

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *An-Nahl*, 16

Chronologically this Sūra, like the six which preceded it, belongs to the late Makkan period, except perhaps verse 110 and some of the verses that follow. But the chronology has no significance. In subject-matter it sums up, from a new point of view, the arguments on the great questions of Allah's dealings with man. His Self-revelation to man, and how the Messengers and the Message are writ large in every phase of Allah's Creation and the life of Man. The new point of view is that Nature points to Nature's God.

Summary.—Everything in Creation proclaims the glory of Allah. To man is given dominion over Nature, that man may recognise Allah's Unity and Allah's Truth (xvi. 1-25).

Man should never lose sight of his goal, which is the Good, or dispute with the great Teachers, who are sent to all Peoples, to bring about Unity; all creatures serve Allah (xvi. 26-50).

Allah's favours and man's ingratitude recounted. His Signs in the rain-bearing clouds, the cattle that give milk, the bee that produces honey, the wonderful relations of family and social life, and the refinements and comforts of civilization (xvi. 51-83).

The Messengers of Truth will bear witness against those who reject the Truth. Allah will judge us according to our faith and deeds (xvi. 84-100).

The Qur-ān is true; it guides and gives glad tidings. Believe, and make the most of Life in all things good and lawful. Follow the example of Abraham; be true in Faith and righteous, and do good (xvi. 101-128).

An-Nahl, or The Bee.

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

1. (Inevitable) cometh (to pass)
The Command of Allah:²⁰¹⁹
Seek ye not then
To hasten it: glory to Him,
And far is He above
Having the partners
They ascribe unto Him!
2. He doth send down His angels
With inspiration of His Command,
To such of His servants
As He pleaseth, (saying):
"Warn (Man) that there is
No god but I: so do
Your duty unto Me."²⁰²⁰
3. He has created the heavens
And the earth with truth²⁰²¹
Far is He above having
The partners they ascribe to Him!
4. He has created man
From a sperm-drop

سُورَةُ النَّحْلِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنِّي أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يَشْرِكُونَ ﴿١﴾

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ بِالرُّوحِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ
عِبَادِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرُوا أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٢﴾

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ تَعَالَى
عَمَّا يَشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣﴾

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا
هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٤﴾

2019. This is an answer to the taunt of the Pagans, who said; "If there is a god, the One True God, as you say, with unified control, why does He not punish the wrong-doers at once?" The answer is; "The decree of Allah will inevitably come to pass; it will come soon enough; when it comes, you will wish it were delayed; how foolish of you to wish even to cut off your last hope of forgiveness?"

2020. The Pagans, with their multiplicity of gods and goddesses, good and evil, could play one off against another. That is mere mockery of religion. With such conceptions, man cannot understand the Unity of Design in the Universe nor realise the Power and Glory of the One True God, to Whom alone worship and service are due.

2021. Not for sport, or fortuitously and without Design. Cf. xv. 85. Surely the Unity of Design in Creation also proves the Unity of Allah their Creator.

And behold this same (man)
Becomes an open disputer!²⁰²²

5. And cattle He has created²⁰²³
For you (men): from them
Ye derive warmth,
And numerous benefits,²⁰²⁴
And of their (meat) ye eat.

6. And ye have a sense
Of pride and beauty in them
As ye drive them home
In the evening, and as ye
Lead them forth to pasture
In the morning.²⁰²⁵

7. And they carry your heavy loads
To lands that ye could not
(Otherwise) reach except with²⁰²⁶
Souls distressed: for your Lord
Is indeed Most Kind, Most Merciful

وَالْأَنْعَمَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ
مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرْجَعُونَ
وَحِينَ تُسْرَحُونَ ﴿٦﴾

وَتَحْمِلُ أَنْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بِلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا بِلَافِيهِ
إِلَّا بِإِشْقٍ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَوْفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

2022. Man's physical origin is lowly. Yet do men go back to material things, and neglect or dispute about the highest things in Life.

2023. Why will you go back to material things, considering that material things are made subservient to your use and enjoyment in various ways as suggested in the clauses that follow.

2024. From wool, and hair, and skins, and milk. Camel's hair makes warm robes and blankets; and certain kinds of goats yield hair which makes similar fabrics. Sheep yield wool, and Llamas alpaca for similar uses. The skins and furs of many animals yield warm raiment or make warm rugs or bedding. The females of many of these animals yield good warm milk, a nourishing and wholesome diet. Then the flesh of many of these animals is good to eat. There are other uses, which the animals serve, and which are referred to later.

2025. The good man is proud of his cattle and is good to them. As they go to, and return from, pasture, morning and evening, he has a sense of his power and wealth and their beauty and docility. Will not man turn from these material facts to the great spiritual truths and purpose behind them?

2026. The cattle and animals also carry loads, and thus make inter-communication between different lands easy. But for them there would have been many difficulties, not only physical, but psychological. Weary men carrying loads are in no mood for social and spiritual intercourse. This intercourse is made possible by the kindness and mercy of Allah.

8. And (He has created) horses,
Mules, and donkeys, for you
To ride and as an adornment;²⁰²⁷
And He has created (other) things
Of which ye have no knowledge.²⁰²⁸
9. Allah alone can show
The right path²⁰²⁹
But there are ways
That turn aside; if Allah
Had willed, He could have
Guided all of you.

SECTION 2.

10. It is He Who sends down
Rain from the sky
From it ye drink,
And out of it (grows)
The vegetation on which
Ye feed your cattle.
11. With it He produces
For you corn, olives,
Date-palms, grapes,
And every kind of fruit:

وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً
وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَصَدُّ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَايِرٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
لَهَدَىٰكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ
شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

يُنْبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالنَّخِيلَ
وَالْأَعْنَابَ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١١﴾

2027. Horse, mules, and donkeys as well as other animals may be beasts of burden, but they may also be pedigree animals bred for beauty and for all those more refined uses, such as processions, in which grace and elegance is the predominant feature.

2028. If we examine the history of transport, there have been vast changes through the ages, from rude pack animals to fine equipages, and then through mechanical contrivances, such means of transport as elegant coaches, tramways and railways, useful motor lorries and Rolls-Royce cars, and air-ships and aeroplanes of all descriptions. At any given point of time, many of these were yet unknown to man. Nor can we suppose the limit to have been reached now or that it will ever be reached at any future time. Through the mind and ingenuity of man it is Allah that creates new things hitherto unknown to man.

2029. Through material things "the Way" does always lead to Allah. But some minds are so obsessed with material things that they miss the pointers to the spiritual. Allah could have forced all to the true Way, but in His Will and Plan is the training of man's will, and that is done by the Signs in nature and Revelation.

Verily in this is a Sign
For those who give thought.²⁰³⁰

12. He has made subject to you
The Night and the Day;²⁰³¹
The Sun and the Moon;
And the Stars are in subjection
By His Command: verily
In this are Signs
For men who are wise.

13. And the things on this earth
Which He has multiplied
In varying colours (and qualities);²⁰³²

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
وَالنَّجْمُ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَنًا
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ
يَذْكُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

2030. The least thought and study of nature will show you Allah's wise and benign Providence in making the processes of nature subserve man's use and refined life. A higher degree of intelligence and study is required ("men who are wise") to understand Allah's Signs to man in the processes connected with the heavenly bodies (verse 12). And a still higher spiritual understanding ("men who celebrate His praises" with gratitude) to realise the marvellous gradations, colours, and nuances in the creatures on this little globe of ours (verse 13). Reason this out carefully.

2031. The Night and the Day are caused by astronomical rotations. What is important for man to note is how Allah has given intelligence to man to make use of this alternation for work and rest; how man can, as soon as he rises from the primitive stage, get over their inequalities by artificial illuminants, such as vegetable or mineral oils, coal, gas, or electricity, which ultimately are derived from the stored-up energy of the sun; how the sun's heat can be tempered by various artificial means and can be stored up for use by man as required, how man can be independent of the tides caused by the moon and the sun, which formerly controlled navigation, but which no longer stand in man's way, with his artificial harbours and great sea-going ships, how navigation was formerly subject to direct observation of the Polar Star and other stars, but how the magnetic needle and charts have now completely altered the position, and man can calculate and to a certain extent control magnetic variations, etc. In such ways the sun, the moon, and the stars themselves become useful servants to him, all by Allah's gift and His Command, without which there would have been no laws governing them and no intelligence to make use of them.

2032. Whose heart has not been moved by the glorious gradation of colours in the sunset clouds? The gradations are infinite, and it is only the eye of an artist that can express their collective beauty. They are but a type of the infinite variety and gradation of qualities in the spiritual sphere even in the little space of our own globe. The big things that can be measured and defined have been spoken of before. Here we have mention of the subtle nuances in the spiritual world which can only be perceived by men who are so high in spiritual insight that their only reaction is to "celebrate the praises of Allah" in gratitude for His infinite Mercies.

Verily in this is a Sign
For men who are mindful.²⁰³³

14. It is He Who has made²⁰³⁴

The sea subject, that ye
May eat thereof flesh
That is fresh and tender,²⁰³⁵
And that ye may extract
Therefrom ornaments to wear;²⁰³⁶
And thou seest the ships
Therein that plough the waves,
That ye may seek (thus)
Of the bounty of Allah²⁰³⁷
And that ye may be grateful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لَنَا كُلَّوَامِنَهُ
لِحِمَا طَرِيًّا وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا
وَتَرَى الْفُلَ الْكَمَّ مَوَاجِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

2033. Read again n. 2030 above, and see how subtly we are led up from the perception of the big to the perception of the subtle and delicate colours and qualities in the spiritual world.

2034. We have gone up in a climax of material things from the big to the subtle in the sky and the earth. Here we have another climax as regard the things of the sea. We get the delicate flesh of fishes and marine creatures of all kinds; we get the treasures of the deep; pearls, coral, amber, and things of that kind; and we have the stately ships ploughing the waves, for maritime commerce and intercourse, for unifying mankind, and for realising the spiritual bounty of Allah which can best be expressed by the boundless ocean.

