

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *At-Ṭalāq*, 65.

This is the ninth of the ten short Madinah Sūras dealing with the social life of the Community. The aspect dealt with here is Divorce, and the necessity or precautions to guard against its abuse. The relations of the sexes are an important factor in the social life of the Community, and this and the following Sūra deal with certain aspects of it. "Of all things permitted by Law", said the Prophet, "divorce is the most hateful in the sight of Allah". (Abū Dā-ūd, *Sunan*, xiii. 3). While the sanctity of marriage is the essential basis of family life, the incompatibility of individuals and the weaknesses of human nature require certain outlets and safeguards if that sanctity is not to be made into a fetish at the expense of human life. That is why the question of Divorce is in this Sūra linked with the question of insolent impiety and its punishment.

The date is somewhere about A.H. 6.

*Summary.*—Provision to be made for women in case of Divorce; insolent impiety always leads to punishment (lxv. 1-12).

*At-Ṭalāq, or Divorce.*

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

1. O Prophet!<sup>5503</sup> When ye  
Do divorce women,<sup>5504</sup>  
Divorce them at their  
Prescribed periods,<sup>5505</sup>  
And count (accurately)  
Their prescribed periods:  
And fear Allah your Lord;<sup>5506</sup>  
And turn them not out  
Of their houses, nor shall  
They (themselves) leave,<sup>5507</sup>

## سُورَةُ الطَّلَاقِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ  
لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ  
لَا تَخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ  
إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ

5503. Note that in the first instance the Prophet is himself addressed individually, as the Teacher and representative of the Community. Then the actual directions: "when ye.....": are addressed to the Community collectively.

5504. "Of all things permitted by law, Divorce is the most hateful in the sight of Allah": see Introduction to this Sūra. The general directions and limitations of Divorce may be studied in ii. 228-232, 236-237, 241, and notes; also iv. 35.

5505. 'Iddat, as a technical term in divorce law, is explained in n. 254 to ii. 228. Its general meaning is "a prescribed period": in that general sense it is used in ii. 185 for a prescribed period for fasting.

5506. The prescribed period (see last note) is in the interests of the wife, of the husband, of an unborn child (if there is any), and of sex laws in nature, and therefore the elementary dictates of refined human society. In English Law the six months interval between the decree *nisi* and the decree absolute in divorce attains the same purpose in a round-about way. The Commentators suggest that the divorce should not be pronounced during the courses. Read with ii. 222, this implies that any incipient differences between husband and wife should not be forced to an issue at a time when sex is least attractive and almost repulsive. Everything should be done to strengthen the social and spiritual aspects of marriage and keep down stray impulses of animal instinct. The parties are to think seriously in a mood of piety, keeping the fear of Allah in their minds.

5507. As Islam treats the married woman as a full juristic personality in every sense of the term a married woman has a right, in the married state, to a house or apartment of her own. And a house or apartment implies the reasonable expenses for its upkeep and for her own and her children's maintenance. And this is obligatory not only in the married state, but during the 'iddat, which is necessarily a most trying period for the woman. During this period she must not only not be turned out, but it is not decent for her to leave of her own accord, lest the chances of reconciliation should be diminished: see the next note.

Except in case they are  
Guilty of some open lewdness,  
Those are limits  
Set by Allah: and any  
Who transgresses the limits  
Of Allah, does verily  
Wrong his (own) soul:  
Thou knowest not if  
Perchance Allah will  
Being about thereafter  
Some new situation.<sup>5508</sup>

2. Thus when they fulfil  
Their term appointed,  
Either take them back  
On equitable terms<sup>5509</sup>  
Or part with them  
On equitable terms;  
And take for witness  
Two persons from among you,  
Endued with justice,  
And establish the evidence<sup>5510</sup>  
For the sake of Allah. Such  
Is the admonition given  
To him who believes  
In Allah and the Last Day.

وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي  
لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُخْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ  
بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَى عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا  
الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكَ كُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ  
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ  
لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾

5508. A reconciliation is possible, and is indeed recommended at every stage. The first serious difference between the parties are to be submitted to a family council on which both sides are represented (iv. 35); divorce is not to be pronounced when mutual physical attraction is at an ebb (n. 5506); when it is pronounced, there should be a period of probationary waiting: dower has to be paid and due provision has to be made for many things on equitable terms; every facility has to be given for reconciliation till the last moment, and impediments are provided against hasty impulses leading to rupture. "Thou knowest not if perchance Allah will bring about thereafter some new situation."

