

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Muḥammad*, 47.

We have examined and followed the current arrangement of the Sūras according to subject-matter and independently of chronology, and we have found that a logical thread runs through them. We have now finished more than five-sixths of the Qur-ān. The remaining sixth consists of short Sūras, but these are again grouped according to subject-matter.

We begin the first of such groups with a group of three Sūras (xlvii, to xlix.), which deal with the organisation of the Muslim Ummah or community both for external defence and in internal relations. The present Sūra deals with the necessity of defence against external foes by courage and strenuous fighting, and dates from about the first year of the Hijra, when the Muslims were under threat of extinction by invasion from Makkah.

Summary.—Aggressive hostility to Faith and Truth should be fought firmly, and Allah will guide (xlvii. 1-19).

Faint-heartedness condemned; those who strive and those who turn away will be sorted out (xlvii. 20-38).

Muḥammad (the Prophet).

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

1. Those who reject Allah
And hinder (men) from
The Path of Allah,–
Their deeds will Allah
Bring to naught.⁴⁸¹⁷
2. But those who believe
And work deeds of
Righteousness, and believe
In the (Revelation) sent down
To Muḥamad–for it is
The Truth from their Lord,–
He will remove from them
Their ills and improve
Their condition.⁴⁸¹⁸
3. This because those who
Reject Allah follow falsehood.
While those who believe follow
The Truth from their Lord:
Thus does Allah set forth⁴⁸¹⁹
For men their lessons
By similitudes.

سُورَةُ مُحَمَّدٍ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَءَامَنُوا بِمَا نَزَّلَ
عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ
وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ
أَمْثَلَهُمْ ﴿٣﴾

4817. Whatever they do will miss its mark, because Allah is the source of all energy and life. If the wicked try to persecute men or seduce them from the Truth, the result will be the opposite of what they intend.

4818. *Bāl* means state or condition, whether external, or of the heart and mind. Both meanings apply here. The more the wicked rage, the better will be the position of the righteous, and Allah will make it easier and easier for the righteous to love and follow the Truth.

4819. We learn the greatest moral lessons by parables and similitudes from things that happen in the outer world. If a man goes after a mirage or a thing that has no real existence, he can never reach his goal, while the man that follows the kindly Light from Allah that leads him on must be happier in mind, sounder in heart, and firmer in life, generally for every moment that he lives.

4. Therefore, when ye meet⁴⁸²⁰
 The Unbelievers (in fight),
 Smite at their necks;
 At length, when ye have
 Thoroughly subdued them,
 Bind (the captives)⁴⁸²¹
 Firmly: therefore
 (Is the time for) either
 Generosity or ransom:⁴⁸²²
 Until the war lays down
 Its burdens. Thus (are ye
 Commanded): but if it
 Had been Allah's Will,
 He could certainly have exacted
 Retribution from them (Himself);
 But (He lets you fight)
 In order to test you,⁴⁸²³
 Some with others.
 But those who are slain⁴⁸²⁴
 In the way of Allah,-
 He will never let
 Their deeds be lost.

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَخَسَّسْتُمُوهُمْ
 فَشَدُّوا أَلْوَتَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ
 أَوْزَارَهَا ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَآنْتَصِرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَ
 بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
 فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٤٧﴾

4820. When once the fight (*Jihād*) is entered upon, carry it out with the utmost vigour, and strike home your blows at the most vital points (*smite at their necks*), both literally and figuratively. You cannot wage war with kid gloves.

4821. In the first onset there must necessarily be great loss of life; "after the enemy's numbers are fairly thinned down, prisoners may be taken". With this passage may be compared viii. 67, and n. 1234.

4822. When once the enemy is brought under control, generosity (*i.e.*, the release of prisoners without ransom) or ransom is recommended.

4823. The Believers are tested in Faith by the extent to which they are willing to make sacrifices, even to the laying down of their lives; and the enemies are tested as to whether they would repent and let the righteous live in freedom and security.

4824. There are two alternative readings, (1) *qatalū*, "those who fight", and (2) *qutilū*, "those who are slain". The meaning under the first reading is wider, and includes that under the second. I have translated on the basis of the second reading, which is in accordance with the text of the Royal Egyptian edition.