2035. Connoisseurs know the delicate flavours of sea fish, such as the pomfret of the Indian Ocean, the herring of the North Atlantic, the mullet of Marseilles, and many another kind. *Tari*, translated "fresh and tender," also refers to the soft moist nature of fresh fish. It is another wonder of Allah that salt water should produce flesh or such fresh, tender, and delicate flavour.

2036. Diving for pearls—in both the primitive and the more advanced form—is another instance of man's power over apparently inaccessible depths of the sea.

2037. After the material benefits which we get from the sea, we are asked to consider things of higher import to the spirit of man. There is the beautiful ship which stands as the symbol of international commerce and intercourse, things that may be of material benefit, but which have a higher aspect in unifying man and making his civilisation more universal. These are first steps in seeking of the "bounty of Allah" through the sea. But there are higher aspects. Navigation and international intercourse increase knowledge, which in its higher aspects should clean the mind and make it fitter to approach Allah. The salt water, which covers nearly 72 percent, of the surface of the Globe, is itself a purifying and sanitary agent, and is a good symbol of the higher bounties of Allah, which are as boundless as the Ocean.

15. And He has set up
On the earth mountains²⁰³⁸
Standing firm, lest it should
Shake with you; and rivers
And ways: that ye
May guide yourselves;²⁰³⁹
16. And marks and sign-posts;
And by the stars
(Men) guide themselves.²⁰⁴⁰
17. Is then He Who creates
Like one that creates not?
Will ye not receive admonition?²⁰⁴¹
18. If ye would count up
The favours of Allah,

وَالَّذِي فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوًى أَنْ تُمِيدَ بِكُمْ
وَأَنْهَضُوا سُبُلًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

وَعَلَّمَكَ وَبِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

2038. Cf. xiii. 3 and xv. 19. Here and elsewhere the earth is spoken of as a spacious carpet beneath our feet and the hills as a steadying agent to keep the carpet from rolling or shaking about. In lxxvii. 7 they are spoken of as pegs or stakes.

2039. In this passage (xvi. 15-16) we have the metaphor of the fixed mountains further allegorised. In these verses the key-words are indicated by the symbols for man's Guidance (*tahtadūn*). First, the physical symbols are indicated; the mountains that stand firm and do not change from day to day in the landscape, unlike shifting sand-dunes, or the coast line of the sea, or rivers and streams, which frequently change their courses, then we have rivers and roads, which are more precise and therefore more useful, though less permanent; then we have 'alāmāt (sign-posts), any kinds of signs erected by man, like direction posts, light-houses or beacons, or provided in nature, as tall trees, etc.; and finally, we have the pole-star, and now the magnetic needle, with its variations marked on navigation charts. All these are symbols for the higher Guidance which Allah provides for the spirit of man. See next note.

2040. See last note. Let us examine the completed allegory. As there are beacons, landmarks and signs to show the way to men on the earth, so in the spiritual world. And it is ultimately Allah Who provides them, and this is His crowning Mercy. Like the mountains there are spiritual Landmarks in the missions of the Great Prophets: they should guide us, or teach us, to guide ourselves, and not shake hither and thither like a ship without a rudder or people without Faith. As rivers and streams mark out their channels, smoothing out levels so we have wholesome Laws and Customs established, to help us in our lives. Then we have the examples of Great Men as further sign-posts: "Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime." In long-distance travel, the pole-star and the magnetic needle are our guides; so in our long-distance journey to the other world, we have ultimately to look to heavenly guidance or its reflection in Allah's Revelation.

2041. The supreme majesty of Allah have been set out in His favours of all kinds, it will be seen at once that the worship of any other than Allah is meaningless and ridiculous. Shall we not take the hint and understand?

Never would ye be able
To number them: for Allah
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.²⁰⁴²

19. And Allah doth know
What ye conceal,
And what ye reveal.

20. Those whom they invoke
Besides Allah create nothing
And are themselves created.²⁰⁴³

21. (They are things) dead,
Lifeless: nor do they know
When they will be raised up.²⁰⁴⁴

SECTION 3.

22. Your God is One God:
As to those who believe not
In the Hereafter, their hearts
Refuse to know, and they
Are arrogant.²⁰⁴⁵

23. Undoubtedly Allah doth know
What they conceal,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُوكُمْ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا
وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

أَمْوتُوا غَيْرَ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ
أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ
قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

لَا جَرَمَ أَنْ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسْرُوكُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ

2042. Of all Allah's favours innumerable, His Mercy and Forgiveness in the spiritual plane is the greatest, and of eternal value to us in our future Lives.

2043. Allah is the only Creator and the Ultimate Reality. Everything else is created by Him, and reflects His glory. How foolish then to worship any other than Allah!

2044. Idols are dead wood or stone. If men worship stars, or heroes, or prophets, or great men, they too have no life except that which was given by Allah. In themselves they are lifeless. If they worship figments of the imagination, they are reflections in a double degree, and have no life in themselves. All these things will be raised up on the Last Day, in order that false worshippers may be confronted with them. But they themselves cannot tell when that Day will be.

2045. Everything points to Allah, the One True Eternal God. If so, there is a Hereafter, for He has declared it. In so far as people do not believe this, the fault is in their Will; they do not wish to believe, and the motive behind is arrogance, the sin which brought about the fall of Iblis: ii. 34.

And what they reveal:²⁰⁴⁶

Verily He loveth not the arrogant.

24. When it is said to them,

"What is it that your Lord²⁰⁴⁷

Has revealed?" they say,

"Tales of the ancients!"

25. That they may bear, on the Day

Of Judgment, their own burdens

In full, and also (something)

Of the burdens of those

Without knowledge, whom they²⁰⁴⁸

Misled. Alas, how grievous

The burdens they will bear!

SECTION 4.

26. Those before them did also

Plot (against Allah's Way):

But Allah took their structures

From their foundations, and the

roof

Fell down on them from above;

إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أُنْزِلَ لَكُمْ

قَالُوا أَسْطِيزُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ

وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَآتَى اللَّهُ

بُيُوتَهُمْ مِنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ

مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَأَتَنَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ

لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

2046. Cf. xvi. 19, where the same words refer to man generally. Whether he conceals or reveals what is in his heart, Allah knows it, and as Allah is Oft-Forgiving. Most Merciful, His grace is available as His highest favour if man will take it. Here the reference is to those who "refuse to know", who reject Allah's guidance out of arrogance. Allah "loveth not the arrogant". Such men deprive themselves of Allah's grace.

2047. When the arrogant Unbelievers are referred to some definite argument or illustration from Scripture, they dismiss it contemptuously with the remark. "Tales of the ancients!" In this, they are not only playing with their own conscience, but misleading others, with perhaps less knowledge than themselves.

2048. Their responsibility or crime is twofold: (1) that they rejected Allah's Message, and (2) that they misled others. Their Penalty will also be double. In vi. 164, we are told that "no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another". This is against the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Every man is responsible for his own sins; but the sin of misleading others is a sin of the misleader himself, and he must suffer the penalty for that also, without relieving those misled, of their responsibility.

And the Wrath seized them
From directions they did not
perceive.²⁰⁴⁹

27. Then, on the Day of Judgment,
He will cover them
With shame, and say:
"Where are My 'partners'
Concerning whom ye used
To dispute (with the godly)?"
Those endued with knowledge²⁰⁵⁰
Will say: "This Day, indeed,
Are the Unbelievers covered
With Shame and Misery,-

28. "(Namely) those whose lives the
angels
Take in a state of wrong-doing
To their own souls."²⁰⁵¹
Then would they offer submission
(With the pretence), We did²⁰⁵²
No evil (knowingly)." (The angels
Will reply), "Nay, but verily
Allah knoweth all that ye did;

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُولُ أَيْنَ
شُرَكَاءِ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُشْفِقُونَ فِيهِمْ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ إِنَّ الْخِزْيَ
الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوءَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا
الْسَّلَامَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوءٍ بَلَى
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

2049. Evil will always devise plots against the Prophets of Allah. So was it with Al-Mustafa, and so was it with the Prophets before him. But the imposing structures which the ungodly build up (metaphorically) collapse at the Command of Allah, and they are often punished from quarters from which they least expected punishment. For example, the Quraish were confident in their numbers, their organisations, and their superior equipment. But on the field of Badr they collapsed where they expected victory.

2050. The worshippers of false gods (ungodly, the Unbelievers) will be unable to reply when brought before the Judgment Seat. The comment of those "endued with knowledge"—the Prophets and Teachers whom they had rejected—will be by way of indictment and explanation of the position of those before the Judgment Seat.

2051. That is, those who died in a state of *Kufr*, or rebellion against Allah, which was really wrong-doing against their own souls.

2052. The excuse is a mere pretence. At first they were too dazed to reply. When they reply, they cannot deny the facts, but resort to the sinner's excuse of saying that they sinned through ignorance, and that their motives were not wrong. Such a plea raises a question of hidden thoughts which are difficult to appraise before a human tribunal. But here they are before their Divine Author, Who knows every secret of their souls, and before Whom no false plea can be of any value. So they are condemned.

29. "So enter the gates of Hell,
To dwell therein.
Thus evil indeed
Is the abode of the arrogant."
30. To the righteous
(When) it is said, "What
Is it that your Lord²⁰⁵³
Has revealed?" they say,
"All that is good." To those
Who do good, there is good
In this world, and the Home
Of the Hereafter is even better²⁰⁵⁴
And excellent indeed is the Home
Of the righteous,--
31. Gardens of Eternity which they
Will enter: beneath them
Flow (pleasant) rivers: they
Will have therein all
That they wish: thus doth
Allah reward the righteous,--
32. (Namely) those whose lives
The angels take in a state²⁰⁵⁵
Of purity, saying (to them),
"Peace be on you; enter ye
The Garden, because of (the good)
Which ye did (in the world)."
33. Do the (ungodly) wait but for
The angels to come to them,

فَادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ
مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

﴿٣٠﴾ وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا خَيْرًا
لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَلَدَارُ
الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُمْ
فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ كَذَلِكَ يَجْزِي اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

الَّذِينَ تَوْفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ

2053. The contrast and parallelism is with xvi. 24, where the ungodly in their levity and their deliberate rejection of guidance find no profit from Allah's Revelation.