5509. Cf. ii. 231. Everything should be done fairly and squarely, and all interests should be safeguarded.

5510. Publicity and the establishment of proper evidence ensure that no one will act unjustly or selfishly. All should remember that these are matters of serious import, affecting our most intimate lives, and therefore our position in the next life.

And for those who fear  
Allah, He (ever) prepares<sup>5511</sup>  
A way out,

3. And He provides for him  
From (sources) he never  
Could expect. And if  
Any one puts his trust  
In Allah, sufficient is (Allah)  
For him. For Allah will  
Surely accomplish His purpose:<sup>5512</sup>  
Verily, for all things  
Has Allah appointed  
A due proportion.

4. Such of your women  
As have passed the age  
Of monthly courses, for them  
The prescribed period, if ye  
Have any doubts, is  
Three months, and for those  
Who have no courses  
(It is the same):<sup>5513</sup>  
For those who are pregnant,

وَيَرْزُقُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بَلِغٌ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ  
لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٢﴾

وَالَّتِي يَبْسُنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنْ أَرْبَبْتُمْ  
فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَالَّتِي لَمْ يَحِيضْ وَأُولَتْ  
الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ  
يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ﴿٣﴾

5511. In these very delicate and difficult matters, the wisdom of jurists provides a less satisfactory solution than a sincere desire to be just and true, which is described as the "fear of Allah". Where such a desire exists, Allah often provides a solution in the most unexpected ways or from the most unexpected quarters; e.g., the worst enemies may be reconciled, or the cry or the smile of an infant baby may heal seemingly irreparable injuries or unite hearts seemingly alienated for ever. And Faith is followed at once by a psychological feeling of rest for the troubled spirit.

5512. Our anger and our impatience have to be curbed. Our friends and our mates or associates may seem to us ever so weak and unreasonable, and the circumstances may be ever so disheartening; yet we must trust in Allah. How can we measure our own weakness or perhaps blindness? He knows all. His universal Purpose is always good. His Will must be accomplished, and we should wish for its accomplishment. His ordering of the universe observes a due, just, and perfect proportion.

5513. Cf. ii. 228. For normal women, the 'iddat is the three monthly courses after separation: if there are no courses or if the courses are in doubt, it is three calendar months. But that time it will be clear whether there is pregnancy: if there is, the waiting period is still after delivery.

Their period is until  
They deliver their burdens:  
And for those who  
Fear Allah, He will  
Make things easy for them.<sup>5514</sup>

5. That is the Command  
Of Allah, which He  
Has sent down to you:  
And if any one fears Allah,  
He will remove his evil deeds<sup>5515</sup>  
From him, and will enlarge  
His reward.

6. Let the women live  
(In 'iddat) in the same  
Style as ye live,  
According to your means:  
Annoy them not, so as  
To restrict them.<sup>5516</sup>  
And if they are pregnant, then<sup>5517</sup>

ذَٰلِكَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ أَنْزَلَهُ إِلَيْنَا وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ  
يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا ﴿٥﴾

أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكَنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا نِضَارُوهُنَّ  
لِالنِّضْيِ قَوْلًا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَىٰ حَمْلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ

5514. Cf. n. 5511. If there is a true and sincere desire to obey the Will of Allah and do right the difficulties will vanish, and these delicate matters will be settled for the greatest happiness of all.

5515. Allah's ordinance is nothing arbitrary. "It is to help us, and to lead us on to our highest good, temporal and spiritual. If we obey Allah. His wisdom will not only solve our difficulties, but it will remove other ills that we may have, subjective and objective. Like a good shepherd, He will lead us on to more and more luscious pastures. With each step higher, our position becomes more and more sure and our reward more and more precious.

5516. Cf. n. 5507 above. A selfish man, because he has divorced his wife, may, in the probationary period before the divorce becomes absolute, treat her with contumely, and while giving her residence and maintenance, may so restrict it as to make her life miserable. This is forbidden. She must be provided on the same scale as he is, according to his status in life. There is still hope of reconciliation, and if not, yet the parting must be honourable.

5517. If there is pregnancy, a sacred third life comes on the scene, for which there is added responsibility (perhaps added hope of reconciliation) for both parents. In any case no separation is possible until after the child is born. Even after birth, if no reconciliation between parents is possible, yet for the nursing of the child and for its welfare the care of the mother remains the duty of the father, and there must be mutual counsel between him and the mother in all truth and sincerity.