5. Soon will He guide them⁴⁸²⁵
And improve their condition,

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٥﴾

6. And admit them to
The Garden which He⁴⁸²⁶
Has made known to them.

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا هُمْ ﴿٦﴾

7. O ye who believe!
If ye will help
(The cause of) Allah,
He will help you,
And plant your feet firmly.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ
وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ ﴿٧﴾

8. But those who reject (Allah),-
For them is destruction,
And (Allah) will bring
Their deeds to naught.⁴⁸²⁷

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعْسًا لَهُمْ وَأَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٨﴾

9. That is because they
Hate the Revelation of Allah;
So He has made
Their deeds fruitless.⁴⁸²⁸

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنزِلَ اللَّهُ فَاحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

10. Do they not travel⁴⁸²⁹
Through the earth, and see
What was the End
Of those before them
(Who did evil)?
Allah brought utter destruction
On them, and similar
(Fates await) those who
Reject Allah.

﴿١٠﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَلُهَا

4825. If we read "who are slain" in the last clause but one of verse 4, (see last note), "guide" would mean "guide them in their journey after death".

4826. "The Garden which He has made known to them ": Cf. ii. 25.

4827. See above, xlvii. 1 and n. 4817.

4828. Their deeds are "fruitless" in the sense that they are vain; they do not produce the results intended by their doers. But they will not be exempt from producing the natural consequences of evil, viz., further degradation and misery for the soul.

4829. The end of evil is evil. All past history and tradition shows that. Will not men of every generation learn that lesson? Allah helps His servants, but those who rebel against Allah have no one to help them.

11. That is because Allah
Is the Protector of those
Who believe, but
Those who reject Allah
Have no protector.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ
لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾

SECTION 2.

12. Verily Allah will admit
Those who believe and do
Righteous deeds, to Gardens
Beneath which rivers flow;
While those who reject Allah
Will enjoy (this world)⁴⁸³⁰
And eat as cattle eat;
And the Fire will
Be their abode.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَسْتَمْنَعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ
كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And how many cities,
With more power than
Thy city which has
Driven thee out,⁴⁸³¹
Have We destroyed
(For their sins)?
And there was none
To aid them.

وَكَايْنٍ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِنْ قَرْيِكَ
الَّتِي أَخْرَجَكَ أَهْلُكُنْهُمْ فَلَا تَاصِرَ لَهُمْ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Is then one who is
On a clear⁴⁸³² (Path)
From his Lord,

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ يَتْرَافٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ
وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٤﴾

4830. An apt simile. Beasts of the field eat their fill, but have no higher interests. Men who worship the world exclusively are no better: their pleasures and enjoyments rise no higher than those of the beasts of the field. They have no inkling of spiritual happiness. On the contrary, as they were endowed with spiritual faculties which they misused, they will not escape the Fire of Punishment, the Penalty of Sin.

4831. A reference to Pagan Makkah, which drove out the holy Prophet because of his righteousness and because he preached Repentance. The date of this Sūra must therefore be after the Hijrat.

4832. Clear, or enlightened; a Path on which shines the Light of Allah.

No better than one
To whom the evil
Of his conduct seems pleasing,
And such as follow
Their own lusts?

15. (Here is) the description
Of the Garden which
The righteous are promised:
In it are rivers
Of water unstaling;⁴⁸³³
Rivers of milk
Of which the taste
Never changes; rivers
Of wine, a joy
To those who drink;
And rivers of honey
Pure and clear. In it
There are for them
All kinds of fruits;⁴⁸³⁴
And Forgiveness from their Lord,⁴⁸³⁵
(Can those in such Bliss)
Be compared to such as
Shall dwell for ever
In the Fire, and be given,

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ
ءَاسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرَ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ حَمَرٍ
لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
الشَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ
وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ

4833. In this description there are four kinds of drinks and all kinds of fruits; and the summing up of all delights in the "Forgiveness from their Lord". The four kinds of drinks are: (1) delicious, cool, pure water, not like earthly water, for it never suffers corruption; (2) milk which never turns sour, whose taste is like that of fresh warm milk drawn from the udder; (3) wine, not like any wine on earth, for it leaves no headaches behind, and causes no intoxication, which is a kind of madness or poison, but is ever a joy to drink; and (4) honey, pure and clear, with no admixture of wax or any foreign substance. These drinks, will cool the spirit, feed the heart, warm the affections, and sweeten life.

4834. See n. 4671 to xliii. 73.

4835. *Forgiveness from their Lord*: that is the covering up or blotting out of sin and all that was sad or unsatisfactory in the lower life; the pure Light from the Countenance of Allah Most High: xcii. 20.

To drink, boiling water,
So that it cuts up⁴⁸³⁶
Their bowels (to pieces)?