2054. Unlike the ungodly, the good find good everywhere,—in this world and in the Hereafter; because they understand and are in accord with the truths around them.

2055. *In a state of purity*: from the evils of this world, from want of faith and want of grace. Purity from such evil is the mark of true Islam, and those who die in such purity will be received into Felicity with a salutation of Peace.

Or there comes the Command
Of thy Lord (for their doom)?²⁰⁵⁶
So did those who went
Before them. But Allah
Wronged them not: nay,
They wronged their own souls.

34. But the evil results
Of their deeds overtook them,
And that every (Wrath)
At which they had scoffed
Hemmed them in.

SECTION 5.

35. The worshippers of false gods
Say: "If Allah had so willed,
We should not have worshipped
Aught but Him—neither we²⁰⁵⁷
Nor our fathers,—nor should
We have prescribed prohibitions²⁰⁵⁸
Other than His." So did those
Who went before them.
But what is the mission
Of messengers but to preach
The Clear Message?²⁰⁵⁹

أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَخَافَ بِهِمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَستَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا
مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَنَحْنُ وَلَاءُ آبَائِنَا وَالْأَحْرَمَ
مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٢٥﴾

2056. That is, until death comes to them, or some Punishment in this life, itself, which precludes them from repentance, and the Mercy of Allah.

2057. The old, old argument: if Allah is All-Powerful, why did He not force all persons to His Will? This ignores the limited Free-will granted to man, which is the whole basis of Ethics. Allah gives man every opportunity of knowing and understanding things, but He does not force him, for that would be against the whole Plan on which our present Life is constituted.

2058. The Pagan Arabs prescribed various arbitrary prohibitions in the matter of meat; see vi. 143-145. These, of course, are not recognised by Islam, which also removed some of the restrictions of the Jewish Law; vi. 146. The general meaning, however, is far wider. Men erect their own taboos and prohibitions, barriers and restrictions, and ascribe them to Religion. This is wrong, and more consonant with Pagan practice than with Islam.

2059. *Clear Message: Mubīn*: in three senses; (1) a Message clear and unambiguous; (2) one that makes all things clear to those who try to understand, because it accords with their own nature as created by Allah; (3) one preached openly and to everyone.

36. For We assuredly sent
Amongst every People a
Messenger,²⁰⁶⁰
(With the Command), "Serve
Allah, and eschew Evil":
Of the people were some whom
Allah guided, and some
On whom Error became²⁰⁶¹
Inevitably (established). So travel
Through the earth, and see
What was the end of those
Who denied (the Truth).

37. If thou art anxious
For their guidance, yet
Allah guideth not such
As He leaves to stray,²⁰⁶²
And there is none
To help them.

38. They swear their strongest oath²⁰⁶³
By Allah, that Allah will not
Raise up those who die:²⁰⁶⁴

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَبِئْسَ مَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

إِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلَى هُدَاهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
مَنْ يُضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ
مَنْ يَمُوتُ بَلَى وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ

2060. Even though Allah's Signs are everywhere in Nature and in men's own conscience, yet in addition Allah has sent human Messengers to every People to call their attention to the Good and turn them from Evil. So they cannot pretend that Allah has abandoned them or that He does not care what they do. His divine Grace always invites their will to choose the right.

2061. While some people accept the guidance of the divine Grace, others so surrender themselves to Evil that it must necessarily follow that Evil obtains a grip over them. They have only to travel through Time or Space to see the end of those who abandoned their lights and surrendered to Evil and Error. For *haqqat* and the meaning of *haqq* in this connection cf. xv. 64.

2062. When once Allah's Grace is rejected by any one, such a person loses all help and guidance. Such persons are then outside Allah's Grace, and therefore they are outside guidance.

2063. The strongest oath of the Pagan Arabs would be by the Supreme Allah; less strong oaths would be by their subordinate deities, or their ancestors, or other things they valued or held sacred.

2064. The usual Pagan creed is: 'If there is a God, it does not follow that He will raise us up; why should He?' The answer is twofold: (1) Allah has promised it, and Allah's promise is true; (2) He must finally manifest the Truth to them, convict them of their falsehood, and enforce their personal responsibility (xvi. 39).

Nay, but it is a promise
(Binding) on Him in truth:
But most among mankind
Know it not.

39. (They must be raised up),
In order that He may manifest
To them the truth of that
Wherein they differ, and that
The rejecters of Truth
May realise that they were liars.²⁰⁶⁵

40. For to anything which We
Have willed, We but say
"Be," and it is.²⁰⁶⁶

SECTION 6.

41. To those who leave
Their homes in the cause
Of Allah, after suffering
oppression,²⁰⁶⁷
We will assuredly give
A goodly home in this world;
But truly the reward
Of the Hereafter will be greater.
If they only realised (this)!
42. (They are) those who persevere
In patience, and put
Their trust on their Lord.

أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

لِيَسِينَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي يُخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَذِبِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ
لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنَبُوْنَنَّهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَآ جَزَاءُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

2065. See the last note.

2066. Allah's "Word" is in itself the Deed. Allah's Promise is in itself the Truth. There is no interposition of Time or Condition between His Will and its consequences, for He is the Ultimate Reality. He is independent of the proximate or material causes, for He Himself creates them and establishes their Laws as He pleases.

2067. There is no merit in suffering exile (*hijrat*) in itself. To have any merit, it must be; (1) in the cause of Allah, and (2) after such an oppression as forces the sufferer to choose between Allah and man. When these conditions are fulfilled, the exiles are entitled to the highest honour, as having made a great sacrifice in the cause of Allah. Such were the early Muslim exiles to Abyssinia; such were the later exiles to Madinah before the Prophet himself left his home in Makkah and went to Madinah; and such were the exiles who went with the Prophet or followed him. At all these stages, his approval or advice was always obtained, either specifically or generally.

43. And before thee

We sent

None but men,²⁰⁶⁸ to whom

We granted inspiration: if ye

Realise this not, ask of those

Who possess the Message.²⁰⁶⁹

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا لَا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ
فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

44. (We sent them) with Clear Signs
And Scriptures²⁰⁷⁰

And We have sent down

Unto thee (also) the Message;

That thou mayest explain clearly

To men what is sent

For them, and that they

May give thought.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ
لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْفَكُّوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

45. Do then those who devise

Evil (plots) feel secure

That Allah will not cause

The earth to swallow them up,

Or that the Wrath will not

Seize them from directions

They little perceive?²⁰⁷¹

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْفَىٰ
أَلَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ
لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

2068. Allah's prophets were always men, not angels; and their distinction was the inspiration they received.

2069. If the Pagan Arabs, who were ignorant of religious and other history, wondered how a man from among themselves could receive inspiration and bring a Message from Allah, let them ask the Jews, who had also received Allah's Message earlier through Moses, whether Moses was a man, or an angel, or a god. They would learn that Moses was a man like themselves, but inspired by Allah. "Those who possess the Message" may also mean any men of Wisdom, who were qualified to have an opinion in such matters.

2070. As the People of the Book had received "Clear Signs" and inspired Books before, so also Allah's Message came to the Prophet Muhammad through the Qur-ān, which superseded the earlier revelations, already corrupted in the hands of their followers.

2071. Cf. xvi. 26. The wicked plot against Prophets of Allah in secret, forgetting that every hidden thought of theirs is known to Allah, and that for every thought and action of theirs they will have to account to Allah. And Allah's punishment can seize them in various ways. Four are enumerated here. (1) They may be swallowed up in the earth like Qārūn, whose story is told in xxviii. 76-81. He was swallowed up in the earth while he was arrogantly exulting on the score of his wealth. (2) It may be that, like Hāmān, the prime minister of Pharaoh, they are plotting against Allah, when they are =

46. Or that He may not
Call them to account
In the midst of their goings²⁰⁷²
To and fro, without a chance
Of their frustrating Him?—

47. Or that He may not
Call them to account
By a process of slow wastage²⁰⁷³
For thy Lord is indeed
Full of kindness and mercy.

48. Do they not look
At Allah's creation.
Among things,²⁰⁷⁴
How their shadows
Turn round, from the right
And the left, prostrating
Themselves to Allah, and that
In the humblest manner?

49. And to Allah doth prostrate
All that is in the heavens

أَوْ يَأْخُذْهُمْ فِي تَقْلِيْبِهِمْ فَمَا لَهُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

أَوْ يَأْخُذْهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُنْفِقُوا ظِلَّهُ،

عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالْشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

= themselves overwhelmed by some dreadful calamity; xl. 36-38, xxix. 39-40. The case of Pharaoh is also in point. He was drowned while he was arrogantly hoping to frustrate Allah's plans for Israel; x. 90-92. For (3) and (4) see the next two notes.

2072. (3) Or the punishment may come to people away from their homes and humble them in their pride. It so happened to Abū Jahl, who came exulting in his pride to the Battle of Badr (A.H. 2). His army was three times the size of the Muslim army from Madinah. But it suffered a crushing defeat, and he himself was ignominiously slain.

2073. (4) Or, as often happens, the punishment comes slowly and imperceptibly, the power of the enemies of Allah being wasted gradually, until it is extinguished. This happened to the Makkans during the eight years of the Prophet's exile. The conquest of Makkah was bloodless, because the power of the enemy had gradually vanished. The Prophet was thus able to show the unexampled generosity and clemency which he showed on that occasion, for two of Allah's attributes are expressed in the titles "Full of kindness" (*Ru-uf*) and "Full of mercy" (*Rahim*).

