

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *An-Nūr*, 24.

The environmental and social influences which most frequently wreck our moral ideals have to do with sex, and especially with its misuse, whether in the form of unregulated behaviour, of false charges or scandals, or breach of the refined conventions of personal or domestic privacy. Our complete conquest of all pitfalls in such matters enables us to rise to the higher regions of Light and of God-created Nature. This subject is continued in the next Sūra.

As the reprobation of false slanders about women (xxiv. 11-20) is connected with an incident that happened to Hadhrat 'Āisha in A.H. 5-6 that fixes the chronological place of this Madinah Sūra.

Summary.—Sex offences should be severely punished, but the strictest evidence should be required, and false slanderers are also worthy of punishment. Light talk about women reprobated (xxiv. 1-26).

Privacy should be respected, and the utmost decorum should be observed in dress and manners (xxiv. 27-34).

Parable of Light and Darkness: order and obedience in Nature point to the religious duty of man (xxiv. 35-37).

Domestic manners and manners in public or collective life all contribute to the highest virtues, and are part of our spiritual duties leading up to Allah (xxiv. 58-64).

An-Nūr, or Light.

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

1. A Sūra which We
Have sent down and²⁹⁵³
Which We have ordained:
In it have We sent down
Clear Signs, in order that
Ye may receive admonition.
2. The woman and the man
Guilty of fornication,—²⁹⁵⁴
Flog each of them
With a hundred stripes:²⁹⁵⁵
Let not compassion move you
In their case, in a matter
Prescribed by Allah, if ye believe
In Allah and the Last Day:
And let a party
Of the Believers
Witness their punishment.²⁹⁵⁶



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سُورَةُ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ يَبَيِّنَاتٍ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١﴾

الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ
وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾

2953. It must not be thought that the checking of sex offences or of minor improprieties, that relate to sex or privacy, are matters that do not affect spiritual life in the highest degree. These matters are intimately connected with spiritual teaching such as Allah has sent down in this Sūra. The emphasis is on "We": these things are not mere matters of convenience, but Allah has ordained them for our observance in life.

2954. *Zinā* includes sexual intercourse between a man and a woman not married to each other. It therefore applies both to adultery (which implies that one or both of the parties are married to a person or persons other than the ones concerned) and to fornication, which, in its strict signification, implies that both parties are unmarried. The law of marriage and divorce is made easy in Islam, so that there may be the less temptation for intercourse outside the well-defined incidents of marriage. This makes for greater self-respect for both man and woman. Other sex offences are also punishable, but this Section applies strictly to *Zinā* as above defined. Although *zinā* covers both fornication and adultery, in the opinion of Muslim jurists, the punishment laid down here applies only to un-married persons. As for married persons, their punishment, according to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be on him), is stoning to death.

2955. Cf. iv. 15, and n. 523.

2956. The punishment should be open, in order to be deterrent.

3. The adulterer cannot have Sexual relations with any but an Adulteress or an idolatress, And the adulteress, none can have Sexual relations with her but an Adulterer or an idolater; To the Believers such a thing Is forbidden.²⁹⁵⁷

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ
وَحَرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

4. And those who launch A charge against chaste women, And produce not four witnesses (To support their allegations).- Flog them with eighty stripes; And reject their evidence²⁹⁵⁸ Ever after: for such men Are wicked transgressors;-

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا يَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

5. Except those who repent thereafter²⁹⁵⁹ And mend (their conduct); For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

2957. Islam commands sex purity, for men and for women, at all times,—before marriage, during marriage, and after the dissolution of marriage. Those guilty of illicit practices are shut out of the marriage circle of chaste men and women.

2958. The most serious notice is taken of people who put forward slanders or scandalous suggestions about women without adequate evidence. If anything is said against a woman's chastity, it should be supported by evidence twice as strong as would ordinarily be required for business transactions, or even in murder cases. That is, four witnesses would be required instead of two. Failing such preponderating evidence, the slanderer should himself be treated as a wicked transgressor and punished with eighty stripes. Not only would he be subjected to this disgraceful form of punishment, but he would be deprived of the citizen's right of giving evidence in all matters unless he repents and reforms, in which case he can be readmitted to be a competent witness. The verse lays down the punishment for slandering "chaste women", which by consensus of opinion also covers slandering chaste men. Chaste women have been specifically mentioned, according to Commentators, because slandering them is more abhorrent.

2959. The punishment of stripes is inflicted in any case for unsupported slander. But the deprivation of the civic right of giving evidence can be cancelled by the man's subsequent conduct, if he repents, shows that he is sorry for what he did, and that he would not in future support by his statement anything for which he has not the fullest evidence. Secular courts do not enforce these principles, as their standards are lower than =

6. And for those who launch
A charge against their wives,
And have (in support)
No evidence but their own,²⁹⁶⁰
Let one of them
Testify four times
By Allah that he is
Of those who speak
The Truth.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا أَنْفُسُهُمْ
فَشَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَدَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ
لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7. And the fifth (oath)
(Should be) that he solemnly
Invokes the curse of Allah
On himself if he
Tells a lie.

وَالْخَامِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ
مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾

8. But it would avert
The punishment from the wife,
If she bears witness
Four times (with an oath)
By Allah, that (her husband)
Is telling a lie;

وَيَدْرَأُ عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَدَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٨﴾

= those which good Muslims set for themselves, but good Muslims must understand and act on the underlying principles, which protect the honour of womanhood.

2960. The case of married persons is different from that of outsiders. If one of them accuses the other of unchastity, the accusation partly reflects on the accuser as well. Moreover, the link which unites married people, even where differences supervene, is sure to act as a steadying influence against the concoction of false charges of unchastity particularly where divorce is allowed (as in Islam) for reasons other than unchastity. Suppose a husband catches a wife in adultery. In the nature of things four witnesses—or even one outside witness—would be impossible. Yet after such an experience it is against human nature that he can live a normal married life. The matter is then left to the honour of the two spouses. If the husband can solemnly swear four times to the fact, and in addition invoke a curse on himself if he lies, that is *prima facie* evidence of the wife's guilt. But if the wife swears similarly four times and similarly invokes a curse on herself, she is in law acquitted of the guilt. If she does not take this step, the charge is held proved and the punishment follows. In either case the marriage is dissolved, as it is against human nature that the parties can live together happily after such an incident.

9. And the fifth (oath)
Should be that she solemnly
Invokes the wrath of Allah
On herself if (her accuser)
Is telling the truth.
10. If it were not
For Allah's grace and mercy
On you, and that Allah
Is Oft-Returning,
Full of Wisdom,—
(Ye would be ruined indeed).²⁹⁶¹

SECTION 2.

