in rivers, lakes, ponds, and underground springs are also one: and each is connected with the other by the constant circulation going on, which sucks up vapours, carries them about in clouds or atmospheric moisture, and again brings them condensed into water or snow or hail to mingle with rivers and streams and get back into the Ocean.

3889. For this whole passage see xvi. 14 and notes 2034 and 2035. Both from the sea and from rivers and lakes we get fish, of which some kinds have a flesh particularly fresh and tender, and of a most delicate flavour.

3890. Such as pearls and coral from the sea, and such delicately tinted stones as the 'Aqiq (carnelian), the agate, the goldstone, or other varieties of quartz pebbles found in river-beds, and considered as gems. Many such are found in the Ken river in Banda District (in India). Some river sands also yield minute quantities of gold. In large navigable rivers and big Lakes like those of North America, as well as in the sea, there are highways for shipping and commerce.

3891. Cf. xxii. 61. The phases of Light in nature may have other uses. But for man they mark periods of rest and activity, and have great influence on his physical, moral, and spiritual life.

Into Night, and He has  
 Subjected the sun and  
 The moon (to His Law):<sup>3892</sup>  
 Each one runs its course  
 For a term appointed.  
 Such is Allah your Lord:<sup>3893</sup>  
 To Him belongs all Dominion.  
 And those whom ye invoke  
 Besides Him own not  
 A straw.<sup>3894</sup>

وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي  
 لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ  
 وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ  
 مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. If ye invoke them,  
 They will not listen  
 To your call, and if<sup>3895</sup>  
 They were to listen,  
 The cannot answer  
 Your (prayer). On the Day  
 Of Judgment they will reject<sup>3896</sup>  
 Your "Partnership". And none,

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا  
 مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ  
 بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَيْرٍ ﴿١٤﴾

3892. Cf. xiii. 2. The sun and the moon mark phases of light, and serve man during the periods of the day and the night. The sun marks the seasons, and is the source of heat and energy and physical life for the whole solar system. The sun and the moon run according to fixed laws, and they will continue to do so, not for ever, but for the period appointed for their duration by Allah.

3893. Allah's might and majesty, and Allah's goodness and wisdom, having been shown by a few examples, it follows that it is folly to seek or worship any other power but Allah. It only throws off man into false paths, and takes him farther and farther away from the Truth.

3894. *Qitmir*: the thin, white skin that covers the date-stone. It has neither strength nor texture, and has no value whatever. Any one relying on any power other than that of Allah relies on nothing whatever. The *Qitmir* is worse than the proverbial "broken reed". Cf. iv. 53 and iv. 124, where the word *naqir*, 'the groove in a date-stone', is used similarly for a thing of no value or significance.

3895. False or imaginary objects of worship serve no purpose whatever. They cannot hear; if they could hear, they could not grant prayers or petitions. In fact, if they are real creatures, such as angels or deified human beings, they will very rightly repudiate any such worship as brings them into competition or "partnership" with Allah. See next note.

3896. Cf. x. 28 and n. 1418; also xxxiv. 40-41. No false ideas or false impressions will remain when true values are restored. Why not then accept the Truth now in this life, and get on to the true path of Grace?



(O man!) can inform you<sup>3897</sup>  
Like Him who is  
All-Aware.

## SECTION 3.

15. O ye men! It is  
Ye that have need  
Of Allah: but Allah is<sup>3898</sup>  
The One Free of all wants,  
Worthy of all praise.

16. If He so pleased, He  
Could blot you out  
And bring in  
A New Creation

17. Nor is that (at all)  
Difficult for Allah.<sup>3899</sup>

18. Nor can a bearer<sup>3900</sup> of burdens  
Bear another's burden.  
If one heavily laden should  
Call another to (bear) his load,  
Not the least portion of it  
Can be carried (by the other)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾

إِنْ يَشَاءْ يُدْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾

وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿١٧﴾

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ وَإِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ  
إِلَىٰ جَمَلِهَا لَا يَحْمِلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ  
إِنَّمَا نُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ

3897. None can tell you the Truth better than He Who is All-Wise and All-knowing. Why not accept His Message and receive His guidance?