2074. I take "things" here to be inanimate things, for the next verse speaks of living "moving creatures" and angels. By a metaphor even such inanimate things are spoken of as recognising Allah and humbly worshipping Him. Even their shadows turn round from right and left according to the light from above, and they humbly prostrate themselves on the ground to celebrate the praises of Allah.

And on earth, whether
Moving creatures²⁰⁷⁵
Or the angels: for none
Are arrogant (before their Lord).

50. They all fear their Lord,²⁰⁷⁶
High above them, and they do
All that they are commanded.

SECTION 7.

51. Allah has said: "Take not
(For worship) two gods;²⁰⁷⁷
For He is just One God:
Then fear Me (and Me alone)."
52. To Him belongs whatever
Is in the heavens and on earth,
And to Him is the religion always:
Then will ye fear other²⁰⁷⁸
Than Allah?
53. And ye have no good thing
But is from Allah: and moreover,
When ye are touched by distress,
Unto Him ye cry with groans,²⁰⁷⁹

مِن دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ لَا يُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ
وَاحِدٌ فَإِنِّي فَازَهُبُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّينُ وَاصِبًا
أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَمَا يَكُم مِّن نِّعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ تُمْرَادًا إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ
فَالِإِلَهِ تُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

2075. *Moving creatures*, i.e., living creatures, "All that is in the heavens or earth," includes every created thing. And created things are mentioned in three classes: inanimate things, ordinary living things, and angels. Even the highest angels are not arrogant; they bow down and serve their Lord, and so does all Creation.

2076. Allah is so high above the highest of His creatures, that they all look up to him in awe and reverence. And they joyfully do their duty in serving Him. This is the meaning of the "fear of the Lord."

2077. The ancient Persians believed in two powers in the Universe, one good and the other evil. The Pagan Arabs also had pairs of deities: e.g., *Jibr* (Sorcery) and *Tāgūt* (Evil), referred to in iv. 51, n. 573, or the idols on Safā and Marwa referred to in n. 160 to ii. 158: their names were Isāf and Nāila.

2078. The Pagans might have a glimmering of the One True God, but they had also a haunting fear of malevolent Powers of Evil. They are told that such fears are groundless. Evil has no power over those who trust in Allah: xv. 42. The only fear they should have is that of the Wrath of Allah. To the righteous all good things come from Allah, and they have no fear in their hearts.

2079. Which shows that the natural tendency of man is to seek Allah, the only Power which can truly relieve distress.

54. Yet, when He removes
The distress from you, behold!
Some of you turn to other gods
To join with their Lord-

ثُمَّ إِذَا كُشِفَ الضَّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. To show their ingratitude
For the favours We have
Bestowed on them! Then enjoy
(Your brief day); but soon
Will ye know (your folly)!

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِإِيمَانِهِمْ فَيَتَعَمَّوْا فَسَوْفَ يَكْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. And they (even) assign,
To things they do not know,²⁰⁸⁰
A portion out of that
Which We have bestowed
For their sustenance!²⁰⁸¹
By Allah, ye shall certainly
Be called to account
For your false inventions.

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ نَصِيبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ تَاللَّهِ
لَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. And they assign daughters²⁰⁸²
For Allah! - Glory be to Him!-
And for themselves what
They desire!

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ الْبَنَاتِ سُبْحَنَهُ وَلَهُمْ
مَا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. When news is brought
To one of them, of (the birth

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا

2080. Idols and fictitious gods are certainly things of which they have no knowledge, idols being lifeless things of whose life or doings no knowledge is possible, and fictitious gods being but figments of their imagination.

2081. Cf. vi. 136-140, 142-144, and v. 103. The Pagans, in assigning and dedicating some of their children, or some of their cattle, or some of the produce of their fields, to their false gods as sharers with the true Supreme God, made themselves doubly ridiculous; first, because every good thing that they valued was given to them by Allah, and how could they patronisingly assign to Him a share of His own gifts?—and secondly, because they brought in other gods as sharers, who had no existence whatever! Besides, the cattle and produce was given for their physical sustenance and the children for their social and spiritual sustenance, and how can they, poor creatures, give sustenance to Allah?

2082. Some of the Pagan Arabs called angels the daughters of Allah. In their own life they hated to have daughters, as explained in the next two verses. They practised female infanticide. In their state of perpetual war sons were a source of strength to them; daughters only made them subject to humiliating raids!

Of) a female (child), his face
Darkens, and he is filled
With inward grief!

وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. With shame does he hide
Himself from his people,
Because of the bad news
He has had!
Shall he retain it?²⁰⁸³
On (sufferance and) Contempt,
Or bury it in the dust?²⁰⁸⁴
Ah! what an evil (choice)
They decide on?²⁰⁸⁵

يَنْزُورِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءٍ مَا بُشِّرَبِهِ
أَيَسْكُكُهُ عَلَى هَوْبٍ أَمْرِدُسُهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ
مَا يَخْتَكُمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. To those who believe not
In the Hereafter, applies
The similitude of evil:
To Allah applies the highest²⁰⁸⁶
Similitude: for He is
The Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom.

لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ
الْأَعْلَى وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

SECTION 8.

61. If Allah were to punish
Men for their wrong-doing,
He would not leave, on the (earth),
A single living creature:
But He gives them respite
For a stated Term:

وَلَوْ يَوَاحِدُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ
وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ

2083. "It", in this and the following clause, refers grammatically to the "news" (*mā bushshira bihi*). In meaning it refers to the "female child"—by the figure of speech known as metonymy.

2084. Cf. lxxx. 8-9. The practice of female infanticide is condemned in scathing terms. Female children used to be buried alive by the Pagan Arabs.

2085. It was an evil choice to decide on. Either alternative—to keep the poor girl as a thing of sufferance and contempt, bringing disgrace on the family, or to get rid of it by burying it alive—was cruel and indefensible.

2086. The word *mathal* ordinarily denotes a similitude, but in the context of the present verse, especially with reference to Allah, it signifies His sublime attributes rather than a similitude. Cf. xxx. 27.

When their Term expires,
They would not be able
To delay (the punishment)
For a single hour, just as
They would not be able
To anticipate it (for a single hour).²⁰⁸⁷

62. They attribute to Allah
What they hate (for themselves),²⁰⁸⁸
And their tongues assert
The falsehood that the reward most
fair²⁰⁸⁹

Is for themselves: without doubt
For them is the Fire, and they
Will be the first to be
Hastened on into it!

63. By Allah, We (also) sent
(Our prophets) to Peoples
Before thee; but Satan
Made, (to the wicked),
Their own acts seem alluring:
He is their patron to-day,²⁰⁹⁰

لَا يَسْتَفْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَيَجْعَلُونَ لِلَّهِ مَا يَكْرَهُونَ وَنَصِفُ
أَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ أَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنَىٰ لَأَجْرَمَ
أَنَّهُمُ النَّارُ وَأَنَّهُمْ مُّقَرَّنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

نَالَهُ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَرِيقٌ
لَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَاهُمْ فَهُمْ يَوَلُّوهُمْ أَلْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

2087. Allah's decree works without fail. If He were to punish for every wrong or shortcoming, not a single living creature on earth would escape punishment. But in His infinite mercy and forgiveness, He gives respite: He provides time for repentance. If the repentance is forthcoming. Allah's Mercy is forthcoming without fail, if not, the punishment comes inevitably on the expiry of the Term. The sinner cannot anticipate it by an insolent challenge, nor can he delay it when the time arrives. Let him not think that the respite given him may mean that he can do what he likes, and that he can escape scot-free from the consequences.

2088. See above, xvi. 57-58 and notes.

2089. The philosophy of Pleasure (Hedonism) assumes that worldly enjoyment is good in itself and that there is nothing beyond. But it can be shown, even on its own ground, that every act has its inevitable consequences. No Good can spring out of Evil. For falsehood and wrong the agony of the Fire is waiting, and the boastful votaries of Falsehood will be the first to fall into it.

2090. In all ages and among all Peoples Allah sent His Messengers to teach the Truth and point the way to righteousness. But the allurements of Evil seemed always attractive, and many men preferred their own ways and the ways of their ancestors to the more difficult path of rectitude. This happened again in the time of Al-Mustafā, and will always happen as long as men succumb to Evil.

So but they shall have
A most grievous chastisement.

64. And We sent down the Book
To thee so that
That thou shouldst make clear
To them those things in which²⁰⁹¹
They differ, and that it should be
A guide and a mercy
To those who believe.

وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ
الَّذِي أُخْتَلِفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

65. And Allah sends down rain
From the skies, and gives therewith
Life to the earth after its death:
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who listen.²⁰⁹²

وَاللَّهُ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا
إِن فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

SECTION 9.

66. And verily in cattle (too)
Will ye find an instructive Sign.²⁰⁹³
From what is within their bodies,²⁰⁹⁴

وَأَن لَّكَ فِي الْبَاقِرِ بُرْهَانٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُبْصِرُونَ
مِنْ بَيْنِ قَرْنٍ وَدَمٍ لِّبَاقِرٍ

2091. But the path of duty before Allah's Messenger is clear. He is sent with the Revelation (the Qur-ān) for three express purposes; (1) that he should bring about unity among the jarring sects, for the Gospel of Unity, while preaching the One True God, leads also to the unity of mankind; (2) that the revelation should be a guide to right conduct; and (3) that it should show the path of repentance and Salvation, and thus be the highest mercy to erring sinners.

2092. When the earth with all its vegetation is well-nigh dead, parched and shrivelled up, a vivifying shower of rain from above gives it new life. This natural phenomenon is a sign of Allah's infinite power, especially of His power to resurrect the dead, and thereafter muster them for judgment.

2093. The spiritual sustenance which Allah gives is typified by the wonderful ways of sustenance in the physical world, which figure forth Allah's providence and loving care for His creation. And the wonderful transformations in the physical world, which all tend to the benefit of man, are also Signs of His supreme wisdom. In the previous verse rain was mentioned, which gives new life to dead nature. In this and the following two verses our attention is drawn to milk, the products of the date and the vine, and honey.