11. Those who brought forward²⁹⁶²
The lie are a body
Among yourselves: think it not
To be an evil to you;
On the contrary it is good²⁹⁶³
For you: to every man
Among them (will come
The punishment) of the sin

وَالْخَمْسَةَ أَنْ غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ
مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٩﴾

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا
لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا أَكْتَسَبَ
مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

2961. Cf. xxiv. 11-14, and n. 2962, which illustrates the matter by a concrete instance.

2962. The particular incident here referred to occurred on the return from the expedition to the Banū Mustaliq, A.H. 5-6. When the march was ordered, Ḥaḍhrat 'Aisha was not in her tent, having gone to search for a valuable necklace she had dropped. As her litter was veiled, it was not noticed that she was not in it, until the army reached the next halt. Meanwhile, finding the camp had gone, she sat down to rest, hoping that some one would come back to fetch her when her absence was noticed. It was night, and she fell asleep. Next morning she was found by Safwān, a Muhājir, who had been left behind the camp expressly to pick up anything inadvertently left behind. He put her on his camel and brought her, leading the camel on foot. This gave occasion to enemies to raise a malicious scandal. The ringleader among them was the chief of Madinah Hypocrites, 'Abudllah ibn Ubai, who is referred to in the last clause of this verse. He had other sins and enormities to his debit, and he was left to the punishment of an unrepentant sinner, for he died in that state. The minor tools were given the legal punishment of the law, and after penitence mended their lives. They made good.

2963. It is worse for a scandal to be whispered about with bated breath, than that it should be brought into the light of day and disproved.

That he earned, and to him²⁹⁶⁴
Who took on himself the lead
Among them, will be
A Chastisement grievous.

12. Why did not the Believers—
Men and women²⁹⁶⁵—when ye
Heard of the affair,—
Thought well of their people
And say, "This (charge)
Is an obvious lie"?

لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Why did they not bring
Four witnesses to prove it?²⁹⁶⁶
When they have not brought
The witnesses, such men,
In the sight of Allah,
(Stand forth) themselves as liars!

لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا
بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Were it not for the grace
And mercy of Allah on you,
In this world and the Hereafter,
A grievous chastisement would have
Seized you in that ye rushed
Glibly into this affair.²⁹⁶⁷

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
لَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

2964. The ringleader: see n. 2962 above.

2965. Both men and women were involved in spreading the scandal. Their obvious duty was to put the best, not the worst, construction on the acts of one of the "mothers of the Believers".

2966. If any persons took it seriously, it was their duty to search for and produce the evidence, in the absence of which they themselves became guilty of slander.

2967. Cf. xxiv. 10 above. It was Allah's mercy that saved them from many evil consequences, both in this life and in the Hereafter, —in this life, because the Prophet's wise measures nipped in the bud any incipient estrangement between those nearest and dearest to him, and from a spiritual aspect in that the minor agents in spreading the scandal repented and were forgiven. No doubts and divisions, no mutual distrust, were allowed to remain in their hearts after the whole matter had been cleared up.

15. Behold, ye received it
On your tongues,
And said out of your mouths
Things of which ye had
No knowledge; and ye thought
It to be a light matter,
While it was most serious
In the sight of Allah.²⁹⁶⁸
16. And why did ye not,
When ye heard it, say?—
"It is not right of us
To speak of this:
Glory to Thee (our Lord) this is
A most serious slander!"²⁹⁶⁹
17. Allah doth admonish you,
That ye may never repeat
Such (conduct), if ye
Are (true) Believers.
18. And Allah makes the Signs
Plain to you: for Allah
Is full of knowledge and wisdom.
19. Those who love (to see)
Scandal circulate
Among the Believers, will have
A grievous Chastisement in this life

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِاللسانِكُمْ وَقُولُونَ يَا فَوَاحِشُ مَا لَيْسَ
لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا
وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ
بِهَذَا سُبْحَنَكَ هَذَا بَهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

وَيَبِّينُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

2968. There are three things here reprobated by way of moral teaching: (1) if others speak an evil word, that is no reason why you should allow it to defile your tongue; (2) if you get a thought or suspicion which is not based on your certain knowledge, do not give it currency by giving it expression; and (3) others may think it is a small matter to speak lightly of something which blasts a person's character or reputation: in the eyes of Allah it is a most serious matter in any case, but specially when it involves the honour and reputation of pious women.

2969. The right course would have been to stop any further currency of false slanders by ignoring them and at least refusing to help in their circulation. The exclamation "Subhānaka", "Praise to Thee (O Allah)", or "Glory to Allah!" is an exclamation of surprise and disavowal as much as to say, "We do not believe it! And we shall have nothing to do with you, O false slanderers!"

And in the Hereafter: Allah
Knows, and ye know not.²⁹⁷⁰

20. Were it not for the grace
And mercy of Allah on you,
And that Allah is
Full of kindness and mercy,
(Ye would be ruined indeed).²⁹⁷¹

SECTION 3.

21. O ye who believe!
Follow not Satan's footsteps:
If any will follow the footsteps
Of Satan, he will (but) command
What is indecent and wrong:
And were it not for the grace
And mercy of Allah on you,
Not one of you would ever²⁹⁷²
Have been pure: but Allah

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا
مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾

2970. What mischiefs can be planned by Evil to delude simple folk who mean no harm in their own minds but who by thoughtlessness are deluded step by step to become the instruments of Evil, may not be known to the most instructed of men, but it is all known to Allah. Man should therefore always be on his guard against the traps of Evil, and it is only Allah's grace that can save him.

2971. Note the refrain that comes four times in this passage, "Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah". Each time it has a different application. (1) In xxiv. 10, it was in connection with the accusation of infidelity by the man against his wife, they were both reminded of Allah's mercy and warned against suspicion and untruth. (2) In xxiv. 14, the Believers were told to be wary of false rumours lest they should cause pain and division among themselves: it is Allah's grace that keeps them united. (3) Here is an admonition for the future: there may be conspiracies and snares laid by evil against simple people; it is Allah's grace that protects them. (4) In xxiv. 21, the general warning is directed to the observance of purity in act and in thought, concerning one's self and concerning others: it is only Allah's grace that can keep that purity spotless, for He hears prayers and knows of all the snares that are spread in the path of the good.

2972. See last note.

Doth purify whom He pleases:²⁹⁷³
And Allah is One Who
Hears and knows (all things).

22. Let not those among you
Who are endued with grace
And amplitude of means²⁹⁷⁴
Resolve by oath against helping
Their kinsmen, those in want,
And those who have left
Their homes in Allah's cause:
Let them forgive and overlook,
Do you not wish
That Allah should forgive you?
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

23. Those who slander chaste,
Indiscreet and believing women²⁹⁷⁵
Are cursed in this life
And in the Hereafter:
For them is a grievous Chastisement-

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي
الْفَرْقِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَزْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْفَافِئَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
لَعْنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

2973. Spotless purity in thought, word, and deed, includes the disposition to put the best construction on the motives of others, so that we ascribe no evil motive to the seeming indiscretions of virtuous people. Such a high standard can only come by the grace of Allah, Who hears all prayers and knows all the temptations to which human nature is subject. His Will and Plan make both for spiritual protection and spiritual peace, and we must place ourselves trustingly in His hands.

2974. The immediate reference was to Hadhrat Abū Bakr, the father of Hadhrat 'Āisha. He was blessed both with spiritual grace from Allah and with ample means, which he always used in the service of Islam and of Muslims. One of the slanderers of Hadhrat 'Āisha turned out to be Miṣṭah, a cousin of Hadhrat Abū Bakr, whom he had been in the habit of supporting. Naturally Hadhrat Abū Bakr wished to stop that aid, but according to the highest standards of Muslim ethics he was asked to forgive and forget, which he did, with the happiest results to the peace and unity of the Muslim community. But the general application holds good for all time. A generous patron should not, in personal anger, withdraw his support even for serious faults if the delinquent repents and mends his ways. If Allah forgives us, who are we to refuse forgiveness to our fellows?

2975. Good women are sometimes indiscreet because they think of no evil. But even such innocent indiscretion lands them, and those who hold them dear, in difficulties. Such was the case with Hadhrat 'Āisha, who was in extreme pain and anguish for a whole month because of the slanders spread about her. Her husband and her father were also =

24. On the Day when their tongues,
Their hands, and their feet
Will bear witness against them²⁹⁷⁶
As to their actions.

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. On that Day Allah
Will pay them back
(All) their just dues,
And they will realise
That Allah is
The (very) Truth,
That makes all things manifest.²⁹⁷⁷

يَوْمَ يُؤْفِكُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ
أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Women impure are for men impure,
And men impure for women impure,
And women of purity
Are for men of purity,
And men of purity
Are for women of purity:
These are innocent of
All what people say:²⁹⁷⁸
For them there is forgiveness,
And a provision honourable.²⁹⁷⁹

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الذَّيْفَ وَالذَّيْفَ وَالذَّيْفَ
وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

= placed in a most awkward predicament, considering their position and the great work in which they were engaged. But unprincipled people, who start false slanders, and their unthinking tools who help in spreading such slanders, are guilty of the gravest spiritual offence, and their worst punishment is the deprivation of Allah's grace, which is the meaning of a state of Curse.

2976. Our own limbs and faculties are the strongest witnesses against us if we misuse them for evil deeds instead of using them for the good deeds for which they were given to us.

2977. All that we thought of hiding will be clear as day before Allah's Judgment Seat, because He is the very essence of Truth and Reality. He is the true Light (xxiv. 35), of which all physical light is merely a type or reflection.

2978. The pure consort with the pure, and the impure with the impure. If the impure, out of the impurity of their thoughts, or imaginations, impute any evil to the pure, the pure are not affected by it, but they should avoid all occasions for random talk.

2979. *Forgiveness* for any indiscretion which they may have innocently committed, and spiritual provision or protection against the assaults of Evil. It is also meant that the more the satans attempt to defame or slander them, the more triumphantly will they be vindicated and provided with the physical and moral good which will advance their real life.

SECTION 4.

27. O ye who believe!

Enter not houses other than
Your own, until ye have
Asked permission and saluted
Those in them: that is
Best for you, in order that
Ye may heed (what is seemly).²⁹⁸⁰

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا
غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا
عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. If ye find no one²⁹⁸¹

In the house, enter not
Until permission is given
To you: if ye are asked
To go back, go back:
That makes for greater purity
For yourselves: and Allah
Knows well all that ye do.

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا
حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمُ انْجِعُوا فَانْجِعُوا
هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلَيْهِ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. It is no fault on your part
To enter houses not used
For living in, which serve
Some (other) use for you:²⁹⁸²

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ
فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ
وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

2980. The conventions of propriety and privacy are essential to a refined life of goodness and purity. The English saying that an Englishman's home is his castle, suggests a certain amount of exclusiveness and defiance. The Muslim principle of asking respectful permission and exchanging salutations ensures privacy without exclusiveness, and friendliness without undue familiarity.

2981. That is, if no one replies; there may be people in the house not in a presentable state. Or, even if the house is empty, you have no right to enter it until you obtain the owner's permission, wherever he may be. The fact of your not receiving a reply does not entitle you to enter without permission. You should wait, or knock twice or three times, and withdraw in case no permission is received. If you are actually asked to withdraw, as the inmates are not in a condition to receive you, you should *a fortiori* withdraw, either for a time, or altogether, as the inmates may wish you to do. Even if they are your friends, you have no right to take them by surprise or enter against their wishes. Your own purity of life and conduct as well as of motives is thus tested.

2982. The rule about dwelling-houses is strict, because privacy is precious, and essential to a refined, decent, and well-ordered life. Such a rule of course does not apply to houses used for other useful purposes, such as an inn or caravanserai, or a shop, or =

And Allah has knowledge
Of what ye reveal
And what ye conceal.

30. Say to the believing men
That they should lower
Their gaze and guard²⁹⁸³
Their modesty: that will make
For greater purity for them:
And Allah is well acquainted
With all that they do.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ
وَيَحْفَظُوا أَرْوَاحَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. And say to the believing women
That they should lower
Their gaze and guard²⁹⁸⁴
Their modesty; that they
Should not display their
Beauty and ornaments²⁹⁸⁵ except
What (ordinarily) appear
Thereof; that they should
Draw their veils over
Their bosoms and not display

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ
فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ
مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِمَخْمَرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ
زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ
أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ
أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ

= a warehouse. But even here, of course, implied permission from the owner is necessary as a matter of common-sense. The question in this passage is that of refined privacy, not that of rights of ownership.

2983. The rule of modesty applies to men as well as women. A brazen stare by a man at a woman (or even at a man) is a breach of refined manners. Where sex is concerned, modesty is not only "good form": it is not only to guard the weaker sex, but also to guard the spiritual good of the stronger sex.

2984. The need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the uncovering of the bosom.

2985. *Zinat* means both natural beauty and artificial ornaments. I think both are implied here, but chiefly the former. The woman is asked not to make a display of her figure except to the following classes of people: (1) her husband, (2) her near relatives whom a certain amount of *neglige* is permissible; (3) her women, (4) slaves, male and female, as they would be in constant attendance; but this item would now be blank, with the abolition of slavery; (5) men who are free from sexual desire and who usually frequent the houses; and (6) infants or small children before they get a sense of sex. Cf. also xxxiii. 59.

Their beauty except
To their husbands, their fathers,
Their husbands' fathers, their sons,
Their husbands' sons,
Their brothers or their brothers' sons,

Or their sisters' sons,
Or their women, or the slaves
Whom their right hands
Possess, or male attendants
Free of sexual desires.
Or small children who
Have no carnal knowledge of women;

And that they
Should not strike their feet
In order to draw attention
To their hidden ornaments.²⁹⁸⁶
And O ye Believers!
Turn ye all together
Towards Allah in repentance that ye
May be successful.²⁹⁸⁷

32. Marry those among you
Who are single,²⁹⁸⁸ and
The virtuous ones among
Your slaves, male or female:
If they are in poverty,

أَوْبَنِي إِخْوَانِهِمْ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِمْ أَوْ نِسَائِهِمْ
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ أَوْ التَّبَعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولَى
الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا
عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضُرُّنَّ بِأَرْجُلِهِمْ لِيُعْلَمَ
مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِمْ وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا
إِنَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَأِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

2986. It is one of the tricks of showy or unchaste women to tinkle their ankle ornaments, to draw attention to themselves.

2987. While all these details of the purity and good form of domestic life are being brought to our attention, we are clearly reminded that the chief object we should hold in view is our spiritual welfare. All our brief life on this earth is a probation, and we must make our individual, domestic, and social life all contribute to our holiness, so that we can get the real success and bliss which is the aim of our spiritual endeavour.

2988. The subject of sex ethics and manners brings us to the subject of marriage. "Single" (*ayāmā*, plural of *Aiyim*) here means any one not in the bond of wedlock, whether unmarried or lawfully divorced, or widowed.

Allah will give them
Means out of His grace:
For Allah is Ample-giving,²⁹⁸⁹
And He knoweth all things.

33. Let those who find not
The wherewithal for marriage
Keep themselves chaste, until
Allah gives them means²⁹⁹⁰
Out of His grace.
And if any of your slaves
Ask for a deed in writing
(For emancipation)
Give them such a deed²⁹⁹¹
If ye know any good
In them; yea, give them
Something yourselves
Out of the means which
Allah has given to you.
But force not your maids²⁹⁹²

وَلَيْسَتَعَفِيفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُعْطِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَءَاتَوْهُمْ
مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرِهُوا فَتِيَاتِكُمْ
عَلَى الْبَيْعِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِنَبْتِغُوا عَرْضَ الْحَيَوةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

2989. Cf. v. 57. Allah's mercy is for all: it is not confined to a class or grade of people.

2990. A Muslim marriage requires some sort of a dower for the wife. If the man cannot afford that, he must wait and keep himself chaste. It is no excuse for him to say that he must satisfy his natural cravings within or outside marriage. It must be within marriage.

2991. The law of slavery in the legal sense of the term is now obsolete. While it had any meaning, Islam made the slave's lot as easy as possible. A slave, male or female, could ask for conditional manumission by a written deed fixing the amount required for manumission and allowing the slave meanwhile to earn money by lawful means. Such a deed was not to be refused if the request was genuine and the slave had character. Not only that, but the master is directed to help with money out of his own resources in order to enable the slave to earn his or her own liberty.

2992. Where slavery was legal, what is now called the "white slave traffic" was carried on by wicked people like 'Abdullāh ibn Ubai, the Hypocrite leader at Madinah. This is absolutely condemned. While modern nations have abolished ordinary slavery, the "White Slave Traffic" is still a big social problem in individual States. Here it is absolutely condemned. No more despicable trade can be imagined.

To prostitution when²⁹⁹³ they desire
Chastity, in order that ye
May make a gain
In the goods of this life.
But if anyone compels them,
Yet, after such compulsion,
Is Allah Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful (to them).²⁹⁹⁴

34. We have already sent down
To you verses making things
Clear, an illustration from (the story
Of) people who passed away
Before you, and an admonition
For those who fear (Allah).²⁹⁹⁵

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ مُبِينَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ
خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكَ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

SECTION 5.

35. Allah is the Light²⁹⁹⁶
Of the heavens and the earth.²⁹⁹⁷
The parable of His Light
Is as if there were a Niche
And within it a Lamp:

﴿٢٥﴾ اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِ
كَمِشْكُورٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ

2993. I have translated "in" (literally, "if") by "when" because this is not a conditional clause but an explanatory clause, explaining the meaning of "force". "Forcing" a person necessarily means that it is against the wish or inclination of the person forced. Even if they were to give a formal consent, it is not valid.

2994. The poor unfortunate girls, who are victims of such a nefarious trade, will yet find mercy from Allah, whose bounties extend to all His creatures.

2995. This prepares the way for the magnificent Verse of Light that follows, and its sublime meaning.

2996. Embedded within certain directions concerning a refined domestic and social life, comes this glorious parable of light, which contains layer upon layer of transcendent truth about spiritual mysteries. No notes can do adequate justice to its full meaning. Volumes have been written on this subject. In these notes I propose to explain the simplest meaning of this passage.

2997. The physical light is but a reflection of the true Light in the world of Reality, and that true Light is Allah. We can only think of Allah in terms of our phenomenal experience, and in the phenomenal world, light is the purest thing we know, but physical =

The Lamp enclosed in Glass:²⁹⁹⁸

The glass as it were

A brilliant star:²⁹⁹⁹

Lit from a blessed Tree,³⁰⁰⁰

An Olive, neither of the East

Nor of the West,³⁰⁰¹

الرَّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ
مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا
يَضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ تُوْرُّ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي

= light has drawbacks incidental to its physical nature: e.g. (1) it is dependent upon some source external to itself; (2) it is a passing phenomenon; if we take it to be a form of motion or energy it is unstable, like all physical phenomena; (3) it is dependent on space and time; its speed is 186,000 miles per second, and there are stars whose light takes thousands of years before it reaches the earth. The perfect Light of Allah is free from any such defects.

2998. The first three points in the Parable centre round the symbols of the Niche, the Lamp, and the Glass. (1) The Niche (*Mishkāt*) is the little shallow recess in the wall of an Eastern house, fairly high from the ground, in which a light (before the days of electricity) was usually placed. Its height enabled it to diffuse the light in the room and minimised the shadows. The background of the wall and the sides of the niche helped to throw the light well into the room, and if the wall was white-washed, it also acted as a reflector: the opening in front made the way for the light. So with the spiritual Light; it is placed high, above worldly things; it has a niche or habitation of its own, in Revelation and other Signs of Allah; its access to men is by a special Way, open to all, yet closed to those who refuse its rays. (2) The Lamp is the core of the spiritual Truth, which is the real illumination; the Niche is nothing without it; the Niche is actually made for it. (3) The Glass is the transparent medium through which the Light passes. On the one hand, it protects the light from moths and other forms of low life and from gusts of wind, and on the other, it transmits the light through a medium which is made up of and akin to the grosser substances of the earth (such as sand, soda, potash, etc.), so arranged as to admit the subtle to the gross by its transparency. So the spiritual Truth has to be filtered through human language or human intelligence to make it intelligible to mankind.

2999. The glass by itself does not shine. But when the light comes into it, it shines like a brilliant star. So men of God, who preach Allah's Truth, are themselves illuminated by Allah's Light and become the illuminating media through which that Light spreads and permeates human life.

3000. The olive tree is not a very impressive tree in its outward appearance. Its leaves have a dull greenish-brown colour, and in size it is inconspicuous. But its oil is used in sacred ceremonies and forms a wholesome ingredient of food. The fruit has a specially fine flavour. Cf. n. 2880 to xxiii. 20. For the illuminating quality of its oil, see n. 3002 below.

3001. This Olive is not localised. It is neither of the East nor of the West. It is universal, for such is Allah's Light. As applied to the olive, there is also a more literal meaning, which can be allegorised in a different way. An olive tree with an eastern aspect =

Whose Oil is well-nigh
Luminous,
Though fire scarce touched it:³⁰⁰²
Light upon Light!
Allah doth guide
Whom He will
To His Light.³³⁰³
Allah doth set forth Parables
For men: and Allah
Doth know all things.

36. (Lit is such a Light)³⁰⁰⁴
In houses, which Allah
Hath permitted to be raised³⁰⁰⁵
To honour; for the celebration,
In them, of His name:

اللَّهُ لِلنُّورِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ
لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا
أَسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿٢٦﴾

= gets only the rays of the morning sun; one with a western aspect, only the rays of the western sun. In the northern hemisphere the south aspect will give the sun's rays a great part of the day, while a north aspect will shut them out altogether, and *vice versa* in the southern hemisphere. But a tree in the open plain or on a hill will get perpetual sunshine by day; it will be more mature, and the fruit and oil will be of superior quality. So Allah's light is not localised or immature: it is perfect and universal.

3002. Pure olive oil is beautiful in colour, consistency, and illuminating power. The world has tried all kinds of illuminants, and for economic reasons or convenience, one replaces another. But for coolness, comfort to the eyes, and steadiness, vegetable oils are superior to electricity, mineral oils, and animal oils. And among vegetable oils, olive oil takes a high place and deserves its sacred associations. Its purity is almost like light itself: you may suppose it to be almost light before it is lit. So with spiritual Truth: it illuminates the mind and understanding imperceptibly, almost before the human mind and heart have been consciously touched by it.

3003. Glorious, illimitable Light, which cannot be described or measured. And there are grades and grades of it, passing transcendently into regions of spiritual height, which man's imagination can scarcely conceive of. The topmost pinnacle is the true prototypal Light, the real Light, of which all others were reflections, the Light of Allah.

3004. The punctuation of the Arabic text makes it necessary to carry back the adverbial clause "in houses", to something in the last verse, say "Lit from a blessed Tree",—the intervening clauses being treated as parenthetical.

3005. That is, in all places of pure worship; but some Commentators understand special Mosques, such as the Ka'ba in Makkah or Mosques in Madinah or Jerusalem; for these are specially held in honour.

In them is He glorified
In the mornings and
In the evenings, (again and
again),³⁰⁰⁶

37. By men whom neither
Trade nor sale
Can divert from the
Remembrance³⁰⁰⁷
Of Allah, nor from regular Prayer,
Nor from paying zakat
Their (only) fear is
For the Day when
Hearts and eyes
Will be turned about,³⁰⁰⁸

38. That Allah may reward them
According to the best³⁰⁰⁹
Of their deeds, and add
Even more for them
Out of His Grace:
For Allah doth provide
For those whom He will,
Without measure.

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ
الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ
الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٣٧﴾

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ
وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

3006. *In the evenings*: the Arabic word is *Āsāl*, a plural of a plural, to imply emphasis: I have rendered that shade of meaning by adding the words "again and again".

3007. "Remembrance of Allah" is wider than Prayer: it includes silent contemplation, and active service of Allah and His creatures. The regular Prayers and regular Charity are the social acts performed through the organised community.

3008. Some renderings suggest the effects of terror on the Day of Judgment. But here we are considering the case of the righteous, whose "fear" of Allah is akin to love and reverence and who (as the next verse shows) hope for the best reward from Allah. But the world they will meet will be a wholly changed world.

3009. The best of the righteous do not deserve the reward that they get: all their faults are forgiven, and only their best actions are considered in the reward that they get. Nay, more! Out of the unbounded Grace of Allah even more is added to them. For in giving rewards, Allah's bounty is boundless.

39. But the Unbelievers,-
 Their deeds are like a mirage³⁰¹⁰
 In sandy deserts, which
 The man parched with thirst
 Mistakes for water; until
 When he comes up to it,
 He finds it to be nothing:³⁰¹¹
 But he finds Allah³⁰¹²
 There, and Allah
 Will pay him his account:
 And Allah is swift
 In taking account.

40. Or (the Unbelievers' state)
 Is like the depths of darkness
 In a vast deep ocean,
 Overwhelmed with billow
 Topped by billow,
 Topped by (dark) clouds:³⁰¹³
 Depths of darkness, one³⁰¹⁴

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ
 الظَّمْثَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا
 وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فُوفَتْهُ حِسَابُهُ وَاللَّهُ
 سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لَّجِيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ
 مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ
 بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكْدِرْهَا وَمَن لَّنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ
 لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

3010. We have had various metaphors to give us an idea of the beneficent Light of Allah. Now we have contrasted metaphors to enable us to see those who deny or refuse that Light, and are overwhelmed in utter darkness. The Light (of Allah) is an absolute Reality, and is mentioned first, and the souls that follow that Light are a reflected reality and are mentioned after the Light. On the other hand the Darkness is not a reality in itself, but a negation of reality; the reflected existences that refuse the Light are mentioned, and then their state, which is Unreality. Two metaphors are given: a mirage, in this verse, and the depths of darkness in the sea, in the next.

3011. The mirage, of which I have seen several instances in the Arabian deserts and in Egypt, is a strange phenomenon of illusion. It is a trick of our vision. In the language of our Parable, it rejects the Light which shows us the Truth, and deceives us with Falsehood. A lonely traveller in a desert, nearly dying of thirst, sees a broad sheet of water. He goes in that direction, lured on and on, but finds nothing at all. He dies in protracted agony.

3012. The rebel against Allah finds himself like the man deluded by a mirage. The Truth which he rejected is always with him. The mirage which he accepted leads to his destruction.

3013. What a graphic picture of darkness in the depths of the Ocean, wave upon wave, and on top of all, dense dark clouds! There is so little light even in ordinary depths of the Ocean that fishes which live there lose their eyes as useless organs.

3014. A contrast to "Light upon Light" in xxiv. 35 above.

Above another: if a man
Stretches out his hand,
He can hardly see it!
For any to whom Allah
Giveth not light,
There is no light!³⁰¹⁵

SECTION 6.

41. Seest thou not that it is
Allah Whose praises all beings
In the heavens and on earth³⁰¹⁶
Do celebrate, and the birds
(of the air) with wings³⁰¹⁷
Outspread? Each one knows
Its own (mode of) prayer
And praise. And Allah
Knows well all that they do.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَالطَّيْرِ صَفَفَتْ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ وَاللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

42. Yea, to Allah belongs
The dominion of the heavens
And the earth; and to Allah
Is the return.³⁰¹⁸

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٢﴾

43. Seest thou not that Allah
Makes the clouds move
Gently, then joins them
Together, then makes them

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرْسِطُ السَّحَابَ ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ
رُكُومًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ

3015. The true source of Light in the world of Reality is Allah, and anyone who cuts himself off from that Light is in utter darkness indeed, for it is the negation of the only true Light, and not merely relative darkness, like that which we see, say, in the shadows of moonlight.

3016. Cf. xxi. 19-20.

3017. All denizens of the heavens, such as angels, all denizens of the earth (including the waters) such as man, animals, insects, fishes, etc., and all denizens of the air, such as birds, celebrate the praises of Allah. Each has his own mode of prayer and praise. It is not necessarily with words, for language (as we know it) is peculiar to man. But actions and other modes of self-expression recognise and declare the Glory of Allah.

3018. To Him we belong; and to Him we shall return. Not only we, but all Creation, proclaims this in the whole world.

Into a heap?—then wilt thou
See rain issue forth³⁰¹⁹
From their midst. And He
Sends down from the sky
Mountain masses (of clouds)
Wherein is hail: He strikes
Therewith whom He pleases
And He turns it away
From whom He pleases.
The vivid flash of its lightning
Well-nigh blinds the sight.

44. It is Allah Who alternates
The Night and the Day:³⁰²⁰
Verily in these things
Is an instructive example
For those who have vision!

45. And Allah has created
Every animal from water:³⁰²¹
Of them there are some
That creep on their bellies;
Some that walk on two legs:

مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سُنَابُزُهُ يَذْهَبُ
بِالْأَبْصَرِ ﴿٤٣﴾

يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي
الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٤﴾

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ
يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾

3019. Artists, or lovers of nature, or observers of clouds will appreciate this description of cloud effects—thin clouds floating about in fantastic shapes, joining together and taking body and substance, then emerging as heavy clouds heaped up, which condense and pour forth their rain. Then the heavy dark clouds in the upper regions, that bring hail,—how distinct and yet how similar! They are truly like mountain masses! And when the hailstones fall, how local their area! It hits some localities and leaves free others almost interlaced! And the lightning—how blinding flashes come from thunderous clouds! In this Book of Nature can we not see the hand of the powerful and beneficent Allah?

3020. His power, wisdom, and goodness are shown no less in the regular phenomena of nature like the succession of Day and Night, than in the seasonal or seemingly irregular movements of clouds and rain and hail and lightning. Those who have the spiritual vision can read this Book of Allah with delight and instruction.

3021. Cf. xxi. 30, n. 2691. Protoplasm is the basis of all living matter, and "the vital power of protoplasm seems to depend on the constant presence of water".

And some that walk on four.³⁰²²
 Allah creates what He wills,³⁰²³
 For verily Allah has power
 Over all things.

46. We have indeed sent down
 Signs that make things manifest:
 And Allah guides whom He wills
 To a Way that is straight.

47. They³⁰²⁴ say, "We believe
 In Allah and in the Messenger,
 And we obey": but
 Even after that, some of them
 Turn away: they are not
 (Really) Believers.

48. When they are summoned
 To Allah and His Messenger,
 In order that he may judge
 Between them, behold, some
 Of them decline (to come).

49. But if the right is³⁰²⁵
 On their side, they come
 To him with all submission.

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ
 إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٦﴾

وَيَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا
 فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ
 بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ
 مِنْهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَإِنْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْمَقْصُودُ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

3022. The creeping things include worms and lowly forms of animal life as well as reptiles (like snakes), centipedes, spiders, and insects. Where these have legs they are small, and the description of creeping or crawling is more applicable to them than that of walking. Fishes and sea-animals generally cannot be said to walk: their swimming is like "creeping on their bellies". Two-legged animals include birds and man. Most of the mammals walk on four legs. This includes the whole of the animal world.

3023. In Allah's Will and Plan, the variety of forms and habits among animals is adapted to their various modes of life and stages of biological development.

3024. The Hypocrites, far from profiting from Allah's Light and Revelation, or declaring their open hostility, play fast and loose according to their selfish worldly aims.

3025. The Hypocrites only wanted to go to the judge who they thought was likely to give judgment in their favour. If their case was incontestable, and justice was on their side, they readily came to the Prophet, knowing that he was just and would judge in their favour, even against his own adherents. But if they had done wrong, an impartial judge was not to their taste. They would rather go to some one who would tip the balance in their favour! This form of selfishness and iniquity was not confined to the Hypocrites of Madinah. It is common in all ages, and should be suppressed.

50. Is it that there is
A disease in their hearts?
Or do they doubt,
Or are they in fear,
That Allah and His Messenger
Will deal unjustly with them?
Nay, it is they themselves
Who do wrong.³⁰²⁶

SECTION 7.

51. The answer of the Believers,
When summoned to Allah
And His Messenger, in order
That he may judge between them,
Is no other than this:
They say, "We hear and we
obey".³⁰²⁷

It is such as these
That will prosper.³⁰²⁸

52. It is such as obey
Allah and His Messenger,
And fear Allah and do
Right, that will triumph.
53. They swear their strongest oaths
By Allah that, if only thou
Wouldst command them, they

أَفِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَمْ ارْتَابُوا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحْيِفَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَخْشَ اللَّهَ وَيَتَّقَهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أَمَرْتَهُمْ
لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُلْ لَا تَقْسِمُوا طَاعَةٌ مَعْرُوفَةٌ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

3026. The real fact is that their conscience smites them. They know their own iniquity, and do not wish to go before a just judge who would be open to no influence and would be sure to give a righteous decree.

3027. Cf. ii. 285. Contrast with it the attitude of the Unbelievers or Hypocrites, who say aloud, "we hear", but intend in their hearts to disobey (ii. 93).

3028. True happiness, whether here or in the Hereafter, is not to be attained by fraud or duplicity: it is the privilege of those who listen attentively to good counsel and carry it out in their lives.

Would leave (their homes).³⁰²⁹

Say: "Swear ye not;
Obedience is (more) reasonable;
Verily, Allah is well acquainted
With all that ye do."

54. Say: "Obey Allah, and obey
The Messenger: but if ye turn
Away, he is only responsible
For the duty placed on him
And ye for that placed
On you. If ye obey him,
Ye shall be on right guidance.
The Messenger's duty is only
To preach the clear (Message)".³⁰³⁰

55. Allah has promised, to those
Among you who believe
And work righteous deeds, that
He³⁰³¹
Will, of a surety, grant them
In the land, inheritance
(Of power), as He granted it

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا
عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوهُ
تَهْتَدُوا وَمَعَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا أَلْبَلَعُ أَلْمِيتُ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي
ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا

3029. Some people, especially hypocrites, give hyperbolic assurances, as did the Madinah Hypocrites to the holy Prophet, that they would do any bidding, even to the forsaking of their hearths and homes. To this they are ready to swear their strongest oaths, which mean nothing. They are asked to spare their oaths, and quietly do at least such unheroic duties as they are asked to do in every-day life. Idle words are not of the least value. Allah will judge by your actions, and He knows all, whether it is open or secret.

3030. 'If you disobey Allah's commands as explained by His Prophet, you are not going to be forced. The Prophet's mission is to train your will and explain clearly all the implications of your conduct. The responsibility for your conduct rests entirely on yourselves.

3031. Three things are promised here, to those who have Faith and obey Allah's Law: (1) that they will inherit power and authority in the land, not for any selfish purposes of theirs nor by way of favouritism, but in order that they may maintain Allah's Law; (2) that the Religion of Right, which Allah has chosen for them, will be openly established, and will suppress all wrong and oppression; (3) that the righteous will live in peace and security, instead of having to suffer persecution, or leave their hearths and homes for the cause of Allah, or practise the rites of their Faith in secret.

To those before them; that
He will establish in authority
Their religion—the one
Which He has chosen for them;
And that He will change
(Their state), after the fear³⁰³²
In which they (lived), to one
Of security and peace:
'They will worship Me (alone)
And not associate aught with Me.'
If any do reject Faith
After this, they are
Rebellious and wicked.

56. So establish regular Prayer
And give zakat
And obey the Messenger;
That ye may receive mercy.

57. Never think thou
That the Unbelievers
Can escape
In the earth
Their abode is the Fire,—
And it is indeed
An evil refuge!

يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرُّسُولَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَمَاؤَنَّهُمْ النَّارُ وَلَيْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٧﴾

3032. If this verse was revealed about the time of the Battle of the Ditch (*Khandaq*), also called the Battle of the Confederates (*Ahzāb*), A.H. 4-5, we can imagine the comfort it gave to the Muslims who were besieged in Madinah by a force ten times their number. The Muslims then lived in a state of great suspense and danger, and under arms for days on end. (See xxxiii. 9-20). The security and authority they were promised came to them subsequently in abundant measures.

SECTION 8.

58. O ye who believe!³⁰³³

Let those whom your right hands³⁰³⁴
Possess, and the (children) among
you

Who have not come of age³⁰³⁵

Ask your permission (before
They come to your presence),

On three occasions: before
Morning prayer; the while

Ye doff your clothes

For the noonday heat;

And after the late-night prayer:

These are your three times³⁰³⁶

Of undress: outside those times

It is not wrong for you

Or for them to move about

Attending to each other:

Thus does Allah make clear

The Signs to you: for Allah

Is full of knowledge and wisdom.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لِيَسْتَفْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ مَلَكَتْ
اَيْمَنُكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَلْبُغُوْا الْحُلُمُ مِنْكُمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّٰتٍ
مِّنْ قَبْلِ صَلٰوةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِيْنَ تَضَعُوْنَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظُّهْرِ
وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ صَلٰوةِ الْعِشَاءِ ثَلَاثُ عَوْرَٰتٍ لَّكُمْ
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌۭۤ اٰۤمَۥتٌۭۤ اٰۤمَۥتٌۭۤ
طَوَّافُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍۭۤ كَذٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْآٰيٰتِ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۭۤ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

3033. We now come to rules of decorum within the family circle in refined society. Servants and children have rather more freedom of access, as they come and go at all hours, and there is less ceremony with them. But even in their case there are limitations. During the night, before morning prayer, i.e., before dawn, they must discreetly ask for permission before they enter, partly because they must not unnecessarily disturb people asleep, and partly because the people are then undressed. The same applies to the time for the midday siesta, and again to the time after night prayers, when people usually undress and turn in to sleep. For grown-ups the rule is stricter: they must ask permission to come in at all times (xxiv. 59).

3034. This would mean slaves in a regime of slavery.

3035. I have translated "come of age" euphemistically for "attain the age of puberty".

3036. It is a mark of refinement for ladies and gentlemen not to be slipshod or vulgarly familiar, in dress, manners, or speech; and Islam aims at making every Muslim man or woman, however humble in station, a refined gentleman or lady, so that he or she can climb the ladder of spiritual development with humble confidence in Allah, and with the co-operation of his brothers and sisters in Islam. The principles here laid down =

59. But when the children among you³⁰³⁷

Come of age, let them (also)

Ask for permission, as do those
Before them:³⁰³⁸

Thus does Allah make clear

His Signs to you: for Allah

Is full of knowledge and wisdom.³⁰³⁹

60. Such elderly women³⁰⁴⁰ as are

Past the prospect of marriage,-

There is no blame on them

If they lay aside

Their (outer) garments, provided

They make not a wanton display

Of their beauty: but

It is best for them

To be modest: and Allah

Is One Who sees and knows³⁰⁴¹

All things.

وَإِذَا بَلَغَ الْأَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَأْذِنُوا
كَمَا اسْتَأْذَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا
فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ
ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ
وَأَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرْنَ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

= apply, if they are interpreted with due elasticity, even if social and domestic habits change, with changes in climate or in racial and personal habits. Punctilious self-respect and respect for others, in small things as well as great, are the key-notes in these simple rules of etiquette.

3037. *Children among you: i.e., in your house, not necessarily your own children.* All in the house, including the stranger within your gate, must conform to these wholesome rules.

3038. Those before them, *i.e.,* those who have already been mentioned in the previous verse. It is suggested that each generation as it grows up should follow the wholesome traditions of its predecessors. While they were children, they behaved like children: when they grow up, they must behave like grown-ups.

3039. The refrain connects up this verse with the last verse, whose meaning is completed here. The slight variation ("*His Signs*" here, against "*the Signs*" there) shows that this verse is more personal, as referring to children who have now become responsible men and women.

3040. For elderly women in the home the rules of dress and decorum are not so exacting as for younger women, but they are also enjoined to study modesty, both because it is good in itself, and as an example to the younger people.

3041. Another example of a refrain: see n. 3039 above. Verses 58 and 59 were closer connected: their refrain was practically identical. This verse, though ancillary, is less closely connected: its refrain comes in like a half-note in a melody.

61. It is no fault in the blind
 Nor in one born lame, nor
 In one afflicted with illness,³⁰⁴²
 Nor in yourselves, that ye
 Should eat in your own houses,
 Or those of your fathers,
 Or your mothers, or your brothers,
 Or your sisters, or your father's
 brothers
 Or your father's sisters,
 Or your mother's brothers,
 Or your mother's sisters,
 Or in houses of which
 The keys are in your possession,
 Or in the house of a sincere
 Friend of yours: there is
 No blame on you, whether
 Ye eat in company or
 Separately. But if ye
 Enter houses, salute each other—
 A greeting of blessing
 And purity as from Allah.³⁰⁴³

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ
 وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ
 أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ آبَائِكُمْ
 أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَانِكُمْ
 أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَامِكُمْ
 أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّاتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَالَتِكُمْ
 أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَالَاتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
 مَفَاتِحُهُ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَأْكُلُوا جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا إِذَا
 دَخَلْتُمْ بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً
 مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُبْرَكَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ
 كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١﴾

3042. There were various Arab superstitions and fancies which are combated and rejected here. (1) The blind, or the halt, or those afflicted with serious disease were supposed to be objects of divine displeasure, and as such not fit to be associated with us in meals in our houses: we are not to entertain such a thought, as we are not judges of the causes of people's misfortunes, which deserve our sympathy and kindness. (2) It was considered unbecoming to take meals in the houses of near relatives: this taboo is not approved. (3) A similar superstition about houses in our possession but not in our actual occupation is disapproved. (4) If people think they should not fall under obligation to casual friends, that does not apply to a sincere friend, in whose company a meal is not to be rejected, but welcomed. (5) If people make a superstition either that they should always eat separately, or that they must always eat in company, as some people weary of their own company think, either of them is wrong. Man is free and should regulate his life according to needs and circumstances.

3043. The shades of meaning in *Salām* are explained in n. 2512 to xix. 62. Here, we were first told that we might accept hospitality and good fellowship in each other's houses. Now we are told what spirit should animate us in doing so. It should not be a spirit only of self-satisfaction in a worldly sense. It should rather be a spirit of good-will in the highest spiritual sense of the term—purity of motives and purity of life, as in the sight of Allah.

Thus does Allah make clear
The Signs to you: that ye
May understand.³⁰⁴⁴

SECTION 9.

62. Only those are Believers,
Who believe in Allah and
His Messenger: when they are
With him on a matter
Requiring collective action,³⁰⁴⁵
They do not depart until
They have asked for his leave;
Those who ask for the leave
Are those who believe in Allah
And His Messenger; so when
They ask for thy leave,
For some business of their,
Give leave to those of them
Whom thou wilt,³⁰⁴⁶ and ask
Allah for their forgiveness;³⁰⁴⁷
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا
حَتَّى يَسْتَأْذِنُوا الْإِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا أَسْتَأْذَنُوكَ
لِغَضِّ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذَنْ لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ
وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

3044. See notes 3039 and 3041 above. The refrain comes again, in a different form, closing the argument from a different point of view.

3045. *Matter requiring collective action*: anything that affects the Community as a whole: Jumu'a and 'Id prayers are periodical occasions of this kind, but what is meant here is, I think, joint consultations with a view to joint undertakings, such as a Jihād, or some kind of organisation in peace.

3046. That is, those to whom, in the exercise of your impartial discretion, you think it expedient to give leave. "Will", unless the context shows otherwise, means "right will", not a will without any definite principle behind it.

3047. In important matters of general consultation, even though leave of absence is given on sufficient excuse, it implies some defect in duty on the part of the person to whom the leave is given, and therefore the need of forgiveness from Him to Whom we owe duty in a perfect measure.

63. Deem not the summons
Of the Messenger among yourselves
Like the summons of one³⁰⁴⁸
Of you to another: Allah
Doth know those of you
Who slip away under shelter
Of some excuse: then
Let those beware who
Withstand the Messenger's order,
Lest some trial befall them,³⁰⁴⁹
Or a grievous Chastisement
Be inflicted on them.

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ
بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ
عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

64. Be quite sure that
To Allah doth belong
Whatever is in the heavens
And on earth. Well doth He
Know what ye are intent upon:³⁰⁵⁰
And the day they will be
Brought back to Him, He
Will tell them the truth
Of what they did:³⁰⁵¹
For Allah doth know
All things.

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ
مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنْظَرُ
بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

3048. Three significations are possible. One is that adopted in the Translation, which agrees with the view of most Commentators. Another would be: 'Do not think that the prayer of the Prophet of Allah is like your ordinary requests to another: the Prophet's prayer will be about serious matters and will be accepted by Allah'. A third interpretation would be: 'Do not address the Prophet familiarly as you would address one another: use proper terms of respect for him.'

3049. The "trial" is understood to be some misfortune in this life, and the "grievous Penalty" to be the punishment in the Hereafter.

3050. The condition or position you are in, the motives which actuate you, and the ends you have in view.

3051. Things misunderstood or maligned, falsely praised or held in honour, or fraudulently shown to be good when they are evil—everything will be revealed in its true light on the Day of final Judgment.