3898. What is man that Allah should care for him, instruct him, and send him special messengers to warn him of danger and harm? It is man that depends on Allah and has need of Him every moment of his life. Allah has no need of him, but He bestows His Grace on him as on all His creatures, out of His unbounded Mercy and loving-kindness. If it were Allah's Will, He could blot out man for his rebellion and create an entirely new world.

3899. There is no limit to Allah's creative power, nor is His creative energy anything rare or unusual. This is the force of the word 'azîz here. Allah's creative energy is exercised every moment, and it is the normal condition in the universe.

3900. Bearer: *hāmīlatun*: feminine in Arabic, as referring to the soul (*nafs*), as in vi. 164.

Even though he be nearly<sup>3901</sup>  
 Related. Thou canst but  
 Warn such as fear  
 Their Lord unseen<sup>3902</sup>  
 And establish regular Prayer.<sup>3903</sup>  
 And whoever purifies himself  
 Does so for the benefit  
 Of his own soul; and  
 The destination (of all)  
 Is to Allah.

وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَمَنْ تَرَكَنَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَرَكَ  
 لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

19. The blind and the seeing  
 Are not alike;<sup>3904</sup>
20. Nor are the depths  
 Of Darkness and the Light;
21. Nor are the (chilly) shade  
 And the (genial) heat of the sun:

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٩﴾

وَلَا الظُّلُمَاتُ وَلَا النُّورُ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُورُ ﴿٢١﴾

3901. Natural relationship may be considered as a reasonable cause or opportunity for bearing each other's burdens. For example, a mother or a father might offer to die for her or his child, and *vice versa*. But this does not apply to spiritual matters. There the responsibility is strictly personal and cannot be transferred to another. In xxix. 13 we are told that the misleaders "will bear other burdens along with their own"; but the context shows that the "other" burdens are the burdens of deluding others with their falsehoods. Both sins are their own, *viz.*, their original sin, and the sin of deluding the others. But the responsibility will be doubled.

3902. *Bil-gaibi*: unseen in the adverbial sense. The man, who, though he does not see Allah, so realises Allah's Presence in himself as if he saw Him, is the man of genuine Faith, and for him Allah's Revelation comes through many channels and is always fruitful.

3903. Prayer is one of the means of purifying ourselves of lower motives in life, for in prayer we seek the Presence of Allah. But the purity which we seek is for our own souls: we confer no favour on Allah or on any Power in the spiritual world, as some imagine who make "gifts" to Allah. In any case the destination of all is to Allah.

3904. Now we are offered some contrasts between those who obey Allah's Law and are thus citizens of Allah's Kingdom and those who are rebels against Allah's Kingdom and are thus outlaws. How can they be considered alike? The godly are like those who see, as contrasted with those who are blind; and their motives and actions are like the purest and highest Light, contrasted with the depths of darkness; or, to take another metaphor, their lives are like the genial and warmth-giving heat of the sun, which benefits all who come within its influence, contrasted with the chilly shadows of gloom in which no vegetation flourishes.

22. Nor are alike those<sup>3905</sup>  
That are living and those  
That are dead. Allah can  
Make any that He wills  
To hear; but thou  
Canst not make those  
To hear who are  
(Buried) in graves.

23. Thou art no other  
Than a warner.<sup>3906</sup>

24. Verily We have sent thee  
With truth, as a bearer  
Of glad tidings,<sup>3907</sup>  
And as a warner:  
And there never was  
A people, without a warner  
Having lived among them  
(In the past).