2094. *Their*; in the Arabic, it is "its", in the singular number, for two reasons: (1) cattle is the generic plural, and may be treated as a singular noun; (2) the instructive Sign is in cattle collectively, but the milk is the product of each single individual.

Between excretions and blood,²⁰⁹⁵

We produce, for your drink,
Milk, pure and agreeable
To those who drink it.

67. And from the fruit
Of the date-palm and the vine,
Ye get out strong drink,²⁰⁹⁶
And wholesome food: behold, in this
Also is a Sign
For those who are wise.

68. And thy Lord taught the Bee²⁰⁹⁷
To build its cells in hills,
On trees, and in (men's)
habitations;

69. Then to eat of all
The produce (of the earth),²⁰⁹⁸

سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ نَتَّخِذُونَ
مِنْهُ سَكْرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً

لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَأَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا
وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا

2095. Milk is a secretion in the female body, like other secretions, but more specialised. Is it not wonderful that the same food, eaten by males and females, produces in the latter, when they have young, the wholesome and complete food, known as milk? Then, when cattle are tamed and specially bred for milk, the supply of milk is vastly greater than is necessary for their young and lasts for a longer time than during the period they give suck to their young. And it is a wholesome and agreeable diet for man. It is pure, as typified by its whiteness. Yet it is a secretion like other secretions, between the excretions which the body rejects as worthless and the precious blood-stream which circulates within the body and is the symbol of life itself to the animal which produces it.

2096. There are wholesome drinks and foods that can be got out of the date-palm and the vine: e.g., non-alcoholic drinks from the date and the grape, vinegar, date-sugar, grape-sugar, and dates and grapes themselves for eating. If *sakar* is taken in the sense of fermented wine, it would refer to the time before intoxicants were prohibited, for this is a Makkan Sūra and the prohibition came in Madinah. In such a case it would imply a subtle disapproval of the use of intoxicants and mark the first of a series of steps that in time culminated in total prohibition.

2097. *Auhā: wahyūn* ordinarily means inspiration, the Message put into the mind or heart by Allah. Here the Bee's instinct is referred to Allah's teaching, which it undoubtedly is. In xcix. 5, it is applied to the earth; we shall discuss the precise meaning when we come to that passage. The honey-comb, itself, with its hexagonal cells, geometrically perfect, is a wonderful structure, and is well called *buyāt*, homes. And the way the bee finds out inaccessible places, in the hills, in the trees, and even among the habitations of men, is one of the marvels of Allah's working in His Creation.

2098. The bee assimilates the juice of various kinds of flowers and fruit, and forms within its body the honey which it stores in its cells of wax. The different kinds of food from which it makes its honey give different colours to the honey, e.g., it is dark-brown, =

And follow the ways of Thy
Lord made smooth:²⁰⁹⁹ there issues
From within their bodies
A drink of varying colours,
Wherein is healing for men:
Verily in this is a Sign
For those who give thought.

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَنُهُ فِيهِ
شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

70. It is Allah Who creates you
And takes your souls at death;
And of you there are
Some who are sent back
To a feeble age, so that²¹⁰⁰
They know nothing after
Having known (much):
For Allah is All-Knowing,²¹⁰¹
All-Powerful.

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُوَفِّقُكُمْ وَيُمْسِكُ مِنْ يُرِيدُ إِنَّ أَزْدِلَ الْعُمُرِ
لَكِنَّ لَا يَعْلَمُ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

SECTION 10.

71. Allah has bestowed His gifts
Of sustenance more freely on some

وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ فَمَا الَّذِي

= light-brown, yellow, white, and so on. The taste and flavour also varies, as in the case of heather honey, the honey formed from scented flowers, and so on. As food it is sweet and wholesome, and it is used in medicine. Note that while the instinctive individual acts are described in the singular number, the produce of "their bodies" is described in the plural, as the result of their collective effort.

2099. *Zululan*: two meanings are possible; (1) ways easy and spacious, referring to the unerring way in which bees find their way from long distances to their combs; and (2) the idea of humility and obedience in them.

2100. Besides the mystery and beauty of the many processes going on in the working of Allah's Creation, there is the wonderful life of man himself on this earth; how he is created as a child; how he grows in intelligence and knowledge; and how his soul is taken back and his body suffers dissolution. In some cases he lives so long that he falls into a feeble old age like a second childhood; he forgets what he learnt and seems almost to go back in Time. Is not all this wonderful, and evidence of the Knowledge and Power of Allah?

2101. Our attention having been called to the remarkable transformations in life and nature, by which the Knowledge and Power of Allah work out His beneficent Plan for His creatures, we are reminded that man at best is but a feeble creature, but for the grace of Allah. We then pass on in the next Section to the differences in the gifts which men themselves enjoy, distinguishing them into so many categories. How much greater is the difference between the created things and their Creator?

Of you than on others: those
More favoured are not going
To throw back their gifts
To those whom their right hands
Possess, so as to be equal
In that respect. Will they then
Deny the favours of Allah?²¹⁰²

فُضِّلُوا بِرِزْقِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ
فَهَرَفَ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ أَفِينِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

72. And Allah has made for you
Mates of your own nature,²¹⁰³
And made for you, out of them,
Sons and daughters and
grandchildren,²¹⁰⁴
And provided for you sustenance
Of the best: will they
Then believe in vain things,
And be ungrateful for Allah's
favours?—

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُم
مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُم
مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ
هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. And worship others than Allah,—
Such as have no power
Of providing them, for sustenance,²¹⁰⁵
With anything in heavens or earth,

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا
مِّنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ شَيْئًا

2102. Even in the little differences in gifts, which men enjoy from Allah, men with superior gifts are not going to abandon them so as to be equal with men of inferior gifts, whom, perhaps, they hold in subjection. They will never deny their own superiority. How then (as the argument is pursued in the two following verses), can they ignore the immense difference between the Creator and created things, and make the latter, in their thoughts, partners with Allah?

2103. *Of your nature*: or of yourselves. Cf. iv. 1 and n. 504, Self, or Personality, or Soul, all imply a bundle of attributes, capacities, predilections, and dispositions, which we may sum up in the word *Nafs*, or nature. Woman was made to be (1) a mate or companion for man; (2) except for sex, of the same nature as man, and therefore, with the same moral and religious rights and duties; and (3) she is not to be considered a source of all evil or sin, as the Christian monks characterised her but rather as a blessing, one of the favours (*Ni'mat*) of Allah.

2104. *Hafadat*: collective plural, grandchildren, and descendants. The root *hafada* also implies obedient service and ministration. Just as the sons (first mentioned) should be a source of strength, so daughters and grand children should serve and contribute to the happiness of fathers and grandparents, and are to be looked upon as further blessings.

2105. "Sustenance" (*rizq*) in all this passage (xvi. 65-74), as elsewhere, implies all that is necessary for man's life and growth, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. Milk, fruit, and honey are examples of physical gifts, with a metaphorical reference to mental and =

And cannot possibly have
Such power?

74. Invent not similitudes²¹⁰⁶

For Allah: for Allah knoweth,
And ye know not.

75. Allah sets forth the Parable
(Of two men: one) a slave
Under the dominion of another;²¹⁰⁷
He has no power of any sort;
And (the other) a man
On whom We have bestowed
Goodly favours from Ourselves,
And he spends thereof (freely),
Privately and publicly:
Are the two equal? (By no means;)
Praise be to Allah. But
Most of them know not.

76. Allah sets forth (another) Parable
Of two men: one of them
Dumb, with no power
Of any sort; a wearisome burden
Is he to his master;
Whichever way he directs him,

وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ

لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَمْلُوكًا لَا يَقْدِرُ

عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَمَنْ رَزَقْنَاهُ مِنْ أَرْزَاقٍ حَسَنًا
فَهُوَ يَنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا هَلْ يَسْتَوُونَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَجُلَيْنِ أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمٌ
لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَى مَوْلَاهُ
أَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّههُ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَنْ

= moral health; family life is an example of moral and social and (ultimately) spiritual opportunities in the life of man; and in xvi. 65 is an example of rain in the physical world as a type of Allah's revelation in the spiritual world.

2106. Cf. xvi. 60 above, and n. 2086. One instance of false similitudes is where Pagans say their gods are mere types of symbols, or where men pray to men as Intercessors.

2107. The first parable is of two men, one of whom is a slave completely under the dominion of another, with no powers of any sort, and another a free man, who is gifted in every way, and is most generous in bestowing out of his opulent wealth (material as well as intangible), privately and publicly, without let or hindrance; for he is his own master and owes no account to any one. The first is like the imaginary gods which men set up,—whether powers of nature, which have no independent existence but are manifestations of Allah, or deified heroes or men, who can do nothing of their own authority but are subject to the Will and Power of Allah; the second describes in a faint way the position of Allah, the Self-Subsistent, to Whom belongs the dominion of all that is in heaven and earth, and Who bestows freely of His gifts on all His creatures.

He brings no good.²¹⁰⁸
Is such a man equal
With one who commands
Justice, and is on
A Straight Way?²¹⁰⁹

يَا مُرُّ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

SECTION 11.

77. To Allah belongeth the Unseen²¹¹⁰
Of the heavens and the earth.
And the matter of the Hour²¹¹¹
(Of Judgment) is as
The twinkling of an eye,
Or even quicker:
For Allah hath power
Over all things.

وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا أُمِرُ السَّاعَةِ
إِلَّا كُلُّمِجَ الْبَصَرِ أَوْ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ إِلَهِ اللَّهِ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَفِيدٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. It is He Who brought you
Forth from the wombs

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ

2108. In the second Parable, one man is dumb; he can explain nothing, and he can certainly do nothing; he is only a wearisome burden to his master, no matter what his master asks him to do; or perhaps he is really harmful instead of bringing any good; such are idols (literal and metaphorical) when taken as false gods. The other man is in a position to command, and he commands what is just and righteous; not only his commands but his doings also are on the path of righteousness. Such are the qualities of Allah.