16. And among them are men
Who listen to thee,
Till when they
Go out from thee,⁴⁸³⁷
They say to those who
Have received Knowledge,
"What is it he said
Just then?" Such are
Men whose hearts Allah
Has sealed, and who
Follow their own lusts.

17. But to those who receive⁴⁸³⁸
Guidance, He increases
Their Guidance,
And bestows on them
Their Piety and Restraint
(From evil).

18. Do they then only wait⁴⁸³⁹
For the Hour,—that it
Should come on them

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ ﴿١٧﴾

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَقَدْ جَاءَ

4836. Cf. xxxvii. 66-67, and n. 4074. Just as the Bliss of the Blessed will penetrate their being through and through, so the agony of the condemned ones will penetrate their being through and through.

4837. Cf. x. 42, and n. 1434; also vi. 25, 36, and n. 857. The case here referred to is that of the Hypocrites who came to the assemblies of Islam in Madinah and pretended to listen to the Prophet's teaching and preaching. But their heart and mind were not in learning righteousness, but in carping at things they saw and heard. When they got out, they knew nothing of the teaching, but on the contrary asked foolish and ignorant questions, such as might raise doubts.

4838. Spiritual advancement is progressive: each step makes the next ones easier and more complete.

4839. Cf. xliii. 66, and n. 4665.

Of a sudden? But already
Have come some tokens⁴⁸⁴⁰
Thereof,
And when it comes to them,
How shall they have
Their Reminder?

19. Know, therefore, that
There is no god
But Allah, and ask
Forgiveness for thy fault,⁴⁸⁴¹
And for the men
And women who believe:
For Allah knows how ye⁴⁸⁴²
Move about and how
Ye dwell in your homes.

SECTION 3.

20. Those who believe say,⁴⁸⁴³
"Why is not a Sūra
Sent down (for us)?"

أَشْرَاطُهَا فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ ﴿١٨﴾

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ
وَمَثُوبَكُمْ ﴿١٩﴾

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ
فَإِذَا أَنْزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ

4840. The sands of time are always running, and when a wrong is done, the time for its punishment is approaching every moment. No one should therefore wait. The time for repentance is *Now* at any given time. When the punishment comes, it is too late for repentance, and all admonition would be useless.

Looking to the particular time when this Sūra was revealed, viz., about a year after the Hijrat, already there were Signs that the plans of the Pagans to crush Islam were crumbling to pieces. The Hijrat showed how much good-will there was in Madinah for the holy Prophet of Allah, and how many people from Makkah adhered to him. The battle of Badr showed that they could hold their own against odds of three to one.

4841. Cf. xl. 55, and n. 4428.

4842. The time and manner of our conducting ourselves at home and when we move about on our business are all material to the judgment of our conduct, and for every nuance in our moral and spiritual progress, we must seek Allah's help and guidance.

4843. The men of faith and loyalty are eager and anxious to get a command to serve the Cause even if it be at the sacrifice of their lives. Not so the Hypocrites, "those in whose hearts is a disease". They are mortally afraid as mentioned below.

But when a Sūra
Of decisive⁴⁸⁴⁴
Meaning is revealed,
And fighting is mentioned
Therein, thou wilt see those
In whose hearts is a disease⁴⁸⁴⁵
Looking at thee with a look
Of one in swoon at
The approach of death.
But more fitting for them—

21. Were it to obey
And say what is just,
And when a matter⁴⁸⁴⁶
Is resolved on, it were
Best for them if they
Were true to Allah.

22. Then, is it⁴⁸⁴⁷
To be expected of you,
If ye were put in authority,
That ye will do mischief
In the land, and break
Your ties of kith and kin?

رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ
نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ
فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ

4844. Cf. iii. 7, and n. 347. The defence of truth and righteousness at all sacrifice, when a definite and categorical command issues from the ruler of an Islamic state is a fundamental condition of enlistment in the cause of Allah. It is true that Punishment and Judgment belong to Allah alone; but our mettle and fidelity have to be tested, (see verse 4 above), and Allah uses human agency in human affairs.

4845. Cf. ii. 10. The disease is hypocrisy, disloyalty to the Cause, want of courage and of the spirit of self-sacrifice, want of true understanding.

4846. The resolution is not taken except under guidance from Allah. Those, therefore, who fail to implement it by their own effort and sacrifice, are not true to Allah. And such disloyalty or cowardice is not even good for them from a worldly point of view. With what face can they meet their friends after their disgraceful conduct?