25. And if they reject thee,  
So did their predecessors,  
To whom came their messengers  
With Clear Signs,

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ  
وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾

إِنْ أَنتَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَإِن مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ  
إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَلَن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ  
جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالنُّزُرِ وَيَا لِكُتُبِ  
الْمُنِيرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

3905. The final contrast is between the Living and the Dead; those whose future has in it the promise of growth and fulfilment, and those who are inert and on the road to perish. With Allah everything is possible: He can give Life to the Dead. But the human Teacher should not expect that people who are (spiritually) dead and buried will by any chance hear his call.

3906. The function of a Prophet is to preach Allah's Truth, to point out the right Way, to show men the need of repentance, and to warn them against the dangers which they incur by living a life of evil. He cannot compel them to accept the Truth or listen to the Message.

3907. It is Allah Who sends the Revelation. While there is warning in it for the heedless, there is good news for those who listen and repent. The warning always came to all peoples before punishment.

Scriptures<sup>3908</sup>

And the illuminating Book.

26. In the end did I  
Punish those who rejected  
Faith: and how (terrible)<sup>3909</sup>  
Was My punishment.

ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

## SECTION 4.

27. Seest thou not that  
Allah sends down rain  
From the sky? With it  
We then bring out produce  
Of various colours.<sup>3910</sup>  
And in the mountains  
Are tracts white and red,<sup>3911</sup>  
Of various shades of colour,  
And black intense in hue.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ  
شَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيَضٌ  
وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٍ ﴿٧﴾

3908. The three things here mentioned are also mentioned in iii. 184, where I have explained the meaning in n. 490. All spiritual teaching centres round the evidences of Allah in our lives, the sublime teaching of Prophets of Allah, and the rules and laws which guide holy living.

3909. Cf. xxii. 44 and xxxiv. 45. The rejecters of Allah hardly realise the terrible consequences to them individually and collectively, if Allah's grace is withdrawn from them and they are left to perish in their own sins and wrong-doing.

3910. Everyone can see how Allah's artistry produces from rain the wonderful variety of crops and fruits—golden, green, red, yellow, and showing all the most beautiful tints we can think of. And each undergoes in nature the gradual shading off in its transformation from the raw stage to the stage of maturity.

3911. These wonderful colours and shades of colours are to be found not only in vegetation but in rocks and mineral products. There are the white veins of marble and quartz or of chalk, the red laterite, the blue basaltic rocks, the ink-black flints, and all the variety, shade, and gradation of colours. Speaking of mountains, we think of their "azure hue" from a distance, due to atmospheric effects, and these atmospheric effects lead our thoughts to the glories of clouds, sunsets, the zodiacal light, the *aurora borealis*, and all kinds of Nature's gorgeous pageantry.

28. And so amongst men  
And beasts and cattle,  
Are they of various colours.<sup>3912</sup>  
Those truly fear Allah,  
Among His Servants  
Who have knowledge.<sup>3913</sup>  
For Allah is Exalted in Might,  
Oft-Forgiving.

29. Those who rehearse the Book  
Of Allah, establish regular Prayer,  
And spend (in Charity)<sup>3914</sup>  
Out of what We have provided  
For them, secretly and openly,  
Hope for a Commerce<sup>3915</sup>  
That will never fail:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْذَوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ  
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ، كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ  
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ  
وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً  
يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ ﴿٢٩﴾

3912. In the physical shapes of human and animal life, also, we see variations in shades and gradations of colours of all kinds. But these variations and gradations, marvellous though they be, are as nothing compared with the variations and differences in the inner or spiritual world. See next note.

3913. In outer nature we can, through colours, understand and appreciate the finest shades and gradations. But in the spiritual world that variation or gradation is even more subtle and more comprehensive. Who can truly understand it? Only Allah's servants, who *know*, i.e., who have the inner knowledge which comes through their acquaintance with the spiritual world,—it is such people who truly appreciate the inner world, and it is they who know that the fear of Allah is the beginning of wisdom. For such fear is akin to appreciation and love,—appreciation of all the marvellous beauties of Allah's outer and inner world ("Allah is Exalted in Might") and love because of His Grace and Kindness ("Oft-Forgiving"). But Allah's forgiveness extends to many who do not truly understand Him.

3914. The man of God takes Allah's Revelation ("the Book") to heart, ever seeks to get closer and closer to Allah ("regular Prayer"), and in doing so, is moved more and more to practical Charity for his fellow-creatures. He is not ashamed of his Charity ("openly"), but he does not do it to be seen by men ("secretly"): he just does what is necessary for his fellow-creatures, whether people talk about it or not.

3915. Here is a metaphor from commerce. The good man's Charity comes not merely out of superfluities, but out of "what Allah has provided" for him. He therefore recognises two things: (1) that his wealth (literal and metaphorical) is not his absolutely, but that it is given to him by Allah; and (2) that he must deny himself the use of some of it, as a merchant puts by some of his wealth to invest as capital. Only, the godly man's =

30. For He will pay them  
Their meed, nay, He will  
Give them (even) more  
Out of His Bounty:  
For He is Oft-Forgiving,<sup>3916</sup>  
Most Ready to appreciate  
(service).<sup>3917</sup>

لِيُوفِّيَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ ۚ  
إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. That which We have revealed  
To thee of the Book  
Is the Truth,—confirming  
What was (revealed) before it:  
For Allah is assuredly—  
With respect to His servants—  
Well acquainted and<sup>3918</sup>  
Fully Observant.

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا  
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Then<sup>3919</sup> We have given  
The Book for inheritance  
To such of Our servants  
As We have chosen:

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى الَّذِينَ آصَافَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا  
فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ، وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ

= Commerce will never fail or fluctuate; because Allah guarantees him the return, and even adds something to the return out of His own Bounty. That is, Allah gives more than ever our merits deserve.

3916. No man is perfect. Everyone has his fault. But when a man tries his best in the service of Allah, his faults are blotted out, and he is treated as if he had committed no faults: "for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, and ready to appreciate service".

3917. Cf. xiv. 5, and n. 2877 for *shakūr*. Allah is ready to recognise, appreciate, and reward the smallest service, without regard to the defects in that service. His gracious acceptance is compared to "gratitude" among men.

3918. All Revelation is one. The Qur-ān therefore confirms the main and uncorrupted features of previous revelations. It must be so, because Allah is fully cognisant of the needs of every age and people; and therefore His Message, while it meets those needs, must in essence be the same. His Messengers did not meet each other as men; but their contact with Allah through inspiration unified their Message. And He cares for and watches over all men, and He knows fully what their needs are, even better than they know themselves.

3919. The force of "then" is that of finality. The Qur-ān is that last Book revealed. Or it may be here to point the contrast between "to thee" in the last verse, i.e., the holy Prophet, in contradistinction to the People of Islam, who inherited the Book after him.

But there are among them<sup>3920</sup>  
Some who wrong their own  
Souls; some who follow  
A middle course; and some  
Who are, by Allah's leave,  
Foremost in good deeds;  
That is the highest Grace.

33. Gardens of Eternity will they<sup>3921</sup>  
Enter: therein will they  
Be adorned with bracelets<sup>3922</sup>  
Of gold and pearls;  
And their garments there  
Will be of silk.

34. And they will say:  
"Praise be to Alah,  
Who has removed from us  
(All) sorrow: for our Lord

سَاقِئٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ  
هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٣﴾

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ  
مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ  
إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

3920. The custodians of the Qur-ān after the holy Prophet were the People of Islam. They were chosen for the Book, not in any narrow sense, but in the sense that the Book was given for their age and they were charged to obey it and preserve and propagate it, so that all mankind should receive the Message. But it does not follow that they are all true and faithful to their charge, as indeed we see too painfully around us to-day. Just as mankind was chosen collectively to be Vicegerents and yet some among mankind fell into evil,—even so, some in the house of Islam fail to follow the Light given to them, and thus "wrong their own souls". But some follow a middle course: in their case "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak": their intentions are good, but they have much to learn yet of the true Muslim life and Muslim virtues. Then there is a third class: they may not indeed be perfect, but both their intentions and their conduct are sound, and they form an example to other men: they are "foremost" in every good deed. They are so, not by their own merits, but by the Grace of Allah. And they have reached the highest Achievement,— the salvation.