2109. The gist of the argument is that those who deviate from the worship of Allah commit twofold treason. (1) They do not recognise the immense difference between the Creator and created things, although, in their own little selfish lives, they are tenacious of any little differences there may be between themselves and other fellow-creatures not so gifted. (2) They are guilty of gross ingratitude in forgetting that the source of goodness and power is Allah, to Whom alone they owe all the gifts they enjoy in life.

2110. The key to all things—not only those which we see and understand, but those which we do not see or of which we have no idea—is with Allah, Whose knowledge and power are supreme.

2111. Lures of this world and its fleeting pleasures often make man forget that the life hereafter is an imminent reality. Many of those who claim to believe in the life to come act and behave as if it belonged to a distant future, and had no relevance to their present activities and mode of living. The Qur-ān repeatedly reminds man that the Hour of Reckoning is not a distant possibility, but very close to man, and could come to pass any moment. The wisest course for man, therefore, is to be always alert and watchful and steer clear of all forms of sin and impiety, for when the Promised Hour comes it will come all of a sudden and without any prior notice. See also x. 45; xxx. 55, xlv. 35.

Of your mothers when
Ye knew nothing; and He
Gave you hearing and sight
And intelligence and affections:²¹¹²
That ye may give thanks
(To Allah).

لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

79. Do they not look at
The birds, held poised
In the midst of (the air
And) the sky? Nothing
Holds them up but (the power²¹¹³
Of) Allah. Verily in this
Are Signs for those who believe.

الْمَيْرَ وَإِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ فِي جَوِّ
السَّمَاءِ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. It is Allah Who made your
habitations
Homes of rest and quiet²¹¹⁴
For you; and made for you,
Out of the skins of animals,
(Tents for) dwellings, which
Ye find so light (and handy)
When ye travel and when
Ye stop (in your travels),²¹¹⁵
And out of their wool,

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّن بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَجَعَلَ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ جُلُودِ الْأَنْعَامِ بُيُوتًا تَسْتَخِفُّونَهَا يَوْمَ
ظَهَرْتُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَصْوَابِهَا
وَأَوْبَارِهَا وَأَشْعَارُهَا أَثْنَاوٌ وَتَعَالَى إِلَهِ حِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

2112. Literally, 'hearts,' which are considered the centres of the affections, and in Arabic idiom, of intelligence also. We should therefore give thanks to Allah, not to imaginary deities or powers or forces.

2113. All the wonderful things in creation are due to the artistry, power, and wisdom of Allah. Such is the flight of birds in mid-air. So also are the inventions and discoveries, due to man's intelligence, in the next verse; for man's intelligence is a gift direct from Allah.

2114. Man's social, intellectual, and spiritual gifts make, of his permanent dwellings, homes of rest and quiet, of refinement and the purer affections, which are the types, in this earthly life, of the highest spiritual Good, the love of Allah. The pure Home thus becomes the type of the highest spiritual Destiny of man. And these capacities in man are the gifts of Allah.

2115. When man travels, he wants temporary dwellings, tents, which he can make of the skins of animals, or of the fabrics of vegetable fibres, similar to the skins of animals. These tents are easy to carry when moving, and easy to pitch during halts.

And their soft fibres²¹¹⁶
 (Between wool and hair),
 And their hair, rich stuff
 And articles of convenience
 (To serve you) for a time.²¹¹⁷

81. It is Allah Who made
 Out of the things He created,
 Some things to give you shade,²¹¹⁸
 Of the hills He made some
 For your shelter; He made you
 Garments to protect you
 From heat, and coats of mail
 To protect you from
 Your (mutual) violence.²¹¹⁹
 Thus does He complete
 His favours on you, that
 Ye may surrender to His Will²¹²⁰
 (In Islām).

82. But if they turn away,
 Thy duty is only to preach
 The Clear Message.

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلَالًا وَجَعَلَ
 لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ
 سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ
 بَأْسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٨٢﴾

2116. *Şif*, wool, is what we get from sheep. *Sha'r*, hair, is what we get from goats or similar animals, for weaving into fabrics. *Wabar* is the soft camel's hair of which, also, fabrics are woven; they may be considered intermediate between the other two; by extension and analogy the term may be applied to furs and such things, by way of illustration.

2117. All such articles of refined luxury, and useful articles of comfort and convenience only last for a while, but they must be considered as Allah's gifts.

2118. For example, trees, gardens, the roofs of houses; also from another point of view, the fact that the sun's rays at various times and in various parts of the earth, come obliquely, thus causing shadow along with sunshine. In the hills there are caves and grottoes.

2119. Our clothes protect us from heat and cold, just as our armour protects us from the hurt which we might otherwise receive in battle.

2120. All these blessings, which have both a physical and (by promoting the good of man) a spiritual purpose, should teach us to rally to Allah and tune our will with His Universal Will, which is another name for Islam.

83. They recognise the favours²¹²¹

Of Allah; then they deny them;
And most of them
Are (creatures) ungrateful.

يَعْرِفُونَ نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُونَهَا
وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

SECTION 12.

84. On the Day We shall raise

From all Peoples a Witness:²¹²²

Then will no excuse be accepted
From Unbelievers, nor will they
Be allowed to make amends.^{2122-A}

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ
لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. When the wrong-doers

(Actually) see the Chastisement²¹²³

Then will it in no way
Be mitigated, nor will they
Then receive respite.

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. When those who gave partners

To Allah will see their "partners",
They will say: "Our Lord!

These are our 'partners', those
Whom we used to invoke²¹²⁴

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شَرَكَاءَ هُمْ قَالُوا
رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَاؤُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا
مِنْ دُونِكَ فَأَلْقُوا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ

2121. 'Arafa is distinguished from 'alima is implying a specific discernment (or recognition) of various qualities and uses. All mankind recognised the value of the blessings they enjoy, but in forgetting or disobeying their Author, the wicked show gross ingratitude; for in practice they deny their obligation to Him for those blessings.

2122. To each People is sent Allah's Messenger or Teacher, to point out the right way. There may be one, or there may be many. Such a Messenger (*Rasul*) will be a witness that Allah's Truth was preached to all peoples in express terms, in addition to the Signs of Allah everywhere in nature. There will then be no room for excuses of any kind. Those who rejected Allah after repeated warnings cannot reasonably ask for more respite, as they had every kind of respite during their life of probation; nor can they now take refuge behind Allah's Grace, which they had repeatedly rejected.

2122-A. That is, they will not be allowed to seek grace by repentance. Cf. xxx. 57, xlv. 35.

2123. When the terrible Penalty is actually on them, it is too late for repentance and for asking for Mercy. Justice must take its course.

2124. The worshippers of false gods will try to shift the responsibility from their own shoulders to that of the false gods. They will suggest (though they will not have the courage for such a bare-faced lie) that they were misled by the false gods. But their lying suggestion will be contradicted and thrown back at them as explained in the next note.

Besides Thee," But they will
Throw back their word at them
(And say): "Indeed ye are liars!"

87. That day shall they (openly) show²¹²⁵
(Their) submission to Allah; and all
Their inventions shall leave
Them in the lurch.

88. Those who reject Allah
And hinder (men) from the Path
Of Allah—for them
Will We add Chastisement
To Chastisement; for that they
Used to spread mischief.

89. On the day We shall raise
From all Peoples a witness
Against them, from amongst
themselves:²¹²⁶

And We shall bring thee
As a witness against these
(Thy people): and We have sent

down

To thee the Book explaining
All things, a Guide, a Mercy,
And Glad Tidings to Muslims.

لَكَذِبُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَالْقَوَا إِلَى اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ السَّلَامُ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ زِدْنَاهُمْ
عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يُفْسِدُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

2125. In so far as the false gods were real things, such as deified men or forces of nature, they will openly disclaim them and then (as always) show their submission to Allah. In so far as the false gods were the invention of the fancy of the idolaters, they will leave their worshippers in the lurch, for they will be shown as non-existent.

2126. To the thought expressed in xvi. 84 above, is added another detail here. Not only will there be witnesses from Peoples, but the witnesses will be men from amongst the Peoples themselves, men of their own kith and kin, who understood them and explained Allah's Message in their own language. The Prophet Muḥammad will be witness against all those who rejected the Message he brought. For those who believe in him of (all races and peoples), the Book which he brought will be an explanation, a guide, a mercy and a Gospel.

SECTION 13.

90. Allah commands justice, the doing
Of good, and giving to kith
And kin, and He forbids
All indecent deeds, and evil
And rebellion: He instructs you,
That ye may receive admonition.²¹²⁷

91. Fulfil the Covenant of Allah
When ye have entered into it,
And break not your oaths
After ye have confirmed them;
Indeed ye have made²¹²⁸
Allah your surety; for Allah
Knoweth all that ye do.

92. And be not like a woman
Who breaks into untwisted strands
The yarn which she has spun,
After it has become strong.²¹²⁹

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ
ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا
الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ
عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ
أَنْكَبَتْ تَلْخُذُوتُ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ

2127. Justice is a comprehensive term, and may include all the virtues of cold philosophy. But religion asks for something warmer and more human, the doing of good deeds even where perhaps they are not strictly demanded by justice, such as returning good for ill, or obliging those who in worldly language "have no claim" on you; and of course *à fortiori* the fulfilling of the claims of those whose claims are recognised in social life. Similarly the opposites are to be avoided; everything that is recognised as shameful, and everything that is really unjust, and any inward rebellion against Allah's Law or our own conscience in its most sensitive form.