4847. It is no use to say, as the Quraish said, that it is not seemly to fight against kith and kin. From one point of view the stand against sin brings "not peace, but a sword". It is a case of either subduing evil or being subdued by evil. If evil gets the upper hand, it is not likely to respect ties of kith and kin. It did not in the case of the holy Prophet and his adherents, and had to be suppressed, to bring about the conditions necessary for peace.

23. Such are the men
Whom Allah has cursed⁴⁸⁴⁸
For He has made them
Deaf and blinded their sight.

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ
فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَرَهُمْ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Do they not then
Earnestly seek to understand
The Qur-ān, or is that there are
Locks upon their hearts?

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ
أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

25. Those who turn back⁴⁸⁴⁹
As apostates after Guidance
Was clearly shown to them,-
Satan has instigated
Them and buoyed them up
With false hopes.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ
مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ
الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. This, because they said⁴⁸⁵⁰
To those who hate what
Allah has revealed, "We
Will obey you in part
Of (this) matter"; but Allah
Knows their (inner) secrets.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ
اللَّهُ سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَمْرِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. But how (will it be)⁴⁸⁵¹
When the angels take
Their souls at death,

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ
وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَرَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾

4848. *Cursed: i.e.,* deprived of His Grace: left them straying, because they deliberately rejected His guidance. The result is that what they hear is as if they had not heard, and what they see is as if they had not seen. They have no desire to understand Allah's Will or Allah's Revelation;—or is it that they have themselves locked and bolted their hearts and minds, so that nothing can penetrate them?

4849. Such men are entirely in the hands of Satan. They follow his suggestions, and their hopes are built on his deceptions.

4850. They have become so impervious to facts and truths, because, without the courage to oppose Allah's Cause openly, they secretly intrigue with Allah's enemies, and say that they will follow them part of the way, and by remaining partly in the other camp, they will be far more useful as spies and half-hearted doubters than by going over altogether. If they think that this game will be successful, they are mistaken. All the inner secrets and motives of their hearts are known to Allah. Cf. lix. 11.

4851. It is all very well for them to practise hypocrisy in this life. How will they feel at death, when they find that the angels know all, and touch the very spots they had taken such care to conceal?

And smite their faces⁴⁸⁵²

And their backs?

28. This because they followed
That which displeased
Allah, and
They hated Allah's good pleasure;
So He made their deeds
Of no effect.

SECTION 4.

29. Or do those in whose⁴⁸⁵³
Hearts is a disease, think
That Allah will not bring
To light all their rancour?
30. Had We so willed,
We could have shown them
Up to thee, and thou
Shouldst have known them⁴⁸⁵⁴
By their marks: but surely
Thou wilt know them
By the tone of their speech!
And Allah knows
All that ye do.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا آسَخَطَ اللَّهُ
وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ، فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ
أَن لَّنُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَثَهُمْ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكَهُمْ فَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ بِسِيمَتِهِمْ^٤
وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ^٥
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾

4852. *Their faces and their backs*: there is a subtle metaphor. The *face* is what looks to the front, the side you present to the outer world; the *back* is what is not shown, what is hidden from the world. The hypocrites will be hit at both points. Or, the *face* is what they boast of, what they are proud of; the *back* is the skeleton in the cupboard, the things they dare not utter, but which yet haunt them. The hypocrites are hit on every side. Cf. viii. 50.

4853. Cf. verse 20 above, and n. 4845. Being diseased at the very core of their being, they do not understand the simplest facts of spiritual life.

4854. Evil is not always necessarily branded in this life with a distinguishing mark or brand. But the discerning ones know. Evil is betrayed by its speech and behaviour.

31. And We shall try you⁴⁸⁵⁵
Until We test those
Among you who strive
Their utmost and persevere
In patience; and We shall
Try your reported (mettle).⁴⁸⁵⁶

وَنَبْلُوَنكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَنَبْلُوا أَخْبَارَكُمْ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Those who disbelieve,
Hinder (men) from
The Path of Allah, and resist
The Messenger, after Guidance
Has been clearly shown to them,⁴⁸⁵⁷
Will not harm Allah
In the least, but He
Will make their deeds
Of no effect.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُوا
الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ
شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ أَعْمَالُهُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. O ye who believe!
Obey Allah, and obey
The Messenger, and make
Not vain your deeds!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. Those who disbelieve,⁴⁸⁵⁸
And hinder (men) from the Path
Of Allah, then die disbelieving,—
Allah will not forgive them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا
وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾

4855. Cf. xxxiv. 21, and n. 3821. The test and trial is for our own psychological development, to help in the exercise of such choice as has been given to us in our free-will. Cf. also iii. 154, and n. 467.