3921. "The Garden" signifies their environment: all they see about them will give them comfort, rest, and satisfaction, and a feeling of beauty and dignity. The jewels and clothes signify their personal external state: here, again, everything will give them a sense of beauty and dignity, comfort, rest, and satisfaction. And finally, most important of all, comes their internal state, where again they will have the same sense of beauty, dignity, comfort, rest, and satisfaction: this is indicated by their words of Praise (verses 34-35).

3922. Cf. xviii. 31 and xxii. 23.

Is indeed Oft-Forgiving  
Ready to appreciate (service):<sup>3923</sup>

35. "Who has, out of His Bounty,  
Settled us in a Home  
That will last: no toil  
Nor sense of weariness<sup>3924</sup>  
Shall touch us therein."

36. But those who reject (Allah)–  
For them will be  
The Fire of Hell:<sup>3925</sup>  
No term shall be determined  
For them, so they should die,  
Nor shall its Chastisement  
Be lightened for them.  
Thus do We reward  
Every ungrateful one!

37. Therein will they cry  
Aloud (for assistance):  
"Our Lord! Bring us out:<sup>3926</sup>

الَّذِي أَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمَقَامَةِ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَا يَمَسُّنَا  
فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيهَا الْغُوبُ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ  
فِيمُوتُوا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا كَذَٰلِكَ  
يَجْزَىٰ كُلُّ كَفُورٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا  
غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم

3923. Cf. above. xxxv. 30. Note how beautifully the argument is rounded off. In verse 30 they were told that "Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate service". Now they have reached the Goal, and they have found the Promise profoundly true. All their hopes are fulfilled, and their sorrows ended.

3924. In case it should be thought that perpetual happiness might cloy or be dull, as would be the case in this life, it is added—as the experience of those who attain that state—that it is not so on that plane of existence. Not only is there Joy, but it remains fresh and leads to no weariness.

3925. The "Fire" is the opposite to the "Garden". Instead of there being comfort, rest, and satisfaction in their environment, there will be pain, suffering and anguish. Instead of there being dignity there will be humiliation. And there will be no hope of its termination or abatement, not even a hope of annihilation.

3926. Cf. xxiii. 107. Not only will their surroundings be the opposite of those in Heaven: their internal state will be one of humiliation, of piteous and fruitless appeals, of vain regrets for a past that cannot be recalled, and vain sights for a future whose gates they have themselves barred. If they were sent back, they would relapse to their sins. Cf. vi. 28.



We shall work righteousness,<sup>3927</sup>  
 Not the (deeds) we used  
 To do!"—"Did we not  
 Give you long enough life  
 So that he that would  
 Should receive admonition?  
 And (moreover) the warner  
 Came to you. So taste ye<sup>3928</sup>  
 (The fruits of your deeds):  
 For the Wrong-doers  
 There is no helper."

## SECTION 5.

38. Verily Allah knows  
 (All) the hidden things  
 Of the heavens and the earth:<sup>3929</sup>  
 Verily He has full knowledge  
 Of all that is  
 In (men's) hearts.
39. He it is that has made  
 You inheritors in the earth:<sup>3930</sup>  
 So, he who disbelieves  
 His disbelief be on

مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مِنْ تَذَكُّرٍ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ  
 فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 إِنَّهُ عَلِيمُ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٣٨﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ  
 كُفْرِهِ وَلَا يَزِدِ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

3927. Cf. vii. 53. Their hankering after another chance, after having deliberately rejected all chances, will have no basis of reason in it.

3928. They had a long enough respite for repentance and amendment. And moreover, besides all the other sources, in nature, history, and their own hearts, by which they could learn of the Right, they had the actual teaching and warning of a messenger whose words spoke direct to them. In the circumstances the Penalty is only the fruit of their own conduct.

3929. Everything that exists is known to Allah: not only concrete things, but feelings, motives, plans, and acts of the will in the human breast.

3930. *Inheritors: khalāif*. In two senses: (1) as Vicegerents on earth, and (2) as successors to previous people who forfeited their rights by wrong-doing. The honour and dignity of (1) and the examples of the past in (2) should have kept them straight and made them truly grateful. See also vi. 165 and n. 988.

His own self their disbelief:<sup>3931</sup>

But adds to the odium  
For the Unbelievers  
In the sight of their Lord:  
Their disbelief but adds  
To (their own) loss.

إِلَآمَقْنَا وَلَا يَرْيِدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Say: "Have ye seen"<sup>3932</sup>

(These) 'Partners' of yours  
Whom ye call upon  
Besides Allah? Show me  
What it is they have created  
In the (wide) earth.  
Or have they a share  
In the heavens? Or  
Have We given them a Book  
From which they (can derive)  
Clear (evidence)?—Nay,  
The wrong-doers promise  
Each other nothing but delusions.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ  
أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
أَمْ أَنبِئْتُهُم بِكُتُبِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ يَبِينٍ مِّنْهُ  
بَلْ إِن يَبْدُؤُا الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُم بَعْضًا  
إِلَآ غُرُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾

3931. Their rejection and ingratitude only causes injury to themselves. They lose all honour and incur odium in the sight of Allah, and they complete their own undoing.

3932. The people who enthrone in their hearts for worship anything besides Allah may well be asked a few questions. Some of such questions are indicated in the text with terse precision: (1) Have you seen these gods of yours? Do they exist? "Seeing" of course does not necessarily mean physical sight. We do not see the air, but no one doubts that it exists. And the air is a physical substance. There are forces that we know exist, but we do not see them. To us, who have Faith, Allah is a truer Reality than anything else that we know, including ourselves. Can the false worshippers say that of any of their false gods? (2) Have your gods created or originated anything on earth? You may worship power or wealth, but that is a scramble for things as between selfish men. Power or wealth does not create new men or new worlds. (3) Have they a share in the ordering of the heavens? Obviously your false gods fail there. (4) Or have these false gods a book or revelation from the Supreme God, with clear evidence, to give them authority to teach men? The Prophets or Messengers of Allah have such authority, and they bring evidence of the One True God. The fact is that falsehood is falsehood, however much one form of it may support another by delusions.

41. It is Allah Who sustains  
The heavens and the earth,<sup>3933</sup>  
Lest they cease (to function):  
And if they should fail.  
There is none—not one—  
Can sustain them thereafter:  
Verily He is Most Forbearing,<sup>3934</sup>  
Oft-Forgiving.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا  
وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ  
إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤١﴾

42. They swore their strongest oaths  
By Allah that if a warner  
Came to them, they would  
Be more rightly guided  
Than anyone of the nations.<sup>3935</sup>  
But when a warner came  
To them, it has only  
Increased their aversion.

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ  
لَيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ أَحَدَى الْأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ  
مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿٤٢﴾

43. On account of their arrogance  
In the land and their

أَسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ وَلَا يَحِيقُ

3933. The universe, as we know it, shows not only evidence of initial designs, but also the working of the Creator who constantly sustains it. That is Allah. If you could imagine that removed, what is there to keep it going? There would only be chaos.

3934. Allah's world goes on according to the laws and decrees established by Him. There are occasional lapses and deviations on the part of His creatures. But He does not punish every petty fault. One of His merciful qualities is that of repeated forbearance and forgiveness.

3935. Cf. vi. 157. In the first instance this referred to the Quraish. Their attitude to the People of the Book had been one of lofty superiority or of insincere excuses. They twitted the Jews and Christians with deviating from their own lights and their own revelations; and for themselves, they said they had received no direct revelation from Allah, or they would have shown themselves the most amenable to discipline, the most ready to follow Allah's Law. This was before the holy Prophet received his mission from Allah. When he received it and announced it, they turned away from it. They fled from it and put a greater and greater distance between it and themselves. But this is the way of all sinners. They find much to carp at in others, and much to excuse in themselves. But when all grounds for excuse are removed, they will be found, not nearer, but farther and farther away from truth and righteousness.

Plotting of Evil.<sup>3936</sup>

But the plotting of Evil  
Will hem in only  
The authors thereof. Now  
Are they but looking for  
The way the ancients<sup>3937</sup>  
Were dealt with? But  
No change wilt thou find  
In Allah's way (of dealing):<sup>3938</sup>  
No turning off wilt thou  
Find in Allah's way (of dealing).

44. Do they not travel  
Through the earth, and see<sup>3939</sup>  
What was the End  
Of those before them,-  
Though they were superior  
To them in strength?  
Nor is Allah to be frustrated  
By anything whatever  
In the heavens  
Or on earth: for He  
Is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئِ إِلَّا يَأْهْلِهِ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا اسْتَنْتَ  
الْأَوَّلِينَ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ  
اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ  
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَمَا كَانَ  
اللَّهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿٤٤﴾

3936. Two causes are mentioned why the Truth is refused acceptance. (1) Unregenerate man is arrogant, and Truth and Righteousness expose all his pretences. (2) He hopes, by underhand plots, to undermine Truth and destroy it; but he is caught in his own snares, while Truth marches forward triumphant.

3937. In all history, men who followed evil were dealt with in three stages by Allah: (1) He was forbearing and merciful, and gave them respite; (2) He sent them admonition through His Messengers, or His Signs, or His revelation; (3) He dealt out justice and punishment. At any given moment, those given to iniquity may well be asked: "Are you going to wait through all these stages or are you going at once to repent, obtain forgiveness, and walk in the ways of righteousness?"

3938. Allah's Laws are fixed, and His ways of dealing with those who follow iniquity are the same in all ages. Our human will may falter or turn away from its course, but Allah's Will ever follows its course and cannot be turned away by any cause whatever.

3939. Cf. xxx. 9. If no other argument will convince men who follow evil, let them travel through space or time, and learn from the experience of others. Evil always came to an evil end. Let not any one individual or generation think that it could escape by some special trick or power. Far wiser and more powerful men were personally brought to account for their iniquities.

45. If Allah were to punish<sup>3940</sup>  
 Men according to what  
 They deserve, He would not  
 Leave on the back  
 Of the (earth) a single<sup>3941</sup>  
 Living creature: but He  
 Gives them respite  
 For a stated Term:  
 When their Term expires,  
 Verily Allah has in His sight<sup>3942</sup>  
 All His servants.

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا  
 مَا تَرَكْنَا عَلَى ظَهْرِهِم مِّن دَابَّةٍ وَلَكِن  
 يُؤَخِّرُهُم إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ  
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

3940. Cf. xvi. 61. There would be no salvation for any of us if we went merely on our deserts. It is Allah's mercy that saves us and helps us to a better and better life until we attain the goal of our existence.

3941. *A single living creature.* This may refer to man, the living crawling creature, with so many possibilities and yet so many weaknesses. But it may mean all creatures literally, as the life of this planet more or less centres round the life of man. He has been given dominion on this earth, and in his state of purity he is Allah's vicegerent.

3942. *Has in His sight all creatures:* i.e., to deal with, according to His laws of Forbearance, Mercy and Justice: see n. 3937 above. The respite does not mean that any one escapes His vigilant eye. All will be dealt with according to their deeds, with justice tempered with Mercy.