2128. The immediate reference may or may not be to the oath of fidelity to the Prophet taken at 'Aqaba fourteen months before the Hijra and repeated a little later: see v. 7, and n. 705. But the general meaning is much wider. And this may be viewed in two aspects (1) Every oath taken, or covenant made, is a Covenant before Allah, and should be faithfully observed. In this it approaches in meaning to v. 1. (2) In particular, every Muslim makes, by the profession, of his Faith, a Covenant with Allah, and he confirms that Covenant every time he repeats that profession. He should therefore faithfully observe the duties taught to him by Islam.

2129. The Covenant which binds us in the spiritual world makes us strong, like strands of fluffy cotton spun into a strong thread. It also gives us a sense of security against much evil in this world. It costs a woman much labour and skill to spin good strong yarn. She would be foolish indeed, after she has spun such yarn, to untwist its constituent strands and break them into flimsy pieces.

Using your oaths
To deceive one another,²¹³⁰
Lest one party should be
More numerous than another;²¹³¹
For Allah will test you by this;
And on the Day of Judgment
He will certainly make clear
To you (the truth of) that
Wherein ye disagree.²¹³²

93. If Allah so willed, He
Could make you all one People:
But He leaves straying²¹³³
Whom He pleases, and He guides
Whom He pleases: but ye
Shall certainly be called to account
For all your actions.

94. And take not your oaths,
To practise deception between
yourselves.²¹³⁴

أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يَبُلُوكُمْ
اللَّهُ بِهِ ۖ وَلِيَبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ مَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ
تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن
يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَزِيلَ

2130. Here *tattakhithūn* is used as an advert to qualify the negative command *takūnū* at the beginning of the verse.

2131. Do not make your religion merely a game of making your own party numerically strong by alliances cemented by oaths, which you readily break when a more numerous party offers you its alliance. The Quraish were addicted to this vice, and in international politics at the present day, this seems to be almost a standard of national self-respect and international skill. Islam teaches nobler ethics for individuals and nations. A Covenant should be looked upon as a solemn thing, not to be entered into except with the sincerest intention of carrying it out; and it is binding even if large numbers are ranged against it.

2132. Disagreements need not necessarily cause conflict where the parties are sincere and honest and do not wish to take advantage of one another. In such cases they do not go by numbers, groupings, and alliances, but by just conduct as in the sight of Allah. Honest differences will be removed when all things are made clear in the Hereafter.

2133. Cf. xiv. 4 and n. 1875. Allah's Will and Plan, in allowing limited free-will to man, is, not to force man's will, but to give all guidance, and leave alone those who reject that guidance, in case they should repent and come back into Grace. But in all cases, in so far as we are given the choice, we shall be called to account for all our actions. "Leaving to stray" does not mean that we can do what we please. Our personal responsibility remains.

2134. In xvi. 92, above, the motive for false and fraudulent covenants was pointed out with reprobation. Now are pointed out the consequences, viz., (1) to others, if they had not been deceived, they might have walked firmly on the Path, but now they lose =

With the result that someone's foot
May slip after it was
Firmly planted, and ye may
Have to taste the evil (consequences)
Of having hindered (men)
From the Path of Allah,
And a mighty Wrath
Descend on you.

قَدَمٌ بَعْدَ ثَبُوتِهَا وَتَذُقُوا السُّوءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُمْ
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

95. Nor sell the Covenant of Allah
For a miserable price:²¹³⁵
For with Allah is (a prize)
Far better for you,
If ye only knew.

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا إِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

96. What is with you must vanish:
What is with Allah will endure.
And We will certainly bestow,
On those who patiently persevere,
Their reward according to
The best of their actions.²¹³⁶

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَ الَّذِينَ
صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

97. Whoever works righteousness,
Man or woman, and has Faith,
Verily, to him will We give
A life²¹³⁷

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ

= faith and perhaps commit like frauds for which you will be responsible; (2) to yourselves; you have not only gone wrong yourselves; but have set others on the wrong path; and you deserve a double Penalty. Perhaps the "evil consequences" refer to this world, and the "Wrath" to the Hereafter.

2135. Any possible gain that you can make by breaking your Covenant and thus breaking Allah's Law must necessarily be miserable; while your own benefit is far greater in obeying Allah's Will and doing right.

2136. What comparison can there possibly be between spiritual Good, which will endure for ever, and any temporal advantage which you may snatch in this world, which will fade and vanish in no time? And then, Allah's generosity is unbounded. He rewards you, not according to your merits, but according to the very best of your actions.

2137. Faith, if sincere, means right conduct. When these two confirm each other, Allah's grace transforms our life. Instead of being troubled and worried, we have peace and contentment; instead of being assailed at every turn by false alarms and the assaults of evil, we enjoy calm and attain purity. The transformation is visible in this life itself, but the "reward" in terms of the Hereafter will be far beyond our deserts.

That is good and pure, and We
Will bestow on such their reward
According to the best
Of their actions.²¹³⁸

98. When thou dost read²¹³⁹
The Qur-ān, seek Allah's protection
From Satan the Rejected One.
99. No authority has he over those
Who believe and put their trust
In their Lord.
100. His authority is over those
Only, who take him as patron
And who join partners with Allah.

SECTION 14.

101. When We substitute one
revelation²¹⁴⁰
For another,—and Allah knows
best
What He reveals (in stages),—
They say, "Thou art but a forger"
But most of them know not.
102. Say, the Holy Spirit²¹⁴¹ has brought
The revelation from thy Lord

أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ
هُم بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

وَإِذَا بَدَلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ
أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُزَيَّفُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتِرٌ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهُدًى

2138. The same ending as in the previous verse deepens the overall effect bringing home the message forcefully and beautifully. The argument is completed and rounded off.

2139. Evil has no authority or influence on those who put their trust in Allah. It is good to express that trust in outward actions, and a formal expression of it—as in the formula, "I seek Allah's protection from Evil"—helps us. Man is weak at best, and he should seek strength for his will in Allah's help and protection.

2140. See ii. 106, and n. 107. The doctrine of progressive revelation from age to age and time to time does not mean that Allah's fundamental Law changes. It is not fair to charge a Prophet of Allah with forgery because the Message as revealed to him is in a different form from that revealed before, when the core of the Truth is the same, for it comes from Allah.

2141. The title of the Angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations came down.

In Truth, in order to strengthen
Those who believe,²¹⁴² and as a
Guide
And Glad Tidings to Muslims.

103. We know indeed that they
Say, "It is a man that
Teaches him." The tongue
Of him they wickedly point to
Is notably foreign, while this
Is Arabic, pure and clear.²¹⁴³

104. Those who believe not
In the Signs of Allah,—
Allah will not guide them,
And theirs will be
A grievous Chastisement.

105. It is those who believe not
In the Signs of Allah,
That forge falsehood:
It is they who lie!²¹⁴⁴

106. Any one who, after accepting Faith in Allah, utters Unbelief.-²¹⁴⁵

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ
لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِي
وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَا يَهْدِيهِمْ
 اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكُذِّبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ

2142. The People of the Book, if they had true faith, were themselves strengthened in their faith and cleared of their doubts and difficulties by the revelations brought by Al-Muṣṭafā; and all whether People of the Book or not—who came within the fold of Islam, found the Qur-ān a Guide and a Gospel, i.e., a substitute for the Mosaic Law and for the Christian Gospel, which had both been corrupted.

2143. The wicked attribute to Prophets of Allah just such motives and springs of action as they themselves would be guilty of in such circumstances. The Pagans and those who were hostile to the revelation of Allah in Islam could not and cannot understand how such wonderful words could flow from the tongue of the Holy Prophet. They must need to postulate some human teacher. Unfortunately for their postulate, any possible human teacher they could think of would be poor in Arabic speech if he had all the knowledge that the Qur-ān reveals of previous revelations. Apart from that, even the most eloquent Arab could not, and cannot, produce anything of the eloquence, width, and depth of Quranic teaching, as is evident from every verse of the Book.

2144. It is clearly those who raise the cry of forgery that are guilty of falsehood, as there is not the least basis or even plausibility in their suggestion.

2145. The exception refers to a case like that of 'Ammār, whose father Yāsir and mother Sumayya, were subjected to unspeakable tortures for their belief in Islam, but never recanted. 'Ammār, suffering under tortures himself and his mind acted on by the

Except under compulsion,
His heart remaining firm
In Faith—but such as
Open their breast to Unbelief,—
On them is Wrath from Allah,
And theirs will be
A dreadful Chastisement.

107. This because they love
The life of this world
Better than the Hereafter:
And Allah will not guide
Those who reject Faith.
108. Those are they whose hearts,
Ears, and eyes Allah has
sealed up²¹⁴⁶
And they take no heed.
109. Without doubt, in the Hereafter
They will be the losers.
110. But verily thy Lord,—
To those who leave their homes
After trials and persecutions,—²¹⁴⁷
And who thereafter strive
And fight for the Faith
And patiently persevere,—
Thy Lord, after all this
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

أَسْخَرَهُ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ
مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكَفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَسَمِعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

لَا جَرَمَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ
الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾
ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا مِن بَعْدِ
مَا فُتِنُوا أَنَّهُمْ جَاهِدُوا وَأَصْبَرُوا إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

= sufferings of his parents, uttered a word construed as recantation, though his heart never wavered and he came back at once to the Prophet, who consoled him for his pain and confirmed his faith.

2146. Cf. ii. 7. On account of their iniquities and their want of Faith their hearts and their senses become impervious to Allah's grace, and they run headlong to perdition.

2147. I take this verse to refer to such men as were originally with the Pagans but afterwards joined Islam, suffered hardships and exile, and fought and struggled in the Cause, with patience and constance. Their past would be blotted out and forgiven. Men like Khalid ibn Walid were numbered with the foremost heroes of Islam. In that case this verse would be a Madinah verse, though the Sūra as a whole is Makkan. Perhaps it would be better to read, with some Commentators, *fatanū* in the active voice rather than *futinū* in the passive voice, and translate "after inflicting trials and persecutions (on Muslim)." Notice the parallelism in construction between this verse and verse 119 below.

SECTION 15.

111. On the Day every soul
Will come up pleading²¹⁴⁸
For itself, and every soul
Will be recompensed (fully)
For all its actions, and none
Will be unjustly dealt with.
112. Allah sets forth a Parable:
A city enjoying security²¹⁴⁹
And quiet, abundantly supplied
With sustenance from every place:
Yet was it ungrateful
For the favours of Allah:
So Allah made it taste
Of hunger and terror (in extremes)
(Closing in on it) like a garment²¹⁵⁰
(From every side), because
Of the (evil) which
(Its people) wrought.
113. And there came to them
A Messenger from among
themselves,
But they falsely rejected him;
So the Wrath seized them

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مُّجَدِّدٌ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا
وَتُؤْتَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ ءَامِنَةً
مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَعْدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ
فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ
الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

2148. When the Reckoning comes, each soul will stand on its own personal responsibility. No one else can help it. Full justice will be done, and all the seeming inequalities of this world will be redressed.

2149. The reference may be to any of the cities or populations in ancient or modern times, which were favoured with security and other blessings from Allah, but which rebelled from Allah's Law and tasted the inevitable penalty, even in the midst of their iniquities. Some Commentators see here a reference to the city of Makkah under Pagan control. See next note.

2150. There is a double metaphor: (1) the *tasting* of hunger and terror after the abundant supplies and the full security which it had enjoyed; and (2) the complete *enfolding* of the City as with a *garment*, by these two scourges, hunger and a state of subjective alarm. If the reference is to Makkah shortly before its fall to the Muslims, the "hunger" was the seven years' severe famine which afflicted it, and the alarm was the constant fear in the minds of the Pagans that their day was done. Peace and prosperity were restored after the re-entry of the Prophet.

Even in the midst
Of their iniquities.

114. So eat of the sustenance
Which Allah has provided
For you, lawful and good;
And be grateful for the favours²¹⁵¹
Of Allah, if it is He
Whom ye serve.

115. He has only forbidden you²¹⁵²
Dead meat, and blood,
And the flesh of swine,
And any (food) over which
The name of other than Allah
Has been invoked.
But if one is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Then Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

116. But say not—for any false thing²¹⁵³
That your tongues may put forth,—
“This is lawful, and this
Is forbidden,” so as to ascribe
False things to Allah. For those
Who ascribe false things
To Allah, will never prosper.

117. In such falsehood
Is but a paltry profit;

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا
وَأَشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ
تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ
الْخِزْيِرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ
غَيْرِبَاعٍ وَلَا عَادِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ
هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

2151. Ingratitude for Allah's sustenance (in the literal and figurative senses) may be shown in various ways, e.g., (1) by forgetting or refusing to acknowledge the true source of the bounty, viz., Allah, (2) by misusing or misapplying the bounty, as by committing excesses in things lawful, or refusing to share them with others of Allah's creatures when the need arises, or (3) by falsely ascribing to Allah any prohibitions we may set up for ourselves for special reasons or because of our special idiosyncrasies.

2152. Cf. ii. 173 and notes, v. 3-4, and vi. 121 and 138-146.

2153. Men are apt to create taboos for themselves, out of superstition, and often for selfish ends, and enforce them in the name of religion. Nothing can be more reprehensible.

But they will have
A most grievous Chastisement.

118. To the Jews We prohibited
Such things as We have
Mentioned to thee before.²¹⁵⁴
We did them no wrong,
But they were used to
Doing wrong to themselves.

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا مَّا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119. But verily thy Lord,
To those who do wrong
In ignorance, but who
Thereafter repent and make
amends,-
Thy Lord after all this,
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.²¹⁵⁵

ثُمَّ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا الشُّوْءَ بِجَهْلَةٍ
ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾

SECTION 16.

120. Abraham was indeed a model,²¹⁵⁶
Devoutly obedient to Allah,
(And) true in faith, and he
Joind not gods with Allah.²¹⁵⁷
121. He showed his gratitude
For the favours of Allah,

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ
مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

شَاكِرًا لَا تَعْبِيهِ أَجْبَنَهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾

2154. See vi. 146 and n. The further prohibitions to them were a punishment for their hardness of hearts, and not a favour.

2155. See above, xvi. 110 and n. 2147. The parallelism in construction confirms the suggestion of the alternative reading which is made in that note. The similarity of expressions also rounds off the argument, as by a refrain in poetry. What follows now in this Sūra is an exhortation to right conduct.

2156. *Ummat*: a model, pattern, example for imitation; but the idea that he was an Ummat in himself, standing alone against his world, should not be lost sight of. See next note.

2157. The Gospel of Unity has been the corner-stone of spiritual Truth for all time. In this respect Abraham is the model and fountain-head for the world of western Asia and its spiritual descendants all over the world. Abraham was among a people (the Chaldeans) who worshipped stars and had forsaken the Gospel of Unity. He was among them but not of them. He suffered persecution, and left his home and his people, and settled in the land of Canaan.

Who chose him, and guided him
To a Straight Way.

122. And We gave him Good
In this world, and he will be,
In the Hereafter, in the ranks
Of the Righteous.²¹⁵⁸

123. Then We revealed
To thee
"Follow the ways of Abraham
The True in Faith, and he
Joined not gods with Allah."

124. The Sabbath was only made²¹⁵⁹
(Strict) for those who disagreed
(As to its observance);
But Allah will judge between them
On the Day of Judgment,
As to their differences.²¹⁶⁰

125. Invite (all) to the Way
Of thy Lord with wisdom
And beautiful preaching;
And argue with them
In ways that are best

وَمَا يَنْتَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
لِإِنَّ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ
وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا
كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ
الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدْ لَهُمِ الْبَالِيَ الَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ

2158. Cf. ii. 113.

2159. If Abraham's Way was the right way, the Jews were ready with the taunt, "Why don't you then observe the Sabbath?" The answer is twofold. (1) The Sabbath has nothing to do with Abraham. It was instituted with the Law of Moses because of Israel's hardness of heart (ii. 74); for they constantly disputed with their Prophet Moses (ii. 108), and there were constantly among them afterwards men who broke the Sabbath (ii. 65, and n. 79). (2) Which was the true Sabbath Day? The Jews observe Saturday. The Christians, who include the Old Testament in their inspired Scripture, observe Sunday, and a sect among them (the Seventh Day Adventists) disagree, and observe Saturday. So there is disagreement among the People of the Book. Let them dispute among themselves. Their dispute will not be settled till the Day of Judgment. Meanwhile, Muslims are emancipated from such stringent restrictions. For them there is certainly the Day of United Prayer on Friday, but it is in no sense like the Jewish or the Scotch Sabbath!

2160. Cf. ii. 113.

And most gracious:²¹⁶¹
 For thy Lord knoweth best,
 Who have strayed from His Path,
 And who receive guidance.²¹⁶²

هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
 بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

126. And if ye punish, let your
 punishment

Be proportionate to the
 Wrong that has been
 Done to you:
 But if ye show patience,
 That is indeed the best (course)²¹⁶³
 For those who are patient.

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ
 وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

2161. In this wonderful passage are laid down principles of religious preaching, which are good for all time. But where are the Teachers with such qualifications? We must invite all to the Way of Allah, and expound His Universal Will; we must do it with wisdom and discretion, meeting people on their own ground and convincing them with illustrations from their own knowledge and experience, which may be very narrow, or very wide. Our preaching must be, not dogmatic, not self-regarding, not offensive, but gentle, considerate, and such as would attract their attention. Our manner and our arguments should not be acrimonious, but modelled on the most courteous and the most gracious example, so that the hearer may say to himself, "This man is not dealing merely with dialectics; he is not trying to get a rise out of me; he is sincerely expounding the faith that is in him, and his motive is the love of man and the love of Allah."

2162. It may be that the Preacher sometimes says to himself, "What is the use of teaching these people? they have made up their minds, or they are obstinate; or they are only trying to catch me out," Let him not yield to such a thought. Who knows how the seed of the Word of Allah may germinate in people's minds? It is not for man to look for results. Man's inner thoughts are known best to Allah.

2163. In the context this passage refers to controversies and discussions, but the words are wide enough to cover all human struggles, disputes, and fights. In strictest equity you are not entitled to give a worse blow than is given to you. Lest you should think that such patience only gives an advantage to the adversary, you are told that the contrary is the case, the advantage is with the patient, the self-possessed, those who do not lose their temper or forget their own principles of conduct.

127. And do thou be patient,²¹⁶⁴

For thy patience is but with the help
From Allah; nor grieve over them:
And distress not thyself
Because of their plots.

وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا تَكُنْ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

128. For Allah is with those²¹⁶⁵

Who restrain themselves,
And those who do good.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
يُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾

2164. In the previous verse are laid down the principles of conduct in controversy for all Muslims; 'if you catch them out, you are not entitled to strike a heavier blow than you received, but it is better to restrain yourself and be patient.' There patience was *recommended*. In this verse a command is directly addressed to the Prophet. 'Do thou be patient.' It is a *command*: his standard as the Great Teacher is much higher; and he carried out in his life. His patience and self-restraint were under circumstances of extraordinary provocation. In his human wisdom it may sometimes have seemed questionable whether forbearance and self-restraint might not be human weaknesses; he had to defend his people as well as himself against the enemy's persecutions. He is told here that he need not entertain any such fears. Patience (with constancy) in those circumstances was in accordance with Allah's own command. Nor was he to grieve if they rejected Allah's Message; the Prophet had done his duty when he boldly and openly proclaimed it. Nor was his heart to be troubled if they hatched secret plots against himself and his people, Allah would protect them.

2165. And the Sūra ends with the highest consolation which the righteous can receive; the assurance that Allah is with them. A double qualification is indicated for so high an honour, (1) that they should not yield to human passion or anger or impatience, and (2) that they should go on with constancy doing good all around them. To attain to the Presence of Allah in the sense of "I am with you" is the culmination of the righteous man's aspiration.