4856. *Akhbār*: the things reported of you; reputation for courage and constancy, which has to be brought to the test of facts and experience. In an epigram of Tacitus we are told of a Roman Emperor that he would have been considered in every way to have been worthy of being a ruler if only he had never ruled! So in life people may think us courageous, true, noble, and self-sacrificing; and we may consider ourselves as possessing all such virtues; but it is actual experience that will bring them to the test.

4857. Cf. verse 25 above, and verse 34 below: in verse 25 was shown the source of the evil, viz., yielding to the deceptions of Satan; in this verse are shown the proximate consequences of such yielding to evil, viz., failure of all we do; and in verse 34 below are shown the eternal consequences, viz., our deprivation of Allah's Grace and Mercy.

4858. See last note.

35. Be not weary and
Faint-hearted, crying for peace,
When ye are⁴⁸⁵⁹
The Uppermost: for Allah is
With you, and will never
Put you in loss
For your (good) deeds.

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلَهِ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا عَلَوْنَ
وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتْرُكَكُمْ أَعْمَلَكُمْ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. The life of this world
Is but play and amusement:⁴⁸⁶⁰
And if ye believe
And guard against evil,
He will grant you
Your recompense, and will not
Ask you (to give up)
Your possessions.⁴⁸⁶¹

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ إِن تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا
يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾

37. If He were to ask you
For all of them, and
Press you, ye would
Covetously withhold, and He
would⁴⁸⁶²

إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمُوهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ
تَبْخُلُوا وَيُنْفِخُ مِنْ أَضْفَانِكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾

4859. To those who are trying to root out evil, and *have authority* to do so, the question is not of peace or conflict, but of whether Good or Evil is to prevail. They must remember that Good must ultimately prevail, and Allah's help is with those who, as far as men can, are trying to further the universal Plan. Cf. n. 4847 to verse 22 above.

4860. Cf. vi. 32, and n. 855; and xxix. 64, and n. 3497. Amusement and play are not bad things in themselves. As preparations for the more serious life, they have their value. But if we concentrate on them, and neglect the business of life, we cannot prosper. So we must use our life in this world as a preparation for the next life.

4861. Complete self-sacrifice, if voluntarily offered, has a meaning: it means that the persons's devotion is exclusively and completely for the Cause. But no law or rule can *demand* it. And a mere offer to kill yourself has no meaning. You should be ready to take risks to your life in fighting for the Cause, but you should aim at life, not death. If you live, you should be ready to place your substance and your acquisitions at the disposal of the Cause. But it is not reasonable to pauperise yourself and become a hanger-on for the Cause. Moreover, the inborn tendency to self-preservation in an average man would lead to concealment and niggardliness if *all* were asked for the Cause, by Law, and there would further be a feeling of bitterness and rebellion.

4862. Cf. iii. 180.

Bring out all your ill-feeling.⁴⁸⁶³

38. Behold, ye are those⁴⁸⁶⁴

Invited to spend

(Of your substance)

In the Way of Allah:

But among you are some

That are niggardly. But any

Who are niggardly are so

At the expense of

Their own souls.

But Allah is free

Of all wants,

And it is ye that are needy.

If ye turn back⁴⁸⁶⁵

(From the Path), He will

Substitute in your stead

Another people; then they

Would not be like you!

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤَآَاءٌ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُخْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلْ
عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ
وَلِإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ
ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ



4863. Cf. above, verse 29. Rancour or ill-feeling, or any desire but that of devotion, should never be given a handle in a wise Law.

4864. Here the case of the special devotee and of the average man with his human foibles are distinguished. Stinginess is not a virtue: it hurts more the finer-nature of the individual practising it that it hurts the Cause. Allah is free of all wants and independent of any need that we can meet. His Cause is similarly independent of human aid. But it uses human agency for our own human advancement. The need to be able to serve Allah's cause is ours. We are the needy beggars who should claim the privilege before the Lord of Bounties unbounded.

4865. If we desert the Cause, the Cause will not fail. Better men than we will uphold the flag. But we should fall, and others will take our place, who are not so timid, half-hearted, or stingy. In Wordsworth's words, "High Heaven rejects the lore of nicely calculated less or more."