Spend (your substance) on them  
Until they deliver  
Their burden: and if  
They suckle your (offspring),  
Give them their recompense:  
And take mutual counsel  
Together, according to  
What is just and reasonable.  
And if ye find yourselves<sup>5518</sup>  
In difficulties, let another  
Woman suckle (the child)  
On the (father's) behalf.<sup>5519</sup>

7. Let the man of means  
Spend according to  
His means: and the man  
Whose resources are restricted,  
Let him spend according  
To what Allah has given him.  
Allah puts no burden  
On any person beyond  
What He has given him.  
After a difficulty, Allah  
Will soon grant relief.<sup>5520</sup>

حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ  
أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِنْ نَعَاَسَرْتُمْ  
فَسَرِّضْ لَهُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۚ وَمَن قَدِرَ عَلَيْهِ  
رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۚ لَا يَكْفِ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا  
إِلَّا مَاءً آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾

5518. "If ye find yourselves in difficulties": e.g., if the mother's milk fails, or if her health fails, or if any circumstance arises which bars the natural course of the mother nursing her own child. There may be psychological difficulties also.

5519. That is, the father must stand all expenses.

5520. We must trust in Allah, and do whatever is possible for us in the interests of the young life for which we are responsible. We must not be frightened by difficulties. Allah will give us relief and provide a solution if we act with honest integrity. Cf. xciv. 5-6.

## SECTION 2.

8. How many populations  
That insolently opposed<sup>5521</sup>  
The command of their Lord  
And of His messengers,  
Did We not then  
Call to account,—  
To severe account?—  
And We chastised them with  
A horrible Chastisement.<sup>5522</sup>
9. Then did they taste  
The evil result of  
Their conduct, and the End  
Of their conduct  
Was Perdition.
10. Allah has prepared for them  
A severe Punishment<sup>5523</sup>  
(In the Hereafter).  
Therefore fear Allah,  
O ye men of understanding—  
Who have believed!—  
For Allah hath indeed  
Sent down to you  
A Message,—<sup>5524</sup>

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قَرِيْبَةٍ عَنَتْ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهَا وَرُسُلِهِ فَحَاسِبْنَهَا  
حِسَابًا شَدِيْدًا وَعَذَّبْنَاهَا عَذَابًا ثَكْرًا ﴿٨﴾

فَذَاقَتْ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهَا وَكَانَ عِقَبُهُمْ أَمْرًا خُسْرًا ﴿٩﴾

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا فَاَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَّقُوا لِيَ الْآلَيْبِ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١٠﴾

5521. Insolent impiety consists not only in the breach of the rites of religion. Even more vital is the defiance of the laws of nature which Allah has made for us. These laws, for us human beings include those which relate to our fellow-beings in society to whom kindness and consideration form the basis of our social duties. Our duties to our families and our children in intimate matters such as were spoken of in the last Section, are as important as any in our spiritual life. Peoples who forgot the moral law in marriage or family life perished in this world and will have no future in the Hereafter. The lessons apply not only to individuals but to whole nations or social groups.

5522. This refers to the present life: apparently the Hereafter is implied in verse 10 below.

5523. See last note.

5524. There is no excuse for us to go astray, seeing that Allah in His infinite Mercy has explained to us His Message by His many Signs around us and clearly by means of the human Teachers and Messengers whom He has sent for our instruction: see next verse.

11. A Messenger, who rehearses  
To you the Signs of Allah  
Containing clear explanations,  
That he may lead forth  
Those who believe  
And do righteous deeds  
From the depths of Darkness<sup>5525</sup>  
Into Light. And those who  
Believe in Allah and work  
Righteousness, He will admit  
To Gardens beneath which rivers  
Flow, to dwell therein  
For ever: Allah has indeed  
Granted for them  
A most excellent provision.

رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ  
وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ  
لَهُمْ رِزْقًا ﴿١١﴾

12. Allah is He Who  
Created seven Firmaments<sup>5526</sup>  
And of the earth  
A similar number,<sup>5527</sup>  
Through the midst  
Of them (all) descends<sup>5528</sup>  
His Command: that ye may  
Know that Allah has power  
Over all things, and that  
Allah comprehends all things  
In (His) Knowledge.

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ  
الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِنَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ  
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾

5525. Cf. xxiv. 40: the unbelievers' state is "like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by dark clouds; depths of darkness, one above another." Cf. ii. 257: "Allah is the Protector of those who have Faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light."

5526. "Seven Firmaments." (Cf. ii. 29; xvii. 44; xxiii. 86; and xli. 12.)

5527. Literally: they are seven in number, each one separate from the other.

5528. But in all spheres of life and Creation, whatever conception we are able to form of them, it is certain that the Command or Law of Allah runs through them all, for His knowledge and power extend